

Freedom

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NOTES.

Failure of Miners' Hunger Strike.

The defeat of the miners provides several useful lessons for the workers, but the most important one is that when it comes to a vital struggle between Capital and Labour the whole forces of the State are used against the workers. Up to the present they have been under the impression that a Government represents the whole of the people, and have looked to it for impartiality during an industrial dispute. We hope that this delusion has gone for ever. The Government helped the mineowners in every way possible, even the £10,000,000 grant being a subsidy to the owners to enable them to pay the miners a wage which would induce them to return to work. Another lesson is that a purely defensive strike is useless. The miners' strike was magnificent, but it was not war. When the Triple Alliance collapsed, the miners' case was hopeless, and it was only a matter of time when they would be forced to surrender. Human suffering has no effect on the wealthy classes when their interests are at stake. During the war they poured out the blood of the workers like water, and the long hunger strike of the miners left them unmoved. Whilst the miners and their families were almost starving Society was enjoying itself in a display of its wealth at Newmarket, Epsom, Ascot, Hurlingham, and other resorts. Many thousands of motor-cars were counted at Ascot, and Press writers revelled in descriptions of the gorgeous scene. For three months the miners have had leisure to study the social question, and we hope that they and all other workers now realise that the wage system means slavery for them and for their children, and that this slavery is based upon the monopoly of the land and the means of life. If they have learned these lessons, then the strike will not have been in vain, and we look forward to their next great fight having for its object the abolition of land monopoly rather than a mere question of wages. But they must drop their worship of leaders.

"Successful Socialism."

What is Socialism? We ask the question seriously. In the *Labour Leader* of June 30 we find an article by Sir Leo Chiozza Money, in which he compares the pre-war conditions in Germany with those of this country, especially in the matter of housing and municipal buildings and social hygiene, and points out the superiority of conditions in Germany. "How did the Germans contrive with smaller incomes to do more than we did?" he asks. And in reply he gravely informs us that it was partly due to the fact that "they gained great public revenue for their States and their cities by practising Socialism on a large scale and thus relieved themselves of taxation (one-half the revenue of Prussia, for example, was from successful Socialism)." What a lot we are learning nowadays! Prussia, the home of the Junkers and of militarism, practising Socialism and making a success of it! In that "Socialist" country obedience to authority was more rigidly enforced than in any other part of the world, the policeman's baton and the soldier's bayonet being always in evidence. When we have said that Socialism means regimentation and discipline, Socialists have denied it indignantly; but here is a writer in the official organ of the I.L.P. practically admitting it. In the same issue of the *Labour Leader* the reporter of the Labour Party Conference writes: "It is noticeable how steadily the Conference swings to the Socialist position." We also have noticed how steadily the official element in the Labour Party is swinging in the direction of State Socialism, with its bureaucracy and discipline. Its Socialism bears such a distinct resemblance to the "successful Socialism" of Prussia that they must be peas out of the same pod. If the I.L.P. favour that sort of Socialism, they are on the direct road to Dictatorship.

The Chaos of Capitalism.

None but Anarchists can be optimists nowadays. The Governments of the world, whether capitalist or Socialist, have made such a sorry mess of things that even our strongest opponents are hard driven to find an excuse for them, and a stricken world must needs turn to Anarchism for relief from its State-made misery. One of the stock objections to Anarchism has been that it would bring chaos, with murder thrown in as a form of recreation. Well, just take a look at the world to-day, and you will see that that is the actual state of affairs under Capitalism and highly centralised Government. Without counting the blissful state of affairs on the other side of the Irish Channel, it is no exaggeration to say that in Europe and Asia millions of men are engaged in murdering or preparing to murder each other, at the behest of their respective Governments; whilst as a result many more millions are in danger of being starved to death. This mass of misery is directly due to the fact that the people have allowed the politicians to take into their hands full control of their lives and economic resources. Consider the situation at home. Do you think it possible that in a non-governmental society four million people would stand idle and let their families starve while there was plenty of cultivable land at hand and the means to cultivate it? Or do you think that under Anarchism any number of men would be so foolish as to put on ridiculous uniforms, take guns, go far across the seas, and suffer untold miseries, in order to shoot down other men whom they had never seen or heard of before, and whose death would not benefit them in any way? Or do you think that in a free society you would find men and women producing fine foods and fine clothing for a gang of idlers and keeping the coarser things only for themselves? No; it is not possible to imagine any of these ridiculous things happening when men and women are free to think and act for themselves. Therefore the sooner the world turns to Anarchism as a remedy for all its ills, the sooner will it begin to lead a saner and happier life.

Still Imprisoning Communists.

The Government still continues its policy of persecuting the Communists. On June 28 A. S. Inkpin, secretary of the Communist Party, was sentenced to six months' hard labour for publishing the "Theses of the Communist International" and other Communist publications; and the National Labour Press was fined £200 and £40 costs for printing them. Inkpin has appealed and been released on bail. A week previously, on June 21, at Glasgow, Guy A. Aldred, Jane H. Patrick, and Douglas McLeish, members of the Glasgow Communist Group, were found guilty of publishing a seditious article in the *Red Commune*. Guy Aldred, who had been kept in prison for four months without bail, received a brutal sentence of twelve months' imprisonment, the other two getting a sentence of three months each. We have read the article concerned and we fail to see why the judge should have been so vindictive to Aldred. His punishment is twice as severe as that meted out to any one else found guilty of a similar offence, and we hope a strong protest will be made. We do not agree with the Communists in their advocacy of a Dictatorship, but that does not prevent us protesting against these prosecutions. In fighting for freedom of speech and press, we fight for freedom for all. Free discussion may hurt the capitalist, but it can never hurt Truth.

"Freedom" Subscriptions Dearer.

Owing to the increase in the postage rates for printed matter, the annual subscription for *FREEDOM* in Great Britain and Ireland is now raised to 3s. All other rates remain as before. If any subscriber is out of work and cannot afford to renew at present, we will continue to send the paper until better economic conditions prevail, if requested.

REPENTANCE AND AMNESTY.

By HARRY WEINBERGER.

If you are a political prisoner—jailed because of your ideals or ideas through war hysteria, and because of war legislation, whose constitutionality is doubtful, despite the decision of the United States Supreme Court—you cannot be freed, unless you are "repentant." You may be consumptive, like Nicholas Zenn Zogg—having contracted it in jail—or you may be going blind in both eyes because of cataracts, like Ricardo Flores Magon, unless you are "repentant" grace will not descend upon you. Wilson and Gregory and Palmer are gone—but amnesty has not, and will not, come. Every country in the world has declared amnesty—except the United States. We are lagging behind kings and the despots of Europe. The spirit of Jefferson after the Alien and Sedition Laws, the magnanimity of Lincoln after the Civil War, are war casualties of the World War.

We universally honour the men and women shrouded by history, like Robert Emmett, Lafayette, and Joan of Arc; we know but to jail Magon, Mollie Steimer, and Debs. We Americans honour Grant at Appamatox—but a new administration, elected by an overwhelming majority of the American people, rebelling against the despotism of a democratic administration, whose shibboleth at least had been "ideals," follows that administration's policies almost unbrokenly, and even denies that there are political prisoners.

Ricardo Flores Magon, who has served more time than any other political prisoner, did not ask for amnesty. I asked for it. Magon, because of his poverty, may never see his wife and children again with his eyes. The letters that follow illuminate the man, the times, and the new administration, like lightning on a dark night:—

"OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, WASHINGTON, D.C.
"April 18, 1921.

"Harry Weinberger, Esq.
"32, Union Square, New York, N.Y.

"DEAR SIR,—Replying to your letter of April 15, 1921, in further reference to the case of R. Flores Magon, I have to state that the Department's information is that Magon's physical condition is such that it can be taken care of at the present time just as well at the penitentiary as on the outside. I do not see, therefore, that there is anything in his physical condition to warrant his release at this time.

"I note your statement that there is no more idealistic character in America than Magon, and that his character is beautifully illustrated by a letter written by him to Mrs. Winnie E. Branstatter, a copy of which you enclose. To my mind his letter to Mrs. Branstatter rather indicates that he regards his prosecution by the Government as persecution, and makes it appear that he is a martyr. He, in no manner, evinces any evidence of repentance, but, on the contrary, rather prides himself upon his defiance of the law.

"My information is that the offence for which Magon is now serving sentence is not the only one that he has committed. He was formerly convicted in the United States District Court for the Southern District of California, at Los Angeles, for conspiring to hire and retain persons in the United States to enter service of foreign people as soldiers, and was sentenced to one year and eleven months in the United States Penitentiary at McNeil Island, which sentence he served, the same expiring January 19, 1914.

"With respect to the offence for which he is now serving, as I have already indicated to you in a former letter, the recommendations are all adverse. He is regarded as a dangerous man because of the seditious and revolutionary doctrines which he asserts and practises, and his determination not to abide by the laws of this country. I am of the opinion, therefore, that until he indicates a different spirit than that expressed in his letter to Mrs. Branstatter he should at least serve until his parole period, which will not be reached until August 15, 1925.

"Respectfully,
"(Signed) H. M. DAUGHERTY,
"Attorney General."

The letter of March 24, 1921, from Magon to Mrs. Winnie E. Branstatter, Chicago, Ill., is in part as follows:—

"My fate has been sealed. I have to die within prison walls, for I am not forty-two, but forty-seven years old, my good comrade, and a twenty-one year sentence is a life term for me. I do not complain against my fate, however; I am receiving what I have always gotten in my thirty years of struggling for justice: persecution. I knew since the first that my appeals to brotherhood and love and peace would be answered by the blows of those interested in the preservation of conditions favourable to the enslaving of man by man. I never expected to succeed in my endeavour, but I felt it to be my duty to persevere, conscious that sooner or later humanity shall adopt a way of social intercourse with love as a basis. Now I have to die a prisoner, and under the sway of my growing infirmity. Before I be dead, darkness will have enshrouded me with a night without moons or stars, but I do not regret it—it is my share in the great enterprise of hastening the advent of Justice, the . . . to unknown goddess. My present and my future are dark, but I am certain of the bright future which is opened to the human race, and this is my consolation, this certainty comforts me. There will not be babies whining for milk, there will not be women selling their charm for a crust of bread; competition and enmity will give way to co-operation and love among human beings. Will not this be great? As a lover of the Beautiful I exult at this prospect. Hitherto Man

"This letter is already too long, and I am loth of wasting your valuable time, my dear comrade, but I have something to tell you. By a letter a comrade wrote to Riviera, I am informed that you know of a pension the Mexican Chamber of Deputies voted in my favour. It is true, my beloved comrade, but I did not accept the pension. I, of course, appreciate the generous motives which prompted the Deputies

to decree it; I am most thankful, but I cannot accept money which has not been voluntarily given by the people. This money was taken from the masses by means of taxation. Should the people have sent it directly, I would proudly have taken it.

"Now I must close. Please pardon the length of this letter. Next time I shall write shorter. Give my fraternal greetings to the good comrades, and you, please accept my comradely love."

"Hon. Harry M. Daugherty,
"United States Attorney General,
"Washington, D.C.

"April 26, 1921.

"DEAR SIR,—Answering your letter of April 18, in re Ricardo Flores Magon, may I again call your attention to the fact that when Mr. Magon, forty-seven years of age, goes totally blind, there is no absolute assurance that the operation, whether performed inside of prison or outside of prison, will be successful, and his sight restored, and my application, based on his physical condition, is that, with the possibility of Magon going and remaining totally blind, that the Department should release him, he having already been confined in prison from August 5, 1918, to the present time, for the mere printed words. His words, you allege, were seditious and revolutionary, but no allegation of Pro-Germanism is made in the case.

"You cite me a former offence of Magon's re his conspiracy to hire and retain persons in the United States to enter service of foreign people as soldiers, which was to help his own countrymen in Mexico, for which he fully served his sentence. In the early history of our country after 1776 we obtained the help of foreign soldiers like Lafayette and Pulaski and others, also probably a violation of the neutrality laws of their countries at the time; yet to-day we have statues to their memories, and it is one of the bonds of friendship between our country and theirs. Magon, a Mexican, tried to help Mexico, and having fully served his time for that violation of our neutrality law, that should not be held against him now, or we are not true to the history of our own country. If nothing else could be done, Magon could be released, allowed to settle up his affairs, get medical attention, and leave the country.

"If amnesty for political prisoners by the present Administration is to be based solely on 'repentance,' then I am afraid that most of the political prisoners will remain in jail, because, whether rightly or wrongly, most of them who went to jail for the expression of their honest opinions still hold those opinions. There are some cases, of course, where there is not even a scintilla of evidence upon which the conviction is based, and 'repentance' even would not be necessary from the confined individuals. Where, however, men have expressed opinions which have been held a violation of the Espionage Law, and have said it publicly, and have gone to jail rather than change honest, conscientious beliefs, after serving a part of their time, most of them will not plead the baby act of 'repentance.'

"We are proud in our history of men who expressed unpopular opinions at unpopular times, and Americans were always of the belief that the first amendment to the Constitution guaranteed free speech and free press, and was a protection against any sedition or espionage laws, especially after the early Alien and Sedition Laws were so thoroughly beaten by the election to the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson. Many people are still of the opinion that the Espionage Law, in view of the first amendment, was, and is, unconstitutional, and the Democratic Party's defeat in the last election was greatly helped by its enforcement of the Spy Act that did not catch spies.

"More than two years after the end of the war any justification for the denial of free speech and free press, or the continued imprisonment of those convicted under the Espionage Law for the expression of their honest opinions during the war, is wrong, and is a confession of weakness new to American history. All other countries of the world have had general amnesty—since when does America lag on questions of Liberty and Freedom?"

"P.O. Box 7, Leavenworth, Kansas,

"May 9, 1921.

"Mr. Harry Weinberger, Counsellor at Law,
"New York City.

"MY DEAR MR. WEINBERGER,—Your letter of the 25th of last April, and a copy of Mr. Daugherty's letter to you, received. You want me to furnish you with data regarding the sentence which ended on Jan. 19, 1914, but in order for you to judge whether I have been the victim of a conspiracy bent on keeping in bondage the Mexican peon, or not, I am going to furnish you with an abstract of the persecution I have suffered ever since I took refuge in this country. . .

"After years, many years, of an unequal struggle in the press and the political clubs in the City of Mexico against the cruel despotism of Porfirio Diaz; after having suffered repeated incarcerations for my political beliefs ever since I was seventeen years old, and having almost miraculously escaped death at the hands of hired assassins on several occasions, in that dark period of the Mexican history, when the practice of the Government was to silence truth's voice with the firing squad, or the dagger, or the poison; after the judiciary, by judicial decree of June 30, 1903, forbade me not only to write for my own journals but to contribute for others as well; having my printing plants successively sequestered by the Government, and my life being in peril, I decided to come to this country, which I knew to be the land of the free and the home of the brave, to resume my work of enlightenment of the Mexican masses.

"The 11th day of January, 1904, saw me set foot on this land, almost penniless, for all what I had possessed had been sequestered by the Mexican Government, but rich in illusion and hopes of social

and political justice. *Regeneracion* made its appearance on American soil in November, 1904. In the following December, a ruffian, sent by Diaz, entered my domicile, and would have stabbed me in the back had it not been for the quick intervention of my brother, Enrique, who happened to be near by. Enrique threw the ruffian out of the house, and showing that this brutal assault on my person had been prepared by certain authorities, and the possible failure of the ruffian's attempt foreseen, at the falling of the latter on the sidewalk, a swarm of agents of the public peace invaded the premises. Enrique was made prisoner and jailed, and finally condemned to pay a fine for disturbing the peace. . . Emboldened by the protection he enjoyed, the ruffian again forced his entrance into my house. This time I telephoned the police; the man was arrested, and I was summoned to appear in court the following day, early in the morning. When I arrived at the police court the man had already been released. . . Seeing my life was so lightly regarded by those who claim to have been empowered with authority to safeguard human interests and life I decided to move southward, and in February, 1905, *Regeneracion* resumed publication at St. Louis, Missouri. In October same year trouble broke loose against me. A Mexican government official, by the name of Manuel Esperon y de la Flor, who maintained the worst type of slavery in the district under his command, for he used to kill men, women, and children as feuded lords used to do, was chosen by Diaz to come and file against me a complaint for what he deems to be a slanderous article which had been printed in *Regeneracion*, and dealing with the despotism he displayed on the unfortunate inhabitants of the district under his control. A charge of criminal libel was preferred and I was thrown into jail with my brother Enrique and Jean Sarabia. Everything in the newspaper office was sequestered: printing plant, typewriter, machines, books, furniture, and so on and sold before a trial had taken place. . . After months of languishing in a cell I got released on bail. . . I paid my bondsman the amount of my bail, and on March, 1905, took refuge in Canada, for I was certain that death awaited me in Mexico. At that time the mere asking by Diaz for a man he wanted was enough to spirit a man across the line to be shot. While in Toronto, Ontario, *Regeneracion* was being published in St. Louis. The Diaz agents found at last my whereabouts. I was informed of their intentions, and evaded arrest by moving to Montreal, Quebec. A few hours after my having left Toronto the police called at my abandoned domicile. I do not know until to-day how Diaz could throw the Canadian authorities against me.

"While in Montreal my Mexican comrades in Mexico were planning an uprising to overthrow the savage despotism of Porfirio Diaz. I secretly moved to Mexican frontier on September, 1906, to participate in the generous movement. My presence at El Paso, Texas, though kept strictly unknown, was discovered by American and Mexican sleuths, who, on the 20th of October, same year, raided the room where I had to confer with some of my comrades. Antonio I. Villarreal now Minister of Agriculture in Obregon's Cabinet, and Juan Sarabia were arrested. I escaped. A price was put on my head. A 25,000 dollar reward was offered for my capture, and hundreds of thousands of leaflets bearing my picture and a description of my personal features were circulated throughout the south-west, and fixed in post offices and conspicuous places with the tempting reward. I succeeded, however, in evading arrest until August 23, 1907, when with Librado Rivera and Antonio I. Villarreal, I was made prisoner in Los Angeles, California, without the formality of a warrant. . .

"Charge after charge was preferred against us, ranging in importance from resisting an officer to robbery and murder. All these charges were successfully fought by our lawyer, Job Harriman, but in the meantime our persecutors were forging documents, training witnesses, and so forth, until at length they finally charged us with having broken the neutrality laws by giving material assistance to patriots to rise in arms, against Porfirio Diaz. The forged documents and trained witnesses were examined by the U.S. Commissioner at Los Angeles, and as a result we were, after more than twenty months' incarceration in the County Jail, sent to Tombstone, Arizona, to be tried. The mere reading of the depositions made by the Government witnesses before the U.S. Commissioner at Los Angeles, and then before the judge of our trial at Tombstone, shows that they committed perjury in either place or in both. Experts for the defence proved that the exhibited documents were gross forgeries. We were, however, sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, which we served in Guma and Florence, Arizona, being released on August 1, 1910, after three years spent behind prison bars.

"*Regeneracion* appeared again in September of the same year, this time in Los Angeles, California. On June, 1911, I was arrested, with my brother, Enrique, Librado Rivera, and Anselmo L. Figueroa, charged with having violated the neutrality laws by sending men, arms, and ammunition to those fighting in Mexico against that form of chattel-slavery, known as peonage, which has been the curse of four-fifths of the Mexican population, as everybody knows. Jack Mosby, one of the prospected witnesses for the prosecution, said on the stand that the U.S. District Attorney had promised him all kinds of benefits if he perjured against us. Fake testimony was introduced by the prosecution, as proven by affidavits sworn by its witnesses after the trial was over, affidavits which must be on file in the Department of Justice, as they were sent there in 1912. In June, 1912, after a year of fighting the case, we were sent to McNeil Island to serve the twenty-three months' imprisonment to which we were condemned, being released on January 19, 1914. Figueroa died shortly afterwards as a result of his imprisonment.

"On February 18, 1917, I was arrested, with my brother, Enrique, for having published in *Regeneracion* articles against the treachery committed by Carranza, then President of Mexico, against the workers, and for having written that the Mexicans who at the time were being assassinated by Texas rangers deserved justice rather than bullets. I got a sentence of one year and one day, for I was expected to live only a few more months having been taken from a hospital bed to be tried. Enrique got three years. We appealed, and finally succeeded in getting bond, under which we were released pending the appeal.

"On the 21st of March, 1918, I was arrested with Rivera, for having

published in *Regeneracion* the Manifesto for which I was given twenty years' imprisonment, and Rivera fifteen. The wording and meaning of the Manifesto were construed as seditious by the prosecution, that is, as aiming at the insubordination and revolt of the military and naval forces of the United States. Any sensible person who happened to read the Manifesto would not draw such a conclusion, for in reality the Manifesto is only an exposition of facts, and a fair warning to all mankind of the evils those facts might produce. In one of its paragraphs it is clearly stated that no one can make a revolution on account of it being a social phenomenon. . . It was enough, however, to secure for me a life term behind prison bars. The persecution, this time, was exceedingly severe. My poor wife, Maria, was incarcerated during five months, and is now free on bond awaiting trial for having notified my friends of my arrest, that they should assist me in my legal defence. . .

"Mr. Daugherty says I am a dangerous man because of the doctrines I assert and practice. Now then, the doctrines I assert and practice are the Anarchist doctrines, and I challenge all fair-minded men and women the world over to prove to me that the Anarchist doctrines are detrimental to the human race. Anarchism strives for the establishment of a social order based on brotherhood and love, as against the actual form of society, founded on violence, hatred, and rivalry of one class against the other, and of members of one class among themselves. Anarchism aims at establishing peace for ever among all the races of the earth by the suppression of this fountain of all evils—the right of private property. If this is not a beautiful ideal, what is it? No one thinks that the peoples of the civilised world are living under ideal conditions. Every conscientious person feels himself shocked at the sight of this continual strife of man against man, of this unending deceiving of one another. Material success is the goal that lures men and women the world over, and to achieve it, no vileness is too vile, no baseness is too base as to deter its worshippers from coveting it. The results of this universal madness are appalling; virtue is trampled upon by crime, and artfulness takes the place of honesty. Sincerity is only a word, or at the most, a mask under which fraud grins. There is no courage to uphold the convictions. Frankness has disappeared, and deceit forms the slippery plane on which man meets man in his social and political intercourse. 'Everything for success' is the motto, and the noble face of the earth is desecrated with the blood of the contending beasts. . . Such are the conditions under which we civilised men live, conditions which breed all sorts of moral and material torture, alas! And all sorts of moral and material degradation. At the correction of all these unwholesome influences the Anarchist doctrines aim, and a man who sustains these doctrines of brotherhood and love can never be called dangerous by any sensible, decent person.

"Mr. Daugherty agrees on my being sick, but he thinks that I can be taken care of in my sickness in prison as it could be done on the outside. Environment is all-important in the treatment of diseases, and no one would ever imagine that a prison cell is the ideal environment for a sick man, and much less when the presence in prison of such a man is owing to his having been faithful to truth and justice. The Government officials have always said that there are not in the United States persons kept in captivity on account of their beliefs, but Mr. Daugherty says in his letter to you: 'He, in no manner, evinces any evidence of repentance, but, on the contrary, rather prides himself upon his defiance of the law. . . I am of the opinion, therefore, that until he indicates a different spirit than that expressed in his letter to Mrs. Branstatter, he should at least serve until August 15, 1925.' The quoted paragraphs and the part of Mr. Daugherty's letter in which he says I am regarded dangerous on account of my doctrines, are the best evidence that there are persons kept in prison owing to their social and political beliefs. . .

"As for the matter of repentance to which Mr. Daugherty gives so much importance, I sincerely state that my conscience does not reproach me for having done wrong, and, therefore, to repent of what I am convinced is right, would be a crime on my part, a crime that my conscience would never pardon me. He who commits an anti-social act may repent, and it is desired that he repents, but it is not fair to exact a vow of repentance from him who all he wishes is to secure freedom, justice, and well-being for all his fellow men regardless of race and creed. If someone ever convinces me that it is just that children starve, and that young women have to choose of two infernos one—prostitution or starvation—if there is a person who could drive out of my brain the idea of not being honourable to kill within oneself that elementary instinct of sympathy, which prompts every sociable animal to stand by the members of its species, and that it is monstrous that Man, the most intelligent of beasts, has to wield the vile weapons of fraud and deceit if he wants to achieve success; if the idea that man must be the wolf of man enters my brain, then I shall repent. But as this will never be my fate is sealed. I have to die in prison, branded as a felon. Darkness is already enshrouding me as though anxious of anticipating for me the eternal shadows into which the dead sink. I accept my fate with manly resignation, convinced that some day, long perhaps after Mr. Daugherty and myself have breathed our last, and of what we have been there only remained his name exquisitely carved in a marble flag upon his grave in a fashionable cemetery, and mine, only a number, 14596, roughly scraped in some plebeian stone in the prison graveyard, justice shall be done me.

With many thanks for the activity you have shown on my behalf, I remain, sincerely yours,

"(Sgd.) RICARDO FLORES MAGON."

This case was called to the attention of President Harding, by letter of April 25, 1921, in which I said: "I know the appeals are many, and our power of visualisation of individuals that we only know as a case is poor, and yet I am pleading in this matter a human case and not a law case, as I was not the attorney for Mr. Magon, who was tried in the West. I hope you will call for the records in this case and examine them yourself, for, in the last analysis, all final decisions, responsibility, and credit are yours."

I have not received a reply, nor has action been taken by the President.

FREEDOM.

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Can Labour Rise?

As that distinguished artist, the late Mr. Bob Fitzsimmons, used to say: "Give me the big uns, every time! The bigger they are, the harder they fall." Fitzsimmons knew his business. Mere bulk is nothing, and your strapping heavyweight, clumsy and slower than the millennium, is the easiest of marks.

Such is great, hulking, artless Labour's plight. Its fighting-pace is that of the tortoise, and its defence is even worse. It talks and starves while the enemy feasts at his ease. It squats shivering before the fortress behind whose walls the foe lies snug and warm. It knows that he can last indefinitely; knows he can close his factory, lock up his title-deeds, and sit it out in comfort; knows that, whatever happens, his property will remain intact, and that the gaol and the workhouse will not be for him. Nevertheless, from time to time Labour, maddened by its necessities and believing still that it can win by weight of numbers, steps into the ring and hangs itself across the ropes, a helpless punching-bag.

If Labour ever had, as has the savage—where civilisation has not invaded him—a shelter for its head, it would be better. If it owned, as does the African negro—where the white man has not taken it away from him—even a patch of land whereon to raise something for its sustenance, it would be much better. If it commanded practically inexhaustible credit, as do its masters, it would be better still. But Labour, having nothing, can get nothing, and its sole reliance is such poor savings as have been scraped painfully together, a penny at a time, into the Union box.

The contest is too unequal, and every intelligent spectator knows it. It goes always as it has always gone. Labour plays timidly for time, and time works steadily against it. Labour is lured into conferences, and the more it talks the more muddled it becomes. Labour shouts defiantly that it is prepared to die in the last ditch, and everybody knows that the end is near. The miners' strike went precisely as did that of the railwaymen, and as thousands in the past have gone. In this country, as in France, Italy, the United States, and everywhere, Labour has been whipped again.

We trust Labour will have the honesty and moral courage to acknowledge this. We trust it will understand, once and for all, that the old starving-game tactics are utterly played out, that the general strike is now a mere platform toy, that all the organisation in the world will not enable it to lift itself by its boot-straps or feed itself by standing idle. We trust it will face, at last, these obvious facts; but, as it has been dodging facts persistently from time immemorial, our faith is somewhat wobbly.

In the clamour against leaders which follows every failure we do not gladly join. The leaders cannot work miracles, and only a miracle can enable the propertyless miners to hold their own against the gentlemen in possession of the mines, by virtue of certain legal formalities the workers do not dare, as yet, to question. Nevertheless, we feel most bitter toward the leaders because they do not raise that question; because, clothed with enormous responsibility, they are afraid to face the music; because they follow tamely when they should be at the head of thought and point out boldly the only way. Granted that they are largely ignorant, it is not their ignorance that is chiefly here to blame. It is their moral cowardice, their set determination not to risk their popularity with the unthinking mob, their thirst for office. That poisons everything. No man twisted by personal ambition can put up a straight and loyal Labour fight.

"It is astonishing," wrote Thomas Carlyle when brooding over the French Revolution, "how long a rotten situation will hang together,

(Continued at bottom of next column.)

MUTUAL TOLERATION VERSUS DICTATORSHIP.

When a great man dies, the King and the Government of that country usually try to bask a little in his glory by exhibiting their participation in the general grief, and so on. Kropotkin did not escape from this fate, the amazing *dessous* of which are exposed by the letter published in FREEDOM for April. Such a temporary armistice is always followed by a recrudescence of persecutions, and the letter of April 1 (Moscow) addressed to Lenin and all the leading committees in Russia by the Anarchist-Syndicalist publishing, organising, and propagandist bodies of Russia (published in FREEDOM last month) bears testimony of this in a pathetic way. In a subdued tone it merely exposes that publishing houses are closed, comrades arrested, ill-treated in prison, etc.; all this is done to the most moderate groups, evidently bent only on independent Syndicalist organisation and theoretical (or, as they express it, moral) propaganda of Anarchism. These groups doubtless share Kropotkin's standpoint, expressed in all his letters, that Russia must be left alone by the capitalist powers abroad, and there is not the slightest indication either that violence in the interior against the Soviet institutions was ever exercised or planned by this section of the Russian Anarchist movement. They are therefore wantonly persecuted merely to hinder their peaceful propaganda, and the attention drawn to Anarchism by the death of Kropotkin is to be counter-balanced by such moves of the almighty Bolshevik Government and their tools.

Such miserable proceedings have, of course, nothing to do with Communism, and Tsarism and the great American Republic have done the same. The question, however, might be asked of sincere Communists whether Socialism, as they understand it, is at all times to be a unique cast-iron system which excommunicates in theory and crushes in practice any other conception of human relations, be it even Socialism of a slightly differing hue or free co-operation, this modest form which most Anarchism will take when the struggle is over, since Anarchists raise no pretension to govern or to impose their ideas from above. In short, after years of racial and nationalist struggle and butchering, after centuries of religious wars and the scramble for markets, after the culmination of all this in the present ruinous war and ruinous peace, do Socialists of the dictatorial type hold out nothing better to mankind than that this fighting, persecuting, oppressing, and brutalising is to continue; that when the capitalist is eliminated there will always be the Anarchist and the independent Syndicalist to be fought, reduced to silence or crushed, and after these all other heretics will be run down, the shibboleth now being not this or that religious trifle or nationalist pretension, but disbelief in Soviet-ordained Dictatorship and its representatives upon earth, commissioners and secret police and the like?

Such considerations are brushed aside by the stale remark that Dictatorship would only be temporary. History gives an abundance of examples that dictators only care how they can make good for the temporary inconvenience they cause and then retire, does it not? Cincinnatus is about the only proverbially eccentric dictator who acted in this way, but with Caesar the Roman Republic ended for good and

provided you do not handle it too roughly." We should like to see the Labour situation handled most roughly; for in this, as in every other country, it has been rotten these many years. Always it is steeped to the lips in base opportunisms that, by the very nature of things, are more sterile than the grave. Always it is pottering about with the unessential and getting nowhere; talking grandiloquently through its official orators and saying hardly anything that counts.

Well, Labour is going to be handled roughly, and probably the next year or two will tell the tale. Its masters now have it almost exactly where they want it, and they will ride it as and whithersoever they themselves desire. The economic servitude is now pretty well complete, and the helpless will receive just what the helpless invariably get. For a time Labour's owners may think it politic to throw an occasional crust to Cerberus, and the State may dangle a few carrots before the donkey's nose. But the load will still be there, and Labour may as well understand clearly that, if the pulling is not satisfactory, the driver will not hesitate to ply the whip.

Apparently, the masses have learned nothing from the War, but we anticipate that it has taught their owners quite a lot. Monopoly, having discovered that it can starve Empires into submission, to-day understands in all its fullness the value of its power. It will use it remorselessly, and, as always, the more helpless the victim, the more cruel will his treatment be. This, indeed, the Socialists, whom Labour's leaders in their despair are beginning to follow, also perceive; and they dream that by making the State the one Monopolist they can rescue Labour from its present helplessness, and set it free.

Therein we differ. To us, as to all Anarchists, such a Monopolist, backed by an omnipotent bureaucracy and with all the forces of violence concentrated in its hands, would be the most inexorable of tyrants, and the proposed remedy a thousand times worse than the original disease. To us the sole cure for Monopoly is to sweep it away, giving all men free and equal access to the means of life. This is the great issue that the suffering immediately ahead will force on us. Around these two standards the real battle will be fought.

the Empire began, and Empires still flourish in our days. And the Norman Conquest, that rather dictatorial solution of the English land question, still holds good, and landlords are not disposed to vanish. Nor is Capitalism, the dictatorship over industrial production, in the least inclined to abdicate. Religious dictatorship established during the first Christian centuries still exists at Rome and in ever so many Greek and Protestant centres, and none of these spiritual rulers will admit that his flock might get along alone after nearly two thousand years of ecclesiastical bureaucracy, priest-rule. After these lofty models the mentality of the Socialist upholders of dictatorship seems to be moulded.

People who are not under the spell of this spirit of domination, imperialist or capitalist, religious or Socialist, as might be the case, but who long to breathe the fresh, invigorating air of the spirit of revolt, look backward and forward to quite another series of historical examples and comrades in the present and coming struggles. Every progress evolved in small circles is hindered by the dictatorial routine of the day. Science is in every field based on the martyrdom of rebels who stood up against the dogmas imposed by the spiritual dictators of each period. Fortunately, such rebels always exist; they rescued mankind from slavery, feudalism, and priest-rule; they will liberate it from Capitalism and Nationalism, from Militarism, and, if needs be, from that curse of a near future, dictatorial Socialism.

We are not at all fanatical believers in the small, the infinitely small, and do not reject generalisations, large-scale measures, but we are guided in our selection exclusively by what each separate organism really seems to require, by the standard of right proportions. We observe in Nature that what is too big becomes unwieldy and nearly as powerless as what is too small. We see how all living organisms are doomed to decay and death if one part of the body overreaches the rest by hypertrophy or infection. In a sound organism all parts co-exist in perfect autonomy, not interfering with the remainder, and capable of repelling any interference from them. Unification means death, as in a body overrun by microbes or a field or a barn overrun by rats and mice. And selection, the formation of new types, works by differentiation.

From such considerations which are but alluded to here it is absurd to expect that men will ever submit willingly to a dictatorial régime. Obedience may be enforced as Capitalism, Militarism, and Bolshevism enforce it, by the stupid means of brute force; but mankind will no more abdicate and resign its spirit and intellect into the hands of Lenin and Marx than into those of any Emperor or Pope, military or capitalist leader. There must be resistance and revolt against such pretensions, and there will be.

No dictatorship ever remained unchallenged; sooner or later its brute power diminished, and it had to climb down—with the worst possible grace, but down it came. The Roman Empire went to pieces, the Church must no longer burn heretics, Capitalism is just holding its own against Labour and no longer its absolute master, and Bolshevik Dictatorship is also stronger on paper and in theory probably than in reality. It prefers to leave the peasants alone, it recognises foreign Capitalism, and it may any day compromise with other Russian Socialist parties and parade as a democracy. This means that tyranny is, as always, coupled with inefficiency and blindness, and digging its own grave.

Such a system can have no sympathy with free co-operation, and our comrades in Russia are in a very difficult position. They will not overthrow the prevailing system, because after all it is to a large extent based on the elimination, temporary at least, of private capitalism, and because they will not be masters, dictators in their turn. They do not wish to be degraded by tyrannising over helpless masses by the usual means and methods of government. I believe that all they really require is to be left alone, to work in their own way, but *disposing of a proper share in the common stock of natural riches and means of production*; for these were not created by the dictators in power, but by the work of Nature and past and present generations of men, and, once wrested from the capitalist monopoliser, *should be at the disposal and in the hands of every section of anti-capitalist bona-fide producers*.

There is some very old misunderstanding in this respect which ought to be cleared up at last. It is quite natural that each school of Socialists, believing in the superiority of its particular tenets, should wish to expand, and it is but human that it should think that its gospel should spread generally and the Social Revolution and new appropriation be made in its favour. Hence nearly all propose to do everything and only a few, co-operators and communitarian experimentalists, confine themselves to their own self-acquired means and self-accepted limits. Hence the Socialist movement became a race where the winner pockets everything and then locks out and scorns his former comrades. Dictatorship against Capitalism, then, is only a pretence to cover this monopolist lock-out of all other Socialist and Anarchist comrades, and this abominable selfishness leads to persecutions, to cruelty and murder of every description, to the murder of comrades by comrades, as in Russia, Hungary, and Germany these late years. And this pandemonium of brutality, inspired by the war, gives the capitalists new hope of discrediting and ruining Socialism for a long time to come, and they send out their White Guards and Fascisti, their Labour spies and other Black-and-Tans; and Socialism to-day, where it is not undermined by mutual abuse, distrust, and other factors, is a shambles and almost physically at the mercy of capitalist cutthroats. It is impossible

for me to imagine that it could be degraded still further, and I question whether this will not open the eyes of some and induce them to make a stand and try to improve matters.

* * * * *

What might be the basis of such action?

I have not foreseen the present crisis, but I have felt for very many years that no single Socialist system can expect to be generalised—except possibly after a long period of free experimentation—and that therefore all systems must agree to co-exist, each within its natural sphere, under *mutual toleration*.

A special system can only be introduced and maintained by dictatorial force, which is bound to make it so odious that its possible advantages, which free experimentation would show, are not properly appreciated. This is happening to the Soviet system, since it permitted adulteration by dictatorship. If those in power refuse to others the means of free experimentation, they act as usurpers of social wealth which should be accessible to all, and it matters little whether they withhold this wealth from others as capitalists or as "Socialists." A unique economic system never existed; even Capitalism lived side by side with early Collectivist and feudal relics and new Co-operative and Socialist growths. Dictatorial Socialism would have to co-exist in any case with many other tendencies which, as latent enemies, would undermine and sap it. Would it not be better to give them elbow-room for friendly emulation?

This question was seldom discussed by Socialists, because the interests of propaganda always seemed to dictate the assertion that the particular movement alone was right, that all others were hopelessly wrong, and that giving way to toleration meant laxity and almost a betrayal of the cause. The very foundation of all co-operation was ignored by this sort of reasoning, for co-existence in friendly co-operation means not a loss but an increase of strength.

It is, therefore, not quite easy to retrace the history of the idea of mutual toleration within the Socialist and Anarchist movements, for most writers appear before the public but as zealous propagandists, eager to advance the cause in hand, and they leave toleration for private use at home in intimate reflections. Some are so ardent that to tolerate anything side by side with the truth they proclaim appears to them the worst of crimes. Some few only are coolheaded and see a bit further ahead.

In 1860, by the way, a forgotten Belgian author, De Puydt, not a Socialist himself, elaborated the whole idea in full, calling it *Panarchie*.

At the close of the eighties Communist Anarchism in Spain tried hard to supersede Collectivist Anarchism, and as a young movement was very intolerant. Comrade Tarrida del Marmol, then editor of the *Barcelona Productor*, said and wrote golden words on the necessary co-existence of both economic hypotheses believed in by various fractions of Spanish Anarchists. Tarrida then created the term "*Anarchism sans phrases*," or "*Anarchism without a label*," to which he always adhered.

About that time Malatesta, returning from South America, in the *Appello* of the "*Associazione*" (his paper, 1889) and elsewhere stood up for the friendly co-existence of both sections of Anarchists.

Little further was said on the subject, and readers of *FREEDOM* early in 1914 may perhaps remember my effort to bring about an understanding between Individualist and Communist Anarchists, an abortive effort crushed by an avalanche of protestations from both sides, each feeling perfectly comfortable in its isolation and exclusive belief to be in the right.

It was some little comfort to me when I saw Malatesta, in his articles in *Umanità Nova* (1920), uphold and proclaim this principle of co-existence and mutual toleration in relation to the Italian Anarchist and Communist parties. Malatesta was the first Anarchist who then was for a time confronted by this problem in an actual and urgent form. The Italian workers seemed disposed to overthrow the old order by a joint effort, and Anarchists, Communists, Revolutionary Socialists, and Syndicalists were all expected to do their best. Should, then, a single party—the Communists, for example—reap the fruits of a joint victory? Their dictatorial leanings were not averse to this. Malatesta told them plainly that the Anarchists were not willing to submit to this, and offered them friendly co-existence without interference from either side, on the common basis of a society without private capitalism. Circumstances prevented further development, but these words stand as a lasting expression of Anarchist thought: *Co-operation with all in the struggle against Capitalism—co-existence with all anti-capitalist parties on the basis of mutual toleration, non-interference, and friendly behaviour*. I trust that the proposed International Anarchist Congress in the coming autumn will further elaborate this point.

The question how in such cases the spheres of each group or movement shall be defined and circumscribed is a very serious one. This question would require careful consideration beforehand, preliminary studies, and yet permits no definite arrangements, since the real situation at a given moment cannot be foreseen. In any case, study and discussion are always useful, and may clear away many misunderstandings. The events from 1917 onward, as those of 1914, found so many Socialists entirely unprepared that ignorance and lack of quick understanding were at the bottom of many mistakes made by them. Everybody was trained only to grasp at everything for the benefit of his own party, and the comrade from whom he was divided by the slightest shade of opinion became in the twinkling of an eye the enemy who

must be put down, exterminated if possible. All have therefore to gain by a proper discussion of these subjects on the basis of fairminded and friendly mutual understanding.

I venture to think that since friendly co-operation, or at least autonomous co-existence, with Socialists of other opinions would be the purpose, every grasping party would soon be found out and its aims frustrated; all would be driven by their own interest to show at their best and to do the best. Questions which cannot be settled can always be set aside, neutralised by common consent. It would be excellent if these neutral spheres had a large extension, for here would be some common ground where all should meet; and if rivalry and struggle must follow after all, some important domains would be saved from ruin. What is generally accepted to-day as to hospitals, monuments, art collections, etc., should be extended to predominance in capitals and large towns and other vantage positions which were created by Nature or are the work of past generations, and should never be controlled by single sections of public opinion. In this spirit the outlines and principal features of future co-existence of Socialist and Anarchist parties and groups might at least be discussed and the minds of people prepared for mutual goodwill.

Between Anarchists in Communist prisons as in Russia, Socialists done to death by Fascists in Italy, Syndicalists murdered in Spain, all three shades of authoritarian Socialists killing each other in Germany, and so on, my idea or suggestion sadly lacks "blood and guts," and I am well aware that this drawback does not recommend it. This cannot be helped, but plenty of blood may still flow, stakes may possibly be lighted, before it may be taken into consideration. Authority dies hard and is constantly finding a new refuge; dispossessed in its religious disguise, nearly found out under the capitalist mask, it found fresh shelter under the wings of Socialism of the dictatorial type, which is such a wonderful godsend to the bureaucracy, to all those who as a body form the State and are at the service of all who pay them.

This stage of human folly will also be overcome and the sphere of Authority reduced once more. Anarchists should make an open and bold stand now; their case was never better, Authority was never more discrediting itself. I am really glad that the Russian comrades have spoken up at last. Let all the world hear as much as possible about Anarchism; after all which happens we are sure to be always better understood by the disenchanted victims of this accursed system of society.

M. N.

May 29, 1921.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

Sebastien Faure has been sentenced once more to imprisonment; this time for eight months. The only charge that it is possible to bring against this unwearying fighter is that his eloquence, backed by scholarship and assiduous study, indicts the existing disorder as it needs to be indicted. His ability marks him out for slaughter. Our comrades of *Le Libertaire* express keen regret that they did not make his arrest an international affair, and explain that, the charges being of the flimsiest, they regarded his acquittal as assured. We think they need not blame themselves. In such cases publicity, especially when Anarchists have worked it up, usually makes it harder for the accused. Moreover, the world to-day is so full of horrors, and the Labour movement so shaken by a series of revolutionary crises for which it has shown itself no match, that the persecution of any one individual, however eminent, rarely provokes a murmur. Faure's trial was held behind closed doors.

There appears to be some activity in Syndicalist circles, and Anarchists working in that field are being urged to appeal for individual initiative and to combat the leader-dictatorship tendencies which have developed. It will not be an easy job, for the average Trade Unionist, distrustful of himself, still loves a leader. The Anarchists of the Lyons district held a Congress, June 26, at which they discussed the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, the possibilities of united action being taken by different revolutionary and economic groups, and the best methods of spreading Anarchist thought.

The Committee of Action of the Young Syndicalists and Anarchists, in the Seine Federation, have shown much anti-militarist energy, opposing openly the further mobilisation of troops. They complain bitterly that their National Federation and its organs, *Humanité* and *L'Internationale*, show little or no sympathy.

In France, as in other countries, the cry of the profiteer is for more and more protection. The farmers of the Oise district are pulling wires to get the tariff on foreign corn trebled, and that on sugar greatly increased. *Germinal* has issued a powerful appeal to the workers which urges them to resist at every point this new extortion, and it points out that, while Loucheur and other financial magnates are piling on taxation and beating wages down, the disorganised Labour movement is doing nothing. For the leaders of the General Confederation of Labour and for the reformist Syndicalists, hand in glove with the politicians and busying themselves with petty opportunist measures, it has only words of contempt.

The situation in France appears to us desperate, and only in the

uncompromising attitude of the Anarchists can we see a ray of hope. Unfortunately, they are in a pitiful minority, and even now much divided in opinion, and their press has a hard struggle to survive.

Le Réveil Ouvrière, which contains some excellent articles on the principles of Anarchism, publishes a manifesto by the General Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.), addressed to National Federations, Departmental Unions, and Syndicates. It appeals for united action as against the measures for the suppression of anti-military propaganda which the Government is now proposing.

United States.

Here there is always brutality in abundance, but there is also a strongly assertive spirit of revolt.

Samuel Gompers, married again recently, has been re-elected President of the American Federation of Labour. His job is secure while the machine is kept in running order. The machine always operates thus, as witness the history of Trade Unionism in this country and of Socialism everywhere. However, in the United States there has been violent anti-machine revolt, the I.W.W. being the leading rebels. The persecution to which they have been subjected, especially during and since the War, has crippled them, but the fire is still there. We are very positive that the key to restored energy is to be found in their making up their mind as to whether they are out-and-out Anarchists or compromising Trade-Union Socialists. On the Pacific Coast, before the War, they had acquired the habit of vigorously proclaiming their Anarchism, but their official leaders and editors pulled steadily in the opposite direction. It is the special function of such gentlemen to make the machine everything, thereby killing the rebellious individuality that gives their movement life.

Apart from strikes against continued reductions in wages, and the bitterness engendered by high prices, exorbitant rents, and a huge army of unemployed, estimated at some three million, the marked feature of the American movement is the outspokenness of the independent press. Such papers as the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *Freeman*, dubbed as bourgeois by self-styled class-conscious Socialists, abound in articles denunciatory of the Government, landlordism, and the plutocracy. Small publications and pamphlets that find their way to our table talk even more plainly, and at much personal risk, for the hand of the Government is heavy. It has made the continued publication of *Free Society* impossible, just as it put an end to the extensive work of the Mother Earth Publishing Association. Recently, the Post Office authorities declared unmailable Kropotkin's "Conquest of Bread," which Zola regarded as "a veritable poem"; and one hears of similar absurdities. Luckily we know that the indignant energies which found their vent in such publications cannot be suppressed, and already we find them working through other channels.

Meanwhile it is to be noted that the thought and practice of all Governments is everywhere alike. According to our latest news, a number of our comrades sentenced to deportation to Russia are still prisoners at Ellis Island, what calls itself so falsely the Soviet Government having refused them permission to re-enter their native land! The comrades detained at Danzig for the same reason, as mentioned in the May issue of *FREEDOM*, have been taken back to New York.

WEST LONDON GROUP NOTES.

DEATH OF ROBERT PEDDIE.

We have been having large and attentive audiences at our meetings, this last six months, at the Grove, Hammersmith; and there has been a slow but sure sale of literature.

Comrades in London, especially in Hammersmith, Battersea, and East Ham, will hear with deep regret of the death of our old and trusted comrade Robert Peddie, who passed away on Friday, July 1, following an operation on the previous Monday. He included amongst his personal friends Sam Mainwaring, William Morris, Madame Sorgue, Louise Michel, Malatesta, and Peter Kropotkin. He had been ill for three months previously, and had already undergone one operation. He was a unique personality who knew no fear. For over thirty years he was an active propagandist in all parts of London. He was open and courageous in his style of speaking, and his outspokenness and sterling honesty always carried conviction. His homely humour was unique, and always secured him large and attentive working-class audiences. No propagandist was more devoted or made greater sacrifices.

We wish to thank all the comrades and sympathisers who have helped him during the last three months. We shall be pleased to receive assistance for his delicate wife and children.

F. P. M. AND J. T.

CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

(June 1 to July 6.)

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