

Freedom

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 399.

SEPTEMBER, 1922.

MONTHLY: TWO PENCE.

NOTES.

The War Cloud.

The smashing-up of the Greek army in Asia Minor by the Turks has brought Europe again to the verge of war. It is an open secret that the British Cabinet has been backing the Greeks, whilst France and Italy have supported the Turks. When the British press declared that Kemal Pasha was using French guns and tanks and Italian aeroplanes, the French press retaliated by saying that all the ammunition captured from the Greeks bore British labels. The Turkish victory has raised once again the question of Constantinople and the freedom of the Dardanelles, a question which brings to a head the antagonism between the interests of French and British capitalists, who are trying to drag the Balkan States into the trouble. The present situation is a striking commentary on the attitude of those simpletons who thought the War begun in 1914 was a war to end war. As long as the capitalists retain power they will continue to use the workers as cannon-fodder in defence of their profits. A month ago Europe and this country witnessed a large number of "No more War" demonstrations, and at the meeting of the International Federation of Trade Unions last spring resolutions were passed in favour of international action by the workers in the event of a new war being threatened. Now is the time for these organisations to show their strength, for the danger is great. There is much explosive material in the Near East and the Balkans, and a spark may cause an explosion similar to that of 1914. It hardly seems credible that such another catastrophe could come again so soon, but the unprincipled scoundrels who to-day control the Governments of the world are capable of any villainy when their interests are endangered.

Bolsheviks and British Capitalists.

The newspapers report the signing of an agreement between Mr. Krassin, representing the Russian Government, and Mr. Leslie Urquhart, representing the Russo-Asiatic Consolidated, by which the latter is granted a ninety-nine years' lease of all the properties in Russia held by its members prior to the Revolution. It includes 2,500,000 acres of mining, agricultural, and forest land, besides factories, railways, and steamers. The Moscow Government also grants the company £2,000,000 towards the cost of putting the property in working order. We are not surprised to read that Mr. Urquhart considers the agreement satisfactory. One interesting paragraph in it says that the company "may freely engage and discharge workmen and employees," and "workmen's committees shall not interfere in any way in the administration or operation of the enterprises." That wipes out the proletarian dictatorship as far as Urquhart's future slaves are concerned. This agreement may be the means of helping to build up the economic structure of Russia, but it will also help to rebuild the shattered forces of Capitalism, which it was one of the objects of the Revolution to destroy. Where the White armies failed the White capitalists may succeed. President Wilson once told the Italians that "a country is owned and dominated by the capital that is invested in it"; and he went on to say: "In proportion as foreign capital comes in among you and takes its hold, in that proportion does foreign influence come in and take its hold, and therefore the processes of capital are, in a certain sense, the processes of conquest." This applies to Russia as much as to any other country, and with foreign capital pouring in in an ever-increasing volume there is a great danger that the victories of the Red Army may have been in vain. In spite of the terms of this agreement, we know that Communist propagandists will still continue to speak of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" in Russia. It is a legend that takes a long time to die.

The Trade Union Congress.

The Congress held at Southport was very similar to many Congresses that have preceded it. Much talk and little wool sums up its proceedings. The question of giving more power to the General Council was the most important one raised. After a long debate the proposal was defeated by a considerable majority. The Communists supported it, because it would lead eventually to the dictatorship of a small group, which is their ideal in organisation; and perhaps it was partly for that reason that the delegates voted against it. But we think the main reason was the fear of the officials of the Unions that the power of bargaining with the employers would be taken away from them, and as the delegates to these Congresses are mostly officials they were able to keep the game in their own hands. To Anarchists the question of Trade Union machinery is of little importance. We are far more concerned with the ideas which prevail among the workers. As long as they are willing to allow the landlords and capitalists to hold in their hands the means of life their Trade Unions will never get beyond the another-halfpenny-an-hour stage. But it is time they recognised the fact that when it comes to pitting their empty stomachs against the big bank balances of their masters they will be beaten every time. They have got to realise that without the free use of the land, from which is obtained all that makes life profitable and pleasurable, they must remain slaves. The man who owns the land owns the lives of those who live on it, and all the Trade Unions in the country cannot alter that fact. When a considerable number of the workers grasp that truth they will surely provide the means by which their slavery will be brought to an end.

Class-War Prisoners.

The War let loose a flood of brutality which is nowhere shown so strongly as in the treatment of those arrested for taking part in strikes and social revolts, or even for merely protesting against conscription. In South Africa, we are told, there are 11,000 Trade Unionists in the jails awaiting trial for their share in the recent troubles on the Rand, over 800 of whom are to be tried for high treason. The ferocity with which the strike was suppressed is being carried into the courts, and terrible sentences have been given those already tried. What the fate of the others will be will depend on the extent to which public opinion can be raised in protest here and in South Africa. The lies about the strike and the strikers were smoke-screens to hide the horrible brutality of Jan Smuts and his Government. In Spain thousands of Anarchists, Syndicalists, and Communists are still in prison or in exile in distant parts of the country, but scarcely a word reaches the outer world from that priest-ridden land. In the United States the President refuses to release the I.W.W. prisoners, men who were convicted on evidence supplied in many cases by spies and perjurers in the pay of the big industrial corporations. Although the I.W.W. were convicted under the Espionage Act, not one of them was found guilty of spying or anti-war plots; but Germans who were convicted for bomb plots and other warlike activities have all been released. The I.W.W., however, are still in jail. Several attempts have been made to obtain the release of our comrades Ricardo Flores Magon and Librado Rivera, but so far without success. One reason given previously in Magon's case was that he was not "repentant"; now the Attorney-General refuses to release either of them, on the ground that they are "dangerous Anarchists and their life has been one continuous fight against law and order and against the Government"—a splendid tribute to their revolutionary spirit. Even the Mexican Government has asked for their release, but in vain. We recommend all these cases to those good folk who have been pleading recently for an era of goodwill between Capital and Labour. Perhaps they can persuade the tiger to release its prey.

THE ST. IMIER CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL, September 15 and 16, 1872.

This September our Swiss comrades in the Jura mountains will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the anti-authoritarian Congress of the old International held at St. Imier, September 15 and 16, 1872; and they will also recall the memory of the Jurassian Federation of the International, which for many years stood in the front ranks of the struggles of the '60s and '70s which created the Anarchist and revolutionary Syndicalist movements of our time. The Congress in question did more: it saved the continuity of the internationalist movement and rescued it from the clutches of the authoritarian politicians gathering round Marx; it even inaugurated the friendly co-existence of movements of different tendencies within the same organisation by establishing the solid basis of complete autonomy and mutual respect for all shades of opinion and tactics. Thus it pointed out ways and methods which have since been abandoned, to the detriment of the common cause of social emancipation. To the present English readers many of the facts connected with these events will not be familiar; when they read this rapid summary of these facts they will, I believe, feel solidarity with the Swiss comrades and send them fraternal greetings, and they may also consider whether these events of fifty years ago do not contain some lessons useful in our days, when, indeed, fresh impulse, fresh initiative are wanted more than ever.

The International Working Men's Association, as founded at St. Martin's Hall, in London, September 29, 1864, was to unite and weld together all workers who would work together for their emancipation from Capitalism, irrespective of the shades of opinion on principles and tactics which divided them. This broad principle was respected for five years, until after the Congress held at Basle, Switzerland, in September, 1869, where for the last time State Socialists or Marxists, Revolutionary Collectivists as the Anarchists were then called, Proudhonian Mutualists, Trade Unionists, Co-operators, and social reformers met in fair discussion and tried to elaborate lines of common action, useful and acceptable to all. The Congresses of 1868 and 1869 showed that the anti-authoritarian and truly revolutionary, anti-parliamentary ideas were making excellent headway, being spread from several intellectual centres of propaganda in Belgium, the Swiss Jura, and Spain, and with so much vigour by Bakunin, who had then lived for two years in and near Geneva, whilst before that time he had first spread these ideas in parts of Italy, mainly Florence and Naples.

Marx, who for all these years had had a free hand in leading the London General Council of the Association, and who had expected that by these means by and by his personal ideas would meet with international acceptance, was mortified when he saw in 1868, and more so in 1869 by the Basle Congress, that he was not making progress, that revolutionary Anarchism came to the front in a way alarming to him. This made him resort from that date to desperate and utterly unfair means by which he expected to terrorise or discourage the anti-authoritarian sections, and he did not mind trying by foul means to discredit and ruin the advocates of freedom, notably Bakunin, whom he had disliked for many years. A minute unravelling of these machinations will be found in the Life of Bakunin as compiled by me and in the records of the International collected by the late James Guillaume; but all this is surpassed by the cynical discussion of their doings between Marx and Engels in their private correspondence, which has since come to light to a large extent.

These intrigues were permitted a long impunity by the situation created by the war of 1870-71 and the Paris Commune, since this gave a plausible pretext for not meeting in congress in 1870 and a miserable, utterly unfair pretext for replacing the congress of 1871 by a private conference held in London and thoroughly engineered and controlled by Marx. At this conference he struck the blow long since premeditated, namely, to enforce an official doctrine, that of political action (implying Labour parties, electioneering, etc.), upon the Association. This was too much.

Opinions as to how to resist these authoritarian encroachments were divided. We can study every phase of this from Bakunin's letter to the Paris *Réveil* (end of 1869); the Jurassian attitude against the Geneva politicians at the Congress held at Easter, 1870; Bakunin's letter of August 6, 1871, protesting against the voluntary dissolution of the section called "L'Alliance" at Geneva; the Jurassian letter to the London conference (September 4, 1871), etc.—there was always an opposition between the intransigent attitude of Bakunin, who did not mind a split in the Association, and the Jurassians' (for brevity's sake I will say James Guillaume's) position; the latter, whilst repudiating the authoritarians as keenly as Bakunin, never ceased looking for means to maintain the cohesion or unity of the International in any case. This struggle of opinion never left the line of friendly discussion, as both sides had so thoroughly at heart their common cause.

After the London conference (September 17-23, 1871) the Jurassian Federation at their Congress held at Souvillier (Swiss

Jura), November 12, exposed the situation in a long circular, defending the autonomy of the sections and federations, and calling for the immediate convening of a general Congress to restore the lost freedom in the International. Bakunin did what he could to second this first open movement of protest, which met with hearty support in Italy, Spain, Belgium, etc.

Until then, apart from slanders spread in semi-private communications to Germany and the United States, which have since come to light, and other slanders circulated by zealous subordinates, Marx had left Bakunin alone personally, though anxiously collecting material (namely, of his revolutionary activity) against him by means of repulsive persons like N. Utin and others. But when the Souvillier circular set the ball rolling and the very foundation of his power was in danger of being either deprived of its prerogatives or abolished altogether, he shirked the fair struggle of opinion, freedom *versus* authority, which Bakunin and his comrades expected to fight out at the coming Congress, and he lowered the level of the debate to personal quarrelling by gathering heaps of incriminations against the revolutionists into a long private circular signed with the names of the members of the General Council (nearly all of whom had never read or even seen it), called "On the Pretended Split in the International," dated March 5, and printed and circulated end of May, 1872. Bakunin and several others published replies and refutations in the Jura *Bulletin* of June 15. Shortly after this the general Congress was convened to meet at The Hague in September. The location of the Congress in Holland, so near to London and Germany, and far from Switzerland and the Southern countries, showed that Marx intended absolutely to control this Congress by a packed majority; and in one of his letters to his American agent, F. A. Sorge (June 21, 1872; published 1906), Marx asked for not less than twelve American credentials, to be sent to himself and his London partisans. The Congress so long waited for in vain was now to become an absolute farce, another tool of Marx as the conference of 1871 had been and as the General Council still was. The Anarchists were determined to stand this no longer and henceforward to fight for the liberation of the International from Marx's domination. But again opinions as to how to act differed in the sense described above.

Without entering upon dates and documents, published and unpublished, the principal phases may be described. When in the middle of July Bakunin and some of the Jurassians met, the latter also were for an intransigent policy, meaning that if the Congress was not held in Switzerland instead of The Hague they would invite the anti-authoritarian federations not to go to Holland but to meet with them in Switzerland and to organise an intimate federation among themselves. In this sense, no doubt, Bakunin then wrote long letters to Italy and to Spain, and the idea was acted upon and further enlarged by the Italians at their conference held at Rimini early in August, where the immediate rupture with the General Council and the convocation of a Congress to be held at Neuchâtel were decided upon.

Meanwhile, however, James Guillaume's constant idea of doing the utmost to keep within the International had prevailed also in the Jura, and found expression in the instructions given to the Jura delegates at the local Congress held in August. They would go to The Hague and the Italians would not. Bakunin sided with the Italians, but—as it was right for true Anarchists to do—all were free to act as they chose, and Guillaume pursued his politics at The Hague with the disapproval of the Spanish Anarchist delegates and of the Italian, Cafiero, who attended the Congress merely as a visitor; but Guillaume met with no interference from their side, though they thrashed out the matter in hot discussions.

Guillaume's idea was that instead of a split, leaving authoritarians and Anarchists absolutely separated, it was preferable that all should remain within the International who would accept the *economic solidarity of the workers against Capitalism* and the *complete autonomy of federations, sections, and individual members as to ideas and tactics*, provided the principle that *the emancipation of the workers should be their own work* was not lost sight of. To put it in a nutshell, he worked with the purpose that the *authoritarians*, those who would not recognise anybody's freedom but their own and who were bent upon domineering over all the others, should leave the International, which they never ought to have joined at all; and that all who loved fair play and mutual toleration should be made welcome in it, whatever their shade of Socialist theory and practice should be. During the week of the Congress whilst the packed majority voted almost dictatorial powers to the ruling clique, and Marx imagined that he won constant victories, Guillaume went round quietly discussing these ideas with many delegates, dispelling their prejudices and welding together their forces. Then when the triumph of Marx was at its height, when the vote was about to be taken decreeing the expulsion of Bakunin and his friends, the minority by a declaration read by V. Dave, a comrade who is still alive, declared the mutual solidarity of the autonomous federations, which did not recognise any of the regulations and resolutions interfering with their autonomy, and which would henceforth communicate among themselves and prepare the realisation of federalist

autonomy within the organisation at the next Congress. Marx was dumbfounded; his authority was defied, and The Hague resolutions were already declared null and void by the Internationalists of Spain, Belgium, Holland, and the Swiss Jura, as far as the delegates who signed the declaration represented them.

Besides this solidarity on the basis of mutual toleration, another link, that of Anarchist ideas held by all, was to keep together the definitely Anarchist federations. This idea Guillaume discussed at Amsterdam (September 8) with Cafiero and the Spanish delegates, and Bakunin since August 30 had already written (at Zurich) the principles and rules of the secret society, the "Alliance of Revolutionary Socialists," which was to ally the action of the Italian and Spanish Anarchists with that of himself and others. To discuss this matter with him the Italian delegates to the anti-authoritarian Congress first met in Zurich (September 6 and following days); on September 11 the Spanish delegates and Cafiero arrived from The Hague; on September 13 the rules of the secret society were definitely accepted, and the St. Imier Congress was then discussed.

Bakunin and these comrades, also a number of Russians, travelled to St. Imier, where the "International Congress" was held on September 15 and 16, being composed of Spanish, Italian (Bakunin among them), French (mainly Commune refugees), and Jurassian delegates.

Here again the Italian view of complete rupture with the General Council and the Jurassian standpoint, defended by Guillaume, were face to face, and the latter was prevailing. Thus the famous second resolution, called "Pact of friendship, solidarity, and mutual defence between the free Federations," did not go further than the declaration of the minority above described, but this was quite sufficient, as coming events showed.

Bakunin, after long conversations with Guillaume, adhered also to these views and began to act upon the Italians in this sense. It may be said that finally, in March, 1873, the next Italian Congress, held at Bologna, adopted a resolution expressing these views of *economic solidarity against Capitalism and complete autonomy as to ideas and tactics* in the most definite terms; so this idea of mutual toleration generally prevailed over that of a clean separation.

The further development was facilitated by the maniacal behaviour of the Marxist General Council at New York, which simply suspended all the independent federations, with the result that in the turn of a hand these excommunicated federations continued to form the International on the basis of the St. Imier principles, and the General Council and its few acolytes were left out in the cold and henceforth taken no further notice of. The Congress held at Geneva (September, 1873) reorganised the Association on this anti-authoritarian basis, and further Congresses were held at Brussels, Berne, and Verviers.

The continuity of the International was thus saved by the methods adopted at St. Imier. After the death of Bakunin (June, 1876) another similar effort was made by the Anarchists to live on friendly terms with their opponents on the basis of this autonomy of ideas and tactics, and the universal Congress held at Ghent (1877) is yet another instance. It was owing to this tradition that the more recent International Socialist Congresses held at Paris, 1889, and so forth, at the beginning as a matter of course comprised Socialists of all shades of opinion; and it will be remembered that the Marxists did not rest until by successive and increasing vexations and acts of brutality they gloriously managed at the London Congress of 1896 to at last erect barriers excluding henceforth all who disbelieved in Parliamentary tactics. Then they were alone once more and quite happy, and they called that *unsocial* isolation the "Second International"! There is no more unsocial being than an out-and-out Marxist, who recognises no Socialist comradeship and knows only dictators and slaves.

It appears to me that if ever *Internationalism* is to be restored it will never be done by the "diplomacy of the proletariat" (a phrase coined by Engels in a letter to Marx), which is quite as abominable as official diplomacy; never by the leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-half, and Third Internationals putting their heads together in as many conferences, and at a similar cost, as the present capitalist masters of poor Europe. It might be tried on these or similar lines, if the lessons of St. Imier are worth anything:

Solidarity in the economic struggle against Capitalism;

Solidarity in the defence of mankind by the repudiation of war and all nationalist oppression;

Autonomy as to ideas and tactics, provided these do not uphold the State, Capitalism, Nationalism, or war.

When by these means the ground has been cleared for independent action, then another series of international ties would come into operation, namely, those joining together men and organisations holding similar ideas and pursuing similar tactics. Then Internationalism will give them combined strength and they will be able to decide where best to begin to act by free experimentation. Then, at last, something new will be before us, not as an oppressive organism imposed by dictatorship, but as an organic growth, and we will all learn by this experience and the present period of stagnation or oppression will be over.

Fifty long years after St. Imier it is about time to begin to act upon the lessons of those days.

Of those who took part in these events of 1872 E. Malatesta, of the St. Imier Congress, and V. Dave, of The Hague minority, are still with us; also two of the Russians present at St. Imier are alive, A. Ross and Z. Ralli. We send them fraternal greetings.

August 12, 1922.

M. N.

A SPIRITUAL PLEA.

"The souls of men can feel a double will, the will to enjoy and the will to aspire at all costs."

This thought we have taken, tearing it out of its context, from the Foreword to "The Social Expression of the Spiritual Life,"* by Gilbert T. Sadler, because it conveys, to the present writer at any rate, the central thought of an entirely Anarchistic work which responds to much of his own inmost thought. The passage cited is followed immediately by this quotation: "'Tis man's perdition to be safe, when for the truth he ought to die." Nietzsche and Tolstoy, apparently so antagonistic, would have welcomed that quotation. Indeed, only under the supposition that they were saturated with that conviction does the life of either Tolstoy or Nietzsche appear to us intelligible.

For our part, we should say the same of Christ and Bakunin, of Gandhi and Herbert Spencer, of all the innumerable pioneers who have broken new trails and plunged boldly into the unknown in the search for Life's true meaning. It matters not a button that the one speaks of God and the other of Nature and the Power Unknowable. These are mere words, to which we never should become enslaved. The fact, the thing itself, is that all such men, and all that is heroic in our own movement, have been and are everlastingly after the same thing—a richer, fuller, happier, and more perfect life. We stumble amid conflicting creeds; we mire amid the inadequacies of a language as yet too undeveloped for the proper expression of larger thoughts now coming to their birth; we misunderstand and are misunderstood; but we are all after the same thing. The entire Anarchist movement is inspired with the unalterable faith that Life as we are living it to-day is utterly unworthy of the superior being Man, satisfies neither his lower nor his higher needs, and, therefore, must be freed from its present shackles and given opportunity to soar—at any cost.

It is this faith which makes Anarchism a revolutionary movement, a living thing. If it lacked that faith, if it lost that conviction, it would become the lifeless skeleton of a dry-as-dust reform, dwindle into a petty sect, and lose all touch of the infinitely varied forces now endeavouring to hammer society into some sort of worthy shape. In saying which we are not merely registering our own personal opinion. We are speaking by the book and adhering strictly to the literal record. Let any one study the volume in which Eltzbacher has enshrined the teaching of the seven Anarchists selected as typical and he will see that this is so. He will discover the common ground on which we all are standing—the non-resistants, the passive resistants, and the apostles of armed revolt. No one ever loathed and anathematised the State more heartily than did Tolstoy, whom Mr. Sadler largely follows; but Kropotkin and Bakunin, who were for overthrowing it by violence, loathed it just as deeply. One and all we hate it because it suppresses life; and most of us, as the present writer believes, because it kills all possibility of rising to the Higher Life. Tolstoy and Mr. Sadler would say it kills the Godlike part of Man. It is the same thing. Let us not quarrel about names.

This little book of 119 pages is packed with illustrations of the manner in which the State, combining in a Devil's Pact the enslaving forces of violence and corruption, crushes the individual and thereby chains the entire collectivity to those lower levels in which vice and poverty, physical suffering and mental and spiritual degeneracy find their fertile soil. Its author would insist that on that lower and most uncomfortable level we shall stick until we see the necessity of getting out of it, and that until we understand that it is well worth our while to struggle desperately toward the heights we shall continue, as now, to wallow in the mud.

With all this we are in full agreement, for we understand well that those who are contented with their sewer will go on squatting in it contentedly. We understand that until the longing for a higher, a nobler, a more worthy existence has been awakened nothing worth talking about has been accomplished. On difference of tactics we are never inclined to quarrel, for these seem to us merely the various trails individual explorers are attempting, and the true road has yet to be found. Gandhi has been experimenting with the passive resistance Mr. Sadler favours, and we anticipate that the results have been already far greater than we are able, as yet, to understand. Others, equally conscientious, have been experimenting in other directions, and the harvest of their sowing time alone can show. For ourselves, we are in favour of trying all things and holding fast to that which proves itself true. This, we think, is the spirit of Mr. Sadler's book—the fourth of a series on the World-Religion—and as such we cordially recommend it to our readers.

* *The Social Expression of the Spiritual Life.* By Gilbert T. Sadler, M.A., LL.B. 3s. 6d. London: C. W. Daniel, 3 Tudor Street, E.C.4.

FREEDOM.

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

Monthly, Twopence; post-free, 2½d. Annual Subscription, 2s. 6d. post-free.
U.S.A. and Canada, \$1.00. France and the Continent, 2s. 6d.
Wholesale price, 1s. 6d. per dozen (13) post-free in the United Kingdom.

All communications, exchanges, etc., to be addressed to
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The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with signed articles.

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Prolonging the Agony.

As I see it, sooner or later some uncompromising propagandists will have to get together and compel modern Civilisation to face its facts. They will have to preach their gospel to all the world, saying in effect something like this:—"Look here, society's present arrangements are absolutely insane, and every one is suffering by them. They were made to suit the bow-and-arrow age, and to-day they are entirely out of date. We are all tied up in such a tangle of contradictory absurdities that it is impossible for any of us to get out of existence even a fraction of its proper joy. Who would wish to be a king, imprisoned in the straitjacket of his rank? What fun is there in being one of the idle rich, habitually bored to death, or a man of great affairs, chained to his business like the veriest galley-slave? For the smaller business man, struggling incessantly against impending failure, life is one continuous alarm, and to the labouring masses it is simply Hell. For them life has been made hopeless, and their instinctive knowledge of their helplessness crushes all the spirit out of them."

Those who have no revolutionary faith will sneer at such a programme as Utopian. Such sceptics are deeply and most deplorably mistaken. I believe that if they knew the various classes they condemn so rashly they would discover that in all of them there are countless individuals looking eagerly—one might say praying earnestly—for some sweeping change. I have never known a great strike that failed to enlist the sympathy of numerous members of every class. The vague hope that out of it there may come, somehow or other, a change for the better rouses that sympathy. I remember very distinctly what general hopes were built on the I.W.W. when it first came into existence, the thought expressed to me repeatedly being: "Here is an organisation that is, at least, in earnest, and is really trying to put up a fight." In a word, the spirit of the age is all for radical change, and it could not be otherwise. Science has revolutionised our daily lives, and with them all our thought.

For my part, I try my uttermost to get at things as they are and clear my mind of illusions. I do not expect from the classes more than sympathy and help in propaganda, because I recognise that in the vast majority of cases they cannot give more. You cannot expect the professional man to ostracise himself by making open war on his clients, nor can you expect the merchant to drive away his customers. These men are neither better nor worse than we are, the only difference being that they are more dependent on their immediate supporters than is the ordinary workingman, and therefore more constrained to prudence. What they can give, and will give if properly handled, is intellectual assistance and moral support—both assets of enormous value. They are the more valuable precisely because from the masses we do not get them. We cannot at present. The masses cannot give us intellectual assistance for the simple reason that, as yet, they do not even begin to understand.

In my view, the mental attitude of the masses is still frankly reactionary. Almost universally they are looking toward the past and, in their efforts for emancipation, copying institutions that have had their day. The peasants' standpoint is not even national; it is ultra-parochial—a standpoint which ignores the fact that scientific discovery, and especially our conquest of the air, has practically annihilated distance, obliterated boundaries, and made the whole world one. The peasants' vote now dominates the policies of the greater part of Europe, and they are policies that attempt to stem the march of evolution and therefore kick vainly against the pricks.

Trade Unionism—of which modern Socialism has become something little better than a humble follower hoping for crumbs—is the form in which the urban workers employed in factory, workshop, mine, and transportation have grouped themselves. From the first it was the tamest copy of methods adopted ages ago by their more far-sighted employers, and it remains so to this day. There is no essential difference between the manufacturers' ring and the labour "trust" which Unionism endeavours vainly to make effective, just as there is no real difference between the so-called Co-operative

Societies and the ordinary joint-stock companies in which the workers, through the medium of the bank, invest their savings. All such institutions profess that they are formed to alter things and improve the workers' fortunes. In reality they have as their one object the propping up of the system that makes the workers fortuneless. They are all for prolonging the agony, and they mock the masses with a false mirage of waters they can never, so long as the present monopolistic system endures, expect to reach.

There is not one peasant or one Trade Unionist in ten thousand who will not run, hat in hand, to the politician if he imagines that thereby he can obtain some temporary advantage—a special privilege, the supposed protection of a tariff, a charity dole, a shortening of the hours of labour, or an increase of wages. These people are the life-blood of the politician and the main bulwark of the all-devouring State. They act thus quite conscientiously, having no conception that they are cutting their own throats and strengthening the machine that crushes them. Until they understand what is the inevitable result of these pernicious activities they will continue to pursue them. It is the special task of Anarchism to promote that understanding and to show them that the State—invasive, coercive, armed to the teeth, and the devoted champion of caste and special privilege—is the deadliest of their foes.

All Trade Union thought is saturated with the doctrine of "Look to the State!" Every one of its programmes is founded on that fallacy, and all its departments are officered by men who hope, avowedly or secretly, that they also may escape from the worker's bench and become parts of the triumphant State machine. The bigger and more powerful the Labour organisation grows, the more pronounced this tendency becomes, and the great American Federation of Labour is to-day a vast nursery for office-seekers. If the Union is a large one, its secretary may find his way into Congress, and the smaller fry will graduate as policemen, secret service men, and gaolers. A great number of the men who get these posts have graduated from the Trade Union school.

The first step toward the solving of any problem is the elimination of impossible solutions, and it is useless to think of co-operation with those whose aims and methods are directly antagonistic to one's own. For my part, I have no ambition to become the Friend of the People by pretending to share their delusions, and I have the strongest conviction that it is neither to the dignity nor to the interest of our movement to play so mean and weak a part. Our business is to oppose all shams; to stand out boldly for what we conceive to be the truth; to tell these deluded masses frankly that until they take into their own hands the control of their own lives all their efforts to get the better of a system that has reduced them to economic helplessness are worse than useless.

I do not believe that such a propaganda can be made to go in the Trade Union environment, nor do I believe that we shall better things by forming Trade Unions of our own and calling them "Anarchist." Our business is not to flock in corners by ourselves as petty sectarians, but to scatter as the expounders of a universal truth. We should not lose ourselves in wildernesses of unimportant details. We have far more than we can do in opening the eyes of the blinded masses to the great facts on which our faith is founded.

W. C. O.

SYNDICALISM.

Whatever else may come of it, Syndicalism, entering once more on a phase of tense activity, is giving rise to an immense discussion. That is of inestimable value, for the first necessity for the revolutionary movement is to emerge from the vague generalities in which it has been floundering so long and face its facts. On certain essential things it must make up its mind before it can begin to talk of a united front. It must decide whether it believes in economic centralisation as inevitable—to our thought a gross misunderstanding of the industrial evolution now in process—and whether it believes in centralisation of administrative power. Does it propose to lay the axe directly to the root of slavery, or does it believe in a gradual whittling away of slavery's most objectionable features? Where does it stand on the land question—since, after all, labour applied to land is the source of all wealth—and what is its attitude toward the peasantry, who in the greater part of Europe have become a dominant power?

Such questions as these are basic; on their being correctly answered everything depends. For example, if it is true that industry is bound to become more and more centralised, as the Socialists contend, then the administration of industry will pass into fewer and fewer hands, and those few will rule the mass. If advance is to be made by gradual improvements in the worker's lot, then opportunism is the thing and Parliamentarism the proper tactic. Finally—and sooner or later we shall have to face it—until the peasant has been won over to our side a successful revolution is almost unthinkable. The town worker cannot make it single-handed. He depends on the tiller of the soil for the very bread he eats, and

that tiller holds the whip hand. Even the powerfully centralised Bolshevik Government quickly discovered that.

Perusal of numerous articles and letters arising out of the discussion shows a veritable chaos of conflicting views. Writing in *Le Libéraire* on the recent Saint-Etienne Conference, Henri Sirolle lays it down as axiomatic that industry will grow more centralised, but insists that administration must be federalised—that is to say, decentralised. We ourselves say this is a dream, for centralisation in production is inevitably accompanied by centralisation in distribution. He is in favour of the Russian Government, and believes that the French Syndicalists should join the Red International. On the other hand, he is bitterly opposed to “the fanatics, the religious bigots” who insist on applying to France the methods necessary in Russia. Again we say the two things go together. A Dictatorship implies conformity to the methods selected by the Dictator.

In the adjoining column Cl. Journet, inveighing against the politicians, declares that the majority of the present Syndicalist organisations serve only to provide places for officials and as stepping-stones to public office. He is for freeing ourselves from the entanglements of political influences, for the overthrow by Syndicalism of all capitalistic powers, and “for the destruction of the State and all its institutions in order to instal in its stead the harmonious society of Labour.” From this we pass, in another issue of the same paper, to a joint letter signed by the secretaries and treasurers of the Seine Building Syndicate and Revolutionary Organisations, the authors of which declare that action is Syndicalism’s life and that theorising only weakens it—although “we love discussion, and it is necessary”! They assert that they are disciples of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Pelloutier, and define their organisations’ aim as being “immediate action for the purpose of conquering more joy, more liberty, less slavery, with the conquest of the means of production and exchange as its final objective.” In other words, they are for whittling away and getting all they can out of the present system. Their declaration is one to which the most conservative English Trade Unionist would willingly subscribe.

We have to thank, and most sincerely we do thank, the Russian Dictatorship for having thrown these vital questions into the melting-pot of general debate; for, just as the high-handed methods of Socialists in office stimulated incalculably that distrust and hatred of the State which is now becoming universal among the masses, so the tyranny of the Dictatorship excites everywhere the gravest doubts as to the wisdom of allowing any one set of men to dominate the Labour Movement. The Red International pushes itself everywhere, resolved to rule or ruin; and this, though for the moment terribly disruptive, is clearing thought and ultimately will convince the entire movement that the rescue from slavery of the masses, individually as well as collectively, is Labour’s proper aim.

Centralisation of power as against decentralisation is the standard round which this battle really rages; and decentralisation will become finally understood as meaning not only freedom for the individual organisation of producers but also freedom for the individual producer.

The foregoing reflections seem to us much on a par with those expressed in a recent issue of *Le Réveil* by its editor, Bertoni. He commences his article with a long extract from the resolutions adopted at St. Imier—fifty years ago!—in which it was declared that Syndicalism was to be a training school for the complete overthrow of the existing system. Bertoni is of the opinion that it is impossible for Revolutionary Anarchists to separate themselves from Syndicalism. For our own modest part we also find that in life’s daily commerce it is quite impossible to separate ourselves from innumerable persons and institutions of which we highly disapprove, Life having a unity of its own which will not be denied. Time, however, has rendered Bertoni sceptical, and the recent Congress at Saint-Etienne has made him more so. He points out that “even conditional adherence to the Moscow Syndicalist International can signify nothing but the acceptance of the political dictatorship idea, which, by the force of necessity, must end in State and private Capitalism, the two being inseparable.” Swiss Syndicalism has disappointed him greatly, and he remarks—at this late date it seems almost a superfluous remark—that Syndicalism, despite its millions of adherents, was powerless to stop the War or resist the sweeping attacks to which Labour since then has been subjected. Eight-hour laws, and other ameliorations wrung from the employers at a time when labour was temporarily scarce, have now gone by the board; and all the Syndicalist leaders can say in their own defence, when confronted with their continual submissions, is that but for them things would be even worse than they are now. Without full treasuries, they insist, they cannot fight, and centralisation is needed for a “united front.” Unfortunately, centralisation, leading to an enormous multiplication of officials, keeps the treasuries empty.

It may be that we are all living in a world of illusions. Certainly if there is one class more deeply steeped in them than any other it is the working class.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

Our exchanges bristle with accounts of Anarchist arrests, hunger strikes, deportations. Roy Jules was arrested and brutally beaten up for a speech he made at the Paris meeting called on behalf of the three hunger-strikers, Loréal, Fister, and Villiers. A meeting held by the Young Anarchists for the urging of a general amnesty to all imprisoned comrades resulted in the arrest of three soldiers of the Colonial army, who were subjected to the roughest treatment. Two comrades were summoned for having distributed in Paris copies of the Cottin pamphlet issued by *Le Libéraire*, and similar action was taken at L’Ille-et-Vilaine. At Marseilles Georges Vidal has been prosecuted as the author of a poem, “A Cottin,” which appeared in both *Le Libéraire* and *Terre Libre*. The offices of the last-named were raided and the whole unsold issue of one number seized. At Reims a Spanish comrade was arrested for his activity in Syndicalist propaganda and deported. A Spanish court has sentenced him to a long term of imprisonment.

The foregoing are mere samples, from which the general situation may be judged. A Government whose one policy toward Germany seems to be that of seizure of the Ruhr and national forests by military invasion is not likely to be over-tender or scrupulous in its treatment of the Anarchist element which is conducting, indefatigably and with much self-sacrificing courage, a widespread anti-militarist propaganda. Against them it will use all means and accept help coming from any quarter, just as the Italian Government has accepted gladly the co-operation of the Fascisti banditti as against Communists, Syndicalists, and all apostles of discontent.

Our French comrades, as also our comrades in Germany, are out of all patience with those who are “lazy in action” and justify their laziness with the argument that evolution depends on material progress, that time is working automatically on the people’s behalf, and that the masses must wait until favourable conditions deign to present themselves. We note a powerful article to that effect by Erich Mühsam in the *Alarm*, and speeches by our French comrades Veber and Boudoux. Unhappily, *FREEDOM* stands almost alone in this country as the persistent opponent of the fatalistic philosophy by which submission is sought to be justified. In France there are at least four active centres of Anarchist Communist revolt, viz., the two papers *Le Libéraire* and *La Revue Anarchiste*, and “La Librairie Social” and “L’Union Anarchiste.” There are several vigorous Individualist Anarchist papers, of which E. Armand’s *L’en Dehors* is the latest but by no means the least able; and in the provinces there are numerous Libertarian Communist and Syndicalist organs, such as *Germinal*, of Amiens.

As has been the case for many months past, the French revolutionary press is occupying itself largely with the harsh treatment meted out to Anarchists and all who attack vigorously the existing disorder. To the authorities, of course, it is a matter of complete indifference what such “undesirables” choose to call themselves. Parallel with these protests runs constant discussion of the measures necessary for the formation of a united front against the common foe. In this discussion Syndicalism, of which we treat elsewhere, plays the leading part and Bolshevism is always prominent, for Moscow has thrust itself into all debates and all attempts to organise. All this seems to us entirely natural—inevitable. The present world-upheaval, which is unquestionably the first stage of a gigantic revolutionary process, moves on the largest of large lines; and the old measures of defence, framed solely for the comparatively petty conflicts with individual employers, are to-day about as serviceable as would be a bow and arrow against a bombing aeroplane. The problem of the moment is the probable collapse of Germany and Austria, the bankruptcy of France and Italy, universal economic chaos, and such a tidal-wave of unemployment as nothing hitherto can have approached. This calls for concerted action and social reconstruction planned on the most extensive scale. The question is—Are the masses equal to this task of revolutionary reconstruction, or will they leave it supinely to their official superiors and trust their future to the tender mercies of their exploiters organised under the aegis of the State?

Italy.

Luigi Fabbri publishes, in *Le Libéraire*, a comprehensive and most instructive account of proletarian parties and organisations as they exist to-day in Italy. The Italian Socialist Party is, he writes, by far the largest numerically, being in fact larger than any of the bourgeois parties since it has 120 Deputies and nearly 3,000 communes under its control. But, naturally, on anything that really matters the bourgeois parties will always act together, whereas the Socialist Party gives virtually no support to the proletariat now assailed on every side, legally by the armed forces of the Government, illegally by the bomb and revolver of the Fascisti. At this moment it is threatened with a disastrous split, a majority of the Deputies believing, against the advice of the party’s directors, that they can climb to power by allying themselves with the Clericals as against the Fascisti.

The Italian Communist Party hopes to succeed to the Socialist

Push the sale of “Freedom.”

Party's heritage, but, in Fabbri's opinion, it has little chance. In the first place, it is handicapped by the fact that it is a fragment of the old Socialist Party, and is saddled with the blame for its terrible mistakes. It checked revolutionary action in 1919-20, and it must share the onus of having made no resistance to the reaction of October-November, 1920, when it was still in party membership, many of its present leaders being then in high office. At present it has only about 20 Deputies, and accordingly it finds it profitable to talk disdainfully of Parliamentarism; but its aims and ambitions are all political. Its principal activity is displayed in bitter attacks on the Socialist Party and on all organisations it has not been able to capture.

Fabbri insists that the Communist Party, although its membership is fairly large, has little hold on the masses, whom it estranges constantly by its methods of propaganda. The Communists' tone of haughty superiority, and their assumption that they alone understand the revolutionary movement, give constant offence. Having for their motto in Italy, as in Russia, the old Jesuit maxim that "the end justifies the means," they seek to capture all other movements, and where they find themselves incapable of doing that they vilify unrestrainedly those who have the audacity to differ from them. Alas! this story is as old as the hills or ignorance itself—always conceited and intolerant. Under Daniel De Leon it killed the old Socialist Labour Party in the United States, and nothing ever played greater havoc with the once-promising I.W.W., or brought on its members more bitter persecution. No one likes being treated as a fool. Fabbri has no hesitation in saying that the Communists, while clamouring loudly for the "united front," are becoming regarded more and more as the most dangerous of disruptionists. He regards it as most pitiful, because the party has in its ranks many young proletarians who are sincerity itself and with whom co-operation is most desirable.

The Italian Anarchist movement he regards as probably having a greater number of adherents than has the Communist Party, but he grants that its forces are not all organised "durably and controllably." To us this last word, "controllably," is detestable. From benevolent control to ruthless dictatorship is never more than a step, and the dread of organisation—other than on a purely voluntary basis—entertained by so many thoughtful Anarchists springs from recognition of that fact. At its last Congress at Ancona the Italian Anarchist Union claimed a membership of 18,000, and Fabbri points out that there are numerous groups, especially in Lombardy, Piedmont, and Tuscany, apart from those Anarchists who have emigrated to Switzerland and America, who do not belong to the Union. He himself considers that the movement's weakness is due to its lack of organisation, and he holds that the Anarchists must also bear their share of the blame for the failure of the 1919-20 revolution. "Perhaps," he remarks, "they did not understand their real power, and when they came to realise it their moment had passed." In his view, the Union has a distinct influence on proletarian thought and activities; but he considers that it is wasting too much of its energy on internal and personal squabbles. Unfortunately, that is also an old story—everywhere.

The Republican Party is a factor, and Fabbri is careful to point out that this is not, as in other countries, bourgeois, conservative, and anti-proletarian. Being unrelentingly hostile to the monarchy, it has been able to preserve its old revolutionary traditions, and, "being animated by a strong sentiment of liberty," in labour conflicts it sides always with the workers as against their employers. Unhappily, it exhausts itself on Parliamentarism, and there it has little influence, only some six or seven Deputies coming from its ranks. Many of the workers belong to it, especially those living in the old Papal States—Trieste, Venetia, and Tuscany. It will surprise many to learn that Fabbri regards D'Annunzio's "legionaries" as drawing nearer to the Republicans. More and more they are ranging themselves in opposition to Fascism and Monarchy.

Syndicalism has four organisations—the General Confederation of Labour, the Italian Syndicalist Union, the Italian Labour Union, and the Syndicate of Italian Railway Workers. The first-named has the largest membership, has an alliance-pact with the Socialist Party, and is the most moderate. Fabbri holds it mainly responsible for the proletarian disaster of 1920, says that to-day it dreads rather than hopes for revolutionary action, and can see no salvation for the proletariat except in collaboration with the bourgeois parties. The Italian Communists support the Confederation but are in a minority and have organised everywhere special Syndicalist groups for the carrying on of their own propaganda.

The Italian Syndicalist Union had, in 1920, a membership of about 500,000, but, in Fabbri's opinion, has much influence outside its own ranks. It disapproves of the reformist tendencies of the Confederation officials and is for direct action, being largely dominated by the thought of Pelloutier, the French apostle of revolutionary Syndicalism. Many of the Anarchists are active in it and often they act as secretaries or fill other official positions. In the main the Union is sympathetic toward Anarchism, but there is a small element anxious to bring it under the Moscow yoke. Fabbri considers that it would be a most important revolutionary force were

it not that many of the localities in which it is strongest have been ravaged ruthlessly by the Fascisti.

The Syndicate of Italian Railway Workers is probably about 170,000 strong and has rendered magnificent service to the working class by the solidarity it has displayed and by its audacious initiative, directed mainly against the State. At present it is passing through a critical period, and probably will be occupied for some time to come chiefly with its own trade affairs. For the rest, it has laboured to create a neutral ground on which all can stand together, and for that purpose has founded the Labour Alliance.

Of the Italian Labour Union Fabbri says simply that it was born in 1918, that it consists mainly of Syndicalists and Socialists who supported the war, that it has a comparatively small membership, and that its activities are chiefly political. His comments on the Republican Party will apply to it.

The question is as to the immediate future, and the worst of all policies is that of doing nothing. Fascism acts, but if the workers would only realise their own strength and break, of their own initiative, into free, spontaneous action, they could throw off not only the burden of the Fascisti but all the present nightmare of destruction and death.

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Printed & Published by the Freedom Press, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N. W. 1.