

Freedom

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NOTES.

Our Empty Countryside

We have frequently said that there is no excuse for shipping thousands of unemployed to the Colonies to get a living on the land, as there are millions of acres in this country that could be cultivated by them if it were not that the giant Monopoly bars the way. Just as fish, meat, and other foods are allowed to rot so as to keep up prices, so land is held out of cultivation in order to maintain the high rents of the land that is let. A writer in the *Daily Telegraph* says:—"One of the strangest sights to the Colonial or the visitor from Western Europe is the immense tracts of waste land he sees when travelling in this country. To both it is a constant source of astonishment that, with our huge population and our huge purchases of foodstuffs from abroad, such wastes should be allowed to exist." He says that vast areas of it could be brought into cultivation, and that very much worse land is being cultivated in the Colonies. Most of our moors and commons are merely deficient in lime, and if they received dressings of ordinary chalk or lime, coupled with the use of the phosphatic and potassic manures used habitually by the modern farmer, their appearance would be completely changed and they would grow excellent crops of corn or market garden crops. "The most striking example is in Wales, where millions of acres of so-called mountain land support nothing but a few sheep, for want of dressings of alkaline phosphates." He admits it would require the expenditure of a great amount of capital, but it would be a remunerative investment. One does not expect land monopoly to be mentioned in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the writer simply deals with the subject from an economic point of view. But his article supports Kropotkin's contention that, if cultivated as it might be, the land of this country could support all its present inhabitants and many more. But until the people are prepared to demand free access to the land it is not much use telling them what they could do with it.

The Trades Union Congress.

This Congress was held at Hull during the first week of this month. Two or three of the subjects discussed stand out from the rest, particularly the decision to give larger powers to the General Council in industrial disputes. The Communists have advocated it because they favour centralisation and hope some day to capture the Council, as a stepping-stone to a Dictatorship. Trade Union officials have opposed it hitherto, as they feared it would weaken their own position in the Unions. But the unofficial strikes which have caused them so much anxiety have driven them to look to the General Council as an ally in the task of enforcing discipline among their unruly members. So, instead of the new powers being a revolutionary move, they are really designed to check the revolutionary element. Years ago, when Labour representation was first suggested, Trade Union officials opposed it; but when they could no longer prevent it, they said: "Labour Members? Of course. And where could you find better ones than us!" Now the Trade Union elders on the Council say: "Dictators? Of course. Happy to oblige." But "firemen" would be a more apt title. Another interesting item on the agenda was the Workers' Charter, passed unanimously by the Congress. Its objects are public ownership of natural resources and services (nationalisation of land, mines, and minerals), State and municipal provision of social necessities and services, with adequate participation of the workers in control and management; a legal 44-hour week and a legal minimum wage for each industry or occupation; maintenance for the unemployed; adequate housing accommodation; free education from elementary schools to universities; adequate maintenance and compensation in industrial accidents and diseases; and pensions for all at 60 and for widowed mothers and dependents. Our criticism of all these schemes is that they leave the capitalist system untouched. Many capitalists would vote for every item in the Charter, and Anti-Socialists like Lloyd George

may one day put it into force to stave off the Revolution. Instead of helping to destroy the wage system, it simply aims at making it tolerable—an impossible task.

The Communist Bubble Bursts.

The resignation of Walton Newbold and Miss Wilkinson from the Communist Party is a sign that the Communist ship is sinking. Newbold says "there will be no further revolution in Europe for many a long year." And we will add that, as far as this country is concerned, no one is more responsible for such a situation than the party of which he was such a prominent member. Their narrow sectarianism, their dogmatic futilities, and their abominable intolerance made it impossible for any other organisation to co-operate with them. They mistook violent language for revolutionary fervour, and with most of them noise was synonymous with argument. Nursed on the pure milk of Marxism, they alone had the true gospel; they alone knew the road to the Social Revolution. Inspired by periodical doses of hot air at congresses of the Third International at Moscow, they returned with well-lined pockets to this benighted country, to give their credulous followers rose-tinted pictures of the Soviet paradise where the capitalists had been wiped off the face of the earth and the peasants and workers ruled the land. At Moscow they vied with other delegates in telling lurid stories of how the workers of their respective countries were itching to follow the lead of their Russian brothers, until at last Ivan Ivanovich firmly believed that Soviets would soon be triumphant from the Behring Sea to the Atlantic Ocean. Even when the New Economic Policy was introduced in Russia they tried to keep up the illusion, and only a few days ago Jim Larkin returned from Moscow with the news that the Third International had appointed twenty-five men to rule the world, of whom he was one! Now the bubble has burst they are trying to link up their bankrupt Red Trade Union International with the "Yellow" Federation at Amsterdam; and we shall probably soon see the Third International making overtures for a deal with the Second. Thus ends a revolutionary gamble in which power was the prize and the workers were merely counters.

Stemming the Tide.

A Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Oxford has been discussing the question of religion and science, and some of the speakers were very frank. Dean Inge said "it was difficult for a man to accept orthodox Christianity as the Churches presented it to him without treachery to his scientific conscience. . . . Intellectual honesty was to a large extent drained out of the Church." We will take his word for it. Professor McBride said "it was of the utmost importance to the Church to discover whether or not the evolutionary view was well founded." He gave his own view of evolution, which he said had nothing to do with the "so-called evolution of Herbert Spencer." The Church can never forgive Spencer. Darwin was content merely to state the facts of evolution, so he was buried in Westminster Abbey. Spencer, however, insisted on showing that evolution had knocked the bottom out of Christianity; so there was no room in the Abbey for him. Another speaker, Dr. J. A. Hadfield, said that a large number of religious people are still infantile in their religious outlook. "I think it is a disgrace to religion if it encourages people to remain in that frame of mind." We, on the contrary, look upon it as quite natural that the Church should encourage it, for only folk with infantile minds could believe the religion it teaches. When scientists had gained their freedom from priestly domination, their investigations exposed the falsity of the Biblical story of the Creation and the fall of man. Miracles appeal now only to children, and men high in the councils of the Church openly repudiate the virgin birth of Christ and his resurrection from the dead. What is there now left of orthodox Christianity? Nothing. But the Church is fighting hard to stem the flood which threatens to sweep it away, and members of it like the Modern Churchmen are trying to find a God whom they can fit in somehow with the teachings of science and so provide them with an excuse for drawing their stipends.

War to the Knife.

The difficulty with Dictators is that they are never in a position to give the public what it wants, being fettered by their party creeds. For example, the Communist and Socialist movement is convinced that private property must be abolished, and that the land and all the instruments of production and distribution must be owned collectively and administered by some centralised authority for the general good. Thus and thus alone, in its opinion, can wage-slavery be overthrown. Whoever, therefore, aspires to leadership in that movement must subscribe wholeheartedly to that particular creed. To it he, supposedly the champion of emancipation, is himself enslaved.

Personally I hold that such a Collectivism would result in colossal power for the few in control of the administrative machine, and in abject slavery for the masses, whose very existence would be at the mercy of their official rulers. But whether I am right or wrong in this is immaterial, the only point worth discussing being whether the public wants that particular rearrangement, or can be made to want it. For my part I am very certain that, in the bulk, it has no confidence in cut-and-dried Utopias, constructed by a minority which imagines that it knows exactly what the majority ought to have.

Dictators cater, of necessity, to their own class-market. Thus, the Russian Government must bend to Communist opinion, our Socialists have to study all the vagaries of modern Collectivism, and Syndicalists and Trade Unionists are forced to fit their policies to the supposed interests of organised Labour. Inevitably these people are all sectarians and opportunists.

Now, the public is not a sect. It has certain fundamental needs, and struggles incessantly to satisfy them. Primarily it clamours always for a squarer deal, for more equality of opportunity, and not for greater restriction. "I have never had a chance," says to himself the man in the street; and at first he merely whines about it. Later on, as the result of constant brooding, he grows indignant. Still later his pent-up indignation breaks into open protest, and finally he understands that if it is all to end in talk he might as well have kept his breath to cool his porridge. Probably we are now passing into that final stage.

Of certain facts, however, every ordinary man nowadays is well aware. He understands quite clearly that he is being robbed, and universally he desires to see it stopped. If you tell him that such and such a duke receives more in royalties than his miners get in wages, he will admit instantly that it is an infernal outrage which ought to be abolished. If you remark that another duke owns four hundred acres in the heart of London, from which he derives an income of fully a million pounds a year for doing nothing, he will agree that it is monstrous. He recognises just as clearly as we do that he is being squeezed by all sorts of monopolists, and he has a most natural objection to being squeezed. He is very positive that if it wasn't for these hold-ups he would be much better off than he is at present. Perhaps that is as far as he will go, but permit me to remark that it is very far. Never shall we find a more solid foundation on which to build.

My point is that these simple truths must be the backbone of every successful movement, that they represent the instinctive aspirations of the masses, and that those aspirations may be trusted. A man says to me: "I am starving, and I must eat"; or, "I am perishing with cold, and I must have clothing and shelter." Instantly I agree with him, and the only comment I can pass is that he, and others like him, must insist on things being so ordered that individually they shall be always in a position to satisfy those elemental needs. The man goes straight to the essential, and on essentials it is impossible to differ. He has voiced one of Life's most patent facts which none can contradict, and thereby he has supplied us with a platform on which all can unite.

In reply, however, I also may state an elemental truth, namely, that without human labour applied to natural resources Life cannot be sustained. No man will venture to deny that statement, and again the very simplicity of the position compels agreement. But he may answer that, if he works, he wants to get whatever his labour produces, or its full and just equivalent; and that position I in my turn shall be unable to dispute. "Get rid of the parasites, who at present manage to get so much for doing nothing," I shall tell him, and I might perhaps add that this is the time of the year at which the working bees dispense with the now useless drones who have performed their special function, that of fertilising the mothers of the hive.

Let me remind our readers that the foregoing is the original basis of the entire Labour movement, which had as its motto "Labour is the only title to reward." That implied free access by every individual worker to whatever might be necessary for the conduct and completion of his task. That also implied the elimination of the unproductive parasite, automatically and painlessly, because where all are equally masters of the opportunity to supply their own wants by their own labour none would support the idler.

All elemental facts are self-evident, and on a clear position all

can stand united; but I can find no solid footing on the clouds into which a swarm of dogmatic sectarians have transported the revolutionary movement. How can I co-operate with the most powerful organisation in the country when it decrees dictatorially that only those who hold a membership card in its Union shall be allowed to work? Others will have none of me unless I advocate the capital levy, the eight-hour day, the minimum wage Bill, and so forth. Nearly all of these my intellect compels me to cast aside as being quite unworkable. All of them I am forced to reject as injurious to the cause I have at heart, since they seduce the unthinking into playing with the foliage when they should be hacking at the root. The supporters of such measures are doing their utmost to shore up a building whose fall, at the earliest moment possible, I ardently desire. As the editor of this paper once remarked to me, they have converted a movement for the emancipation of humanity into an ambulance wagon.

With such people I, for one, will not co-operate. I detest their sectarianism, with its worship of catchwords, its pedantry and bigotry. I despise their greed for office. I have no use for editors and organisers whose one thought is subscribers and dues-paying members. As I see it, they are degrading a great movement to the level of a bargain-counter, and against them I am in full revolt.

The Anarchist movement is slowly gathering its forces for that attack, and training itself by rigid discussion of fundamentals, with which all its European press to-day is full. It is shedding the sectarian shell it has inherited from Socialism, and striking out into the realities of Life. It is beginning to study seriously the land question, which it has hitherto neglected deplorably; for until the land question is settled all talk about freedom of production is a waste of breath. Also it will have to study far more carefully the money question, for until the producers are at liberty to make their own arrangements for the exchange and distribution of their product there can be no such thing as economic freedom.

These problems, when tackled honestly from the standpoint of fairplay for everybody, are really very simple; and when presented simply they will win acceptance everywhere, for in the mass men are hungering for just that single thing—fair play. But the Socialist movement, rigidly sectarian and caught in a vast net of fallacies in which long years of partisan propaganda have enmeshed it, will fight us tooth and nail. So much the better. Fight puts fallacies to the test, and shows them up as the pernicious humbugs they truly are. Between the advocates of Freedom and the believers in Dictatorship there should be always war to the knife.

WM. C. OWEN.

THE INDIAN PRESS.

DEAR COMRADE—It is a cardinal principle of all civilised countries that the citizens have a right to enjoy freedom of thought. A free press is a distinguishing mark between civilised and barbarian States. The control of the press is the security of a corrupt and tyrannical Government. No man or woman who hopes to see a burning love of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity will be satisfied until backward countries gain a chance to discuss the ideas of the modern world without the interference of their Governments.

Mr. Lloyd George condemned the Russian Government for making laws against the press, but this great personality has forgotten that the British ruling class are not in favour of freedom of thought, and British subjects are not basking in the sunshine of free thought, and under the British flag we realise the darkness caused by the absence of a free press. The following extract from the Indian Penal Code, Section 124A, will show this clearly:—"Whoever by words, either spoken or written; or by signs, or by visible representation or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection toward His Majesty or his government as established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life, or any shorter time; to which a fine may be added, or without a fine."

Mr. T. A. Jackson, in "The British Empire," says:—"In 1910 a Press Act was introduced to control the press, and, according to the Press Association of India, over 350 presses and 300 newspapers have been penalised under the Act; £40,000 have been demanded in securities, and over 500 publications have been proscribed. In the Andaman Islands—the Siberia of India—many editors and writers are undergoing long term or life sentences."

In the name of the law, the authorities have destroyed all the copies found in India of "The Awakening of India," by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and of the "Open Letter" to Gandhi, by Tolstoy! England is supposed to be the mother of freedom, but by the injustice of her sons in India thousands of editors and journalists are suffering heavy penalties.

It is hypocrisy to say that the Empire is a Commonwealth of people. The very word "Empire" suggests domination on the one hand and subjection on the other. No suggestion of brotherhood is manifest in the word. We find in Empire race hatred, brute force, fraud, and suppression of freedom of thought; therefore nobody could imagine an Empire as a healthy and united Commonwealth of peoples.—Yours for the Cause,

N. J. UPADHYAYA.

Thrashing Out the Problems.

In "The Octopus," Frank Norris gave us many years ago the story of California's conquest by the railway Trust, and in a striking chapter he puts the famous president of that once all-powerful monopoly on his defence. It is a simple defence, viz., that railways build themselves; that, like the wheat they distribute, the demand for their services creates the supply; and that, regardless of individuals, the peoples must be fed. The work, the end to be attained, is everything; the worker, personally nothing. If he can give good value to the public he may share in the general prosperity. If, for any one of countless reasons, he can no longer give good value, to the scrap-heap with him.

This is the essence of the Collective philosophy, which for more than a century has dominated civilisation's thought. Business is business, and cannot let sentiment stand in its way. Contracts must be kept and jobs put through, whoever may be broken in the process. The greatest good of the greatest number is the slogan, and any incidental injury that may befall individuals, or helpless minorities, cuts no figure when measured by the general gain. This, we repeat it, is the Collective philosophy which hitherto has hypnotised the ages' thought. It came into vogue with the factory era. It is the creed by which Big Business swears, and more than half the so-called revolutionary world still worships at its shrine. Above all, the Socialists; for they think only in terms of production on the highest scale, and their dream is the absorption of all industrial activity by the Universal State.

Luckily there is revolt. There was bound to be; if only because of the misery this disregard of individual happiness has wrought. To this idolatry of mass production we owe the modern wage-slave, imprisoned in his factory and tied to his machine; this helpless slave to whom the master, himself the victim of the mass forces set in motion, cries desperately:—"Produce! Produce!! No matter what, so long as I can sell it. No matter for whom, so long as I can get him to pay the price. If I can find no market, you must fight to create one. You live to work. You can exist only as material wants are multiplied. This is Life's meaning, and it has no other."

We Anarchists understand that by no possibility can so false a philosophy endure for long; and against it everywhere we proclaim ourselves in high revolt. Everywhere we urge the masses to shoulder the task of shaping their own lives; to get out, at any cost, of the economic helplessness which at present renders them the easy prey of every robber; to determine that they will no longer be a driven herd. Modern Anarchism, tutored by the never-ending failures of all revolutionary movements which have put their faith in the mere enrolment of numbers, is now developing a strong literature of individual revolt. It is submitting to a searching criticism the theories it inherited from Socialism, with which it tried so long, and vainly, to establish the "united front." The collapse of the German Social Democratic Party taught it much, and the Russian developments of the last seven years have forced it to think far more furiously than ever. Indeed, to think hard, and to get the workers' heads out of the clouds, is certainly a great part of Anarchism's special mission.

For the moment the place of honour should be given, we feel, to E. Armand, editor of *L'En Dehors*, for his latest work, "L'Initiation Individualiste Anarchiste," is a real contribution to revolutionary thought. It tackles all the problems, courageously and clearly. Its very comprehensiveness renders criticism no easy task, and for that reason alone we still delay the full review it ought to have. In the French and Italian revolutionary Press, however, it is quoted repeatedly, and evidently it has set in motion a flood of thoroughly healthy and much-needed controversy. Armand is an indomitable champion of individual liberty, as being necessarily the corner-stone of Anarchism, which is a no-rules movement. On this we have to take a resolute stand, for without it we cannot hope to develop the strength necessary to the arduous task we have on hand.

Under the editorship of Malatesta, *Pensiero e Volontà* has been full of spirited debate upon this subject. Merlino argues vigorously that until we can make up our minds on the apparently conflicting philosophies of Individualism and Communism we shall continue to be, as we have been so long, a house divided against itself. Malatesta, on the other hand, thinks the differences exaggerated, and cites many cases in which Individualist and Communist Anarchists have united against the common foe. As it seems to us, Merlino has the better of the argument, for the main objection to half-hearted alliances is that they break precisely when solidarity is needed most.

In the papers named, and in such publications as *L'Idée*

Anarchiste, which is singularly rich in articles by noted Anarchist writers, the doctrine of the "class struggle" is examined exhaustively. Our interpretation of that doctrine differs widely from the one promulgated so assiduously by members of the Socialist and Communist parties. Anarchists generally have no belief in the rigid categories those parties have drawn up, placing in one the entire employing class and in the other all who work for wages. We think such a dogmatic sundering of the sheep from the wolves ridiculous. We realise that it never stands the test of action, for in innumerable cases the worker's job depends on his employer's solvency, and he will not wreck his job. Moreover, it is clear to us that the strongest and most reliable union is one based on similarity of aspirations and ideals. Many who are listed as belonging to the employing class are with us in their desire for some great revolutionary change. On the other hand, many wage-workers are reactionary to the very marrow of their bones.

Syndicalism is also being discussed extensively, and on that subject there is sure to be much difference of opinion. Many still build high hopes on it, while others see in it only the old Trade Unionism thinly disguised, to suit the taste of the more radical. In *L'Idée Anarchiste*, under the heading "The Revolution is not a question of Class," D. A. De Santillan sets out the latter view. He writes, in part: "We protest against the Syndicalists who tell us that the Revolution is a class question for the same reason that we protest against the Bolsheviks or Social Democrats when they declare it is a party question—their particular party. We have seen the Dictatorship of the Proletariat become finally the Lenin Dictatorship. If Syndicalism were to get into the saddle we should find, even more than now, class understood as applying only to the syndicalised workers, to the executive committees, and to the cleverest and most astute of those committees. And just as Lenin could say, 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat! I am the Dictatorship,' so we should have some Syndicalist saying, 'The Class! I am the Class.'"

In *La Revue Anarchiste* J. Baillot is writing a series of powerful articles on the inevitable failure of all revolutionary movements that entrust themselves to politicians. "In truth," he writes, "the bourgeoisie will be saved if the proletariat allows itself to be lulled to sleep by the narcotic phraseology of the politicians; if it follows their advice and sends them to Parliament to manufacture for it its happiness. On the other hand, the bourgeoisie will be lost if the proletariat, distrusting its advances and rejecting resolutely the twaddle spouted by Parliamentary Socialists and State Communists, places all its hopes and concentrates all its energies on the Syndicalist general strike." Baillot is a believer in Syndicalism as the force that will "break the unity and stop the march of capitalist civilisation."

Conspicuous in the last-named review is an article on "Social Toil and Individual Work," by André Naudy, an uncompromising Individualist. Socialism he condemns as being the sacrifice of all individualism to the collectivity—"to this new idol, Humanity." Syndicalism he regards as even worse, since it seeks to impose on all the mentality of the syndicated. He deplores bitterly the collectivist tendencies of the age which are resulting in our judging men and women no longer by their characters as human beings, but by their capacity as servants of the State. As we see it, he and Baillot are at opposite poles of thought.

Without exception, however, all these Anarchist writers agree that the struggle is to escape from slavery, and that slavery is rendered possible by the economic dependence of the exploited on the exploiters, who are still permitted to monopolise the entire mechanism of production and exchange. As Eltzbacher points out in his standard work, all Anarchists are at one in their belief that this monopoly finds in the State its great defender; and all Anarchists, therefore, seek to weaken at every point the power and authority of that coercive institution. On the other hand, the Socialists and Communists are striving incessantly to enlarge its powers and make its authority supreme. Between these conflicting philosophies the masses stand irresolutely helpless, understanding neither and hoping only that some kindly benefactor will throw open the prison doors and let them out.

Hilaire Belloc, who has some reputation as an observer, has recently expressed the opinion that all Europe is longing for a return to Monarchy; that it is ready to fall back on that paternal feudalism under which the chosen few assumed the guardianship of the disinherited many; that, for the sake of rescue from the present chaos, it will only too gladly confide its destinies once more to "those above." Should events prove him correct, none will have contributed so lavishly to that deplorable reaction as the Socialists, who are all for multiplying controls, and the Communists who, if they could, would discipline every one of us.

W. C. O.

FREEDOM.

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The Sacred Treaty of Versailles.

At last the agreement which puts in force the Dawes scheme of Reparations has been signed by all concerned, and the loan of £40,000,000 to Germany is now assured. A respite has been granted to the people of Germany until 1928, but from that year onward for an indefinite period a sum of £125,000,000 a year has to be paid to their conquerors by the present generation of Germans, their children, and their children's children. "Woe to the vanquished!" The German Government has been forced to sign this agreement because of the occupation of the Ruhr. British Governments have always insisted that this occupation was illegal, but by signing this agreement the present Government guarantee to France the reparations made possible by the illegal occupation! Thus is the Entente Cordiale renewed and the two hearts of MacDonald and Herriot made to beat as one! Thus is the sanctity of the Treaty of Versailles acknowledged!

With the exception of the miners, who fear the dislocation of the coal export trade, hardly any section of the Labour Movement has raised a protest against this permanent enslavement of the German workers. The *Labour Press Service*, an official organ of the Labour Party, says the Agreement is a great personal triumph for Mr. MacDonald, as it embodies "a negotiated and not an enforced peace. . . . It provides that reparations will be paid in the prescribed way." But the writer admits that "if default is declared France has secured freedom of action to re-enter the Ruhr." In other words, the re-occupation of the Ruhr is to be a permanent threat to insure against a default in the payments. And the Labour Party writer calls this a "negotiated" peace!

What short memories the workers have! When out of office the Labour Party repeatedly demanded the revision of the Treaty of Versailles. At a special conference in December, 1921, it denounced the "scheme of reparations imposed on Germany," and urged the Government "to take steps at once in connection with our former Allies to revise the territorial and economic clauses in the Treaty of Versailles." The Annual Conference of the Labour Party in 1922 condemned the Peace Treaties for having "crushed and impoverished the peoples of Central Europe," and passed a resolution in favour of the revision of the Treaty of Versailles. Again, at the Annual Conference held in London, in June, 1923, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald moved on behalf of the Executive Committee a resolution renewing the Labour Party's "repeated declarations on the reparations question," and calling for a world conference to "revise the Peace Treaties in accordance with the need of European political and economic reconstruction." Finally, in the party's manifesto at the General Election last December, this demand for a conference to revise the Versailles Treaty was restated. But as soon as the Labour Government took office all this was forgotten. It is true that Mr. Arthur Henderson mentioned it when standing as a candidate at a by-election, but he was promptly repudiated in the House of Commons by Mr. MacDonald. And in the Franco-British Memorandum of June 9th last (issued after the British Premier's sudden visit to M. Herriot in Paris) it was stated that the necessity of gaining the confidence of subscribers to the loan under the Dawes scheme was "not incompatible with respect for the Treaty of Versailles, a violation of which would not only shake confidence in the solemn undertakings of nations, but would pave the way for a fresh conflict." The workers of Germany had to be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, and the Labour Party organ lies to its readers to disguise its treachery.

There are, however, a few members of the Labour Party who refuse to hide the truth, notably Mr. E. D. Morel, whose writings have thrown a strong light on the origins of the War. Speaking in the House of Commons on the Reparations demanded from Germany, he said: "Think of the basis on which

that demand is made, that Germany was solely responsible for the war, that she plotted the war, and that all the other belligerents were as innocent as lambs. Does any intelligent man outside Germany, let alone inside Germany, believe that to-day? It has been rejected by every historian, both in this country, and in every country, I think, except France." But who is going to pay reparations? he asked. "It is the common men and women and children of Germany, the working classes of Germany." Mr. Morel quoted from the speech of an American Senator, in which it was pointed out that 20 per cent. of those people in Germany on whom reparations fall were born since the war broke out, and that 80 per cent. were women and children when the war broke out. "How can you build a temple of peace upon such rotten moral foundations as these?" In his opinion, this policy of punishment, going on again, now restarted under the Dawes Report, cannot have any end but that of another European war.

The occupation of the Ruhr caused intense misery among the workers of Germany, but the children were the principal sufferers. According to a report issued by the American Friends Service Committee, dated January 14th, 1924, there has been a reduction of the birth-rate from about 30 per 1,000 to 15 per 1,000, accompanied by an increase in stillbirths and a great diminution in the proportion of mothers who can nurse their babies, due to insufficient nourishment. "One in ten of the babies born alive in Berlin is given over to an institution to raise because of poverty of the family." It is not uncommon to find 15 per cent., and even 25 per cent., of the children under two years of age in hospitals, suffering from lung tuberculosis. This has been a development of the past 12 to 18 months, and is a new experience in the hospitals visited. "From infancy to school age marked rickets is so common, anemia, listlessness, poor muscular tone, sunken eyes and emaciation are so generally seen, that one loses a sense of proportion and is inclined to underestimate the extent of depreciation of vitality which is almost everywhere obvious among the children of the wage earners." Nearly 20 per cent. of children applying at six years for admission to school have to be sent home as unfit to attend.

And this people, whose great crime was to trust their rulers, now out of harm's way, are doomed to slave for an indefinite term without hope of relief in order to satisfy the demands of a gang of heartless financiers and politicians who gambled in the War. A feeling of solidarity would have prevented the Labour Movement of this country from allowing a Labour Premier to fasten the Dawes scheme on the workers of Germany, but we are disgusted to find one of their official organs saying that in signing the Agreement "the Prime Minister has achieved a great personal triumph and a genuine victory of principle." We hope the Labour Movement will soon realise the true meaning of this damnable scheme and insist on sweeping it away with the rotten system on which it is founded.

NO FALSE ALLIANCES.

There are Anarchists—we might say so-called Anarchists—who think that, as the masses are at present incapable of organising Anarchistically and defending the Revolution by Anarchistic methods, we ourselves ought to seize power and "impose Anarchy by force." I shall keep on repeating that he who believes in the educational influence of brute force, or in the promotion and development of liberty by governmental aid, may be whatever he choose to be, and may even be in the right as opposed to us, but certainly cannot call himself an Anarchist, unless he wishes to lie to himself and others.

. There may be among us some, and certainly they are not of the best, who, through lack of understanding or for other reasons less agreeable to confess, would stand in with the triumphant party and seek to have a finger in the governmental pie. All they would accomplish, however, would be the betrayal of the cause they mean to defend; as certain pretended Russian Anarchists have done; as the Socialists who ally themselves with the bourgeoisie, to help along Socialism, are doing; as do those Republicans who give themselves to the Monarchy, that they may pave the way to the Republic!

There has been formed in South America an "Argentine Libertarian Alliance" which claims that it has progressed beyond "dogmatic and ossified Anarchism," and that it "represents a new historical departure in Anarchism." We have not received this association's "Constitutive Manifesto," and cannot with full knowledge pass judgment on its announced "iron concepts, elaborated in fifteen years devoted to an ardent, bold, and profound revision of Anarchism's doctrinal values." We hope to be able to do this later. At present it appears to us that they are trying to do what has already been tried in Europe, and that quickly proved abortive, namely, to reconcile Anarchism with Dictatorship and similar Moscow products.

E. MALATESTA, in *Pensiero e Volontà*.

The Persecutions in Russia.

[We have decided to print the following reply to Guy Aldred instead of the "Open Letter," by Alexander Berkman, who asks us to attach his signature to it. The "Open Letter" was published in the August issue of the *Commune*.]

The Glasgow *Commune* of June last contains an article by its editor, Guy Aldred, entitled "Persecution in Russia." The article begins by saying that "it is time to deal boldly and simply with the allegations of despotism and imprisonment of revolutionists that are brought against the Soviet Government of Russia."

How does the "boldness and simplicity" of the editor express itself? In a eulogy of Lenin and Trotsky and in a slanderous attack on Makhno and the Committee for the Defence of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia. We are not aware that "boldness" is necessary for the repetition of the calumnies and vilification which Moscow has been spreading against its opponents. What is necessary for a man who acts as an editor is some intelligence and some knowledge of the international events with which every thinking working man is now conversant. Yet the editor of the *Commune* is woefully lacking in these things. For if it is not ignorance which causes him to rehash the stale Bolshevik lies and to deny the existence of the International Working Men's Association and the groups comprising the Joint Committee of Defence, then it is certainly wilful lying.

The editor of the *Commune* goes even further than the Bolsheviks: he denies things which Moscow admits. For instance, their—in their own words—"relentless war against Anarchists, Anarcho-syndicalists," and other political dissenters. That decree was introduced to the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party by Lenin and has been energetically applied ever since.

It is therefore not mere "allegations" on the part of the Defence Committee of the political victims of Soviet misrule; it is a charge backed by facts and figures which have for years been coming from Russia, and which have been carefully sifted, examined, and placed before the world as one of the many black pages in the history of Bolshevik treachery and brutality. Thousands of revolutionists who have bled for the Revolution and have helped to put the Bolsheviks upon the throne in the Kremlin have either been done to death or are till this day languishing in Soviet prisons, in the frozen North, and in ghastly concentration camps throughout Russia. If Guy Aldred does not know these facts, he has his own ignorance to blame. He has no right to impute "fraudulent methods" to those who refuse to cling to the coat-tails of Moscow.

In speaking of Nestor Makhno, Aldred says: "Some time ago the Anarchists made a hero of Makhno. This man proves his revolutionary heroism by serving as general in the Polish White Guards, a tool of French reaction." Where does Aldred get his data if not from the Bolshevik Press? If he were a sincere seeker of the truth, as he pretends to be, he would have taken the trouble to investigate these calumnies against Makhno—calumnies the Bolsheviks have maintained for years, except the periods when they needed Makhno to help them fight back the counter-revolutionists.

But the whole article of Aldred shows that he is not in the least interested in doing justice to Makhno or to the other political exiles in the tender clutches of the Tcheka. His sole aim is to exonerate Moscow at any cost, even at the cost of truth and crying facts. However, the Russian comrades in Berlin, who, after yearlong service to the Revolution, have been deported and set adrift by the rulers of Russia, will themselves pay their "respects" to the editor of the *Commune* concerning Makhno. And we are certain that the "Freedom" and the "Worker's Friend" groups, attacked by Aldred, will also know how to deal with him. We wish in particular to expose the utter ignorance of the man in his statement that the International Working Men's Association "does not exist and the German Syndicalists know it does not exist."

The International Working Men's Association was organised at the Syndicalist Congress held in Berlin in December, 1922. The Congress was attended by delegates from Argentine, Denmark, Germany, France, Holland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, Spain, and Tchecho-Slovakia. The International Working Men's Association is the continuation of the First International. The spirit and principles which inspired the Congress and which are the guiding force in the activities of the International Working Men's Association, are those of Bakunin

and are irrevocably opposed to the ideas and methods of Marx, now being applied by the Third International.

Indeed, the International Working Men's Association exists and, what is very much to the point, it worries the bosses of the Communist and Red Trade Union Internationals not a little. Lozovsky has done his utmost to induce the organisations affiliated with the International Working Men's Association to join Moscow; and when that failed, he took refuge in the old Jesuitic methods of the Bolsheviks. The Press output of the Red Trade Union International is filled with gall and slander against the labour bodies affiliated with the Berlin International. Lozovsky, Bukharin, and the other Moscow leaders devote a good deal of their time to denouncing the International Working Men's Association.

If Guy Aldred does not know all these facts, he is very ignorant indeed. But in that case he is not fit to be an editor. We call upon the readers of the *Commune* to demand of Guy Aldred that he inform himself a bit and that he bring proof for his accusations—or that he stand condemned as an ignoramus and liar.

RUDOLF ROCKER.
AUGUSTIN SOUCHY.
EMMA GOLDMAN.
ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

Berlin, July, 1924.

We have received a letter from Guy Aldred, dated August 2, asking if our comrade Wm. C. Owen is prepared to meet him in debate on "Anarchism and the Workers' Duty towards the State." As Anarchists, we cannot imagine that the workers have any duty towards the State; but we replied saying that Owen would not debate with him on any question. Guy Aldred also said he was prepared to affirm "that the persons participating in the so-called London protest against Bolshevik atrocities are not Anarchists," and he is ready to defend his title to being called an Anarchist. We are not in the least interested in his personal opinion on these matters, but are very anxious that he should not run away from the vital subject under discussion—the persecution of Anarchists and other revolutionists in Russia. Now that the four comrades who sign the above reply have vouched for the accuracy of the matter published in our protest, we await his reply. But we shall refuse to be drawn away from this point by any side issues.

In the August issue of the *Commune* Aldred says that Wm. C. Owen is "the present virtual editor of FREEDOM." This statement is false, like so many others from the same source.

GOING FOR GOVERNMENT.

The majority of people are not concerned about government or governmental institutions until they come into personal contact with them. It is probably true to say that a majority of the taxpayers in these islands do not know what is the name of the Prime Minister and there are very few people indeed who can name the members of the Cabinet right off without a mistake. It is when a man comes into contact with government, when he receives his income tax demand, or is picked to serve on a jury, or has the rate collector hanging about his door, that he realises, only momentarily it is sadly true, the iniquity of government, and has things to say about it.

The curse of the present age is the number of people who are simply dying to do us good. They will do us good in all sorts of ways if we will only allow them. But when all their schemes and plans and notions and panaceas are boiled down it simply amounts to this: that they propose to walk the governmental quarter-deck and tell the rest of us what we shall do. Conservatives, Labourites, Liberals, Communists—as these last misname themselves—all are bursting to get us out of the morass into which they have unitedly helped to push us. There may be free and independent electors who make up their minds how they will vote only after listening to the sticky trash they hear at election meetings, but they are few and far between. Most of them plump for the winning side, or exchange their votes for rides in motor cars, which is just about what their votes are worth. But they all do labour under the monstrous delusion that government is going to do something for them they are unable to do for themselves. It is a monstrous, a cruel delusion, which is being exposed only by as many people as are Anarchists in thought and in deed.

The politicians, whatever flag they wave or whatever their pretensions, are all mouths. Not only do they make a noise, but they devour with harlots the people's substance. The Labourites are going to give us Utopia by feeding us on our own tails, while the Conservatives would resuscitate trade by making trading between the different nations of the world impossible. The Liberals have not yet decided what they are going to offer us, it will be a

hotch-potch of taxation of land-values probably; while the Communists propose to clap all libertarians into jail while they establish a dictatorship of themselves. Not one amongst the crowd of them proposes to abolish taxation and to let the people spend their own money as they would like to spend it. That would not be practical politics. To abolish taxation would mean no jobs for politicians. And what would the magpie do then, poor thing! The politician who calls himself a Communist is no better than any of the others; he brays a little more loudly, that is all. Every political party believes in the dictatorship of the proletariat, so long as it is in power to do the dictating. A Liberal Government in England shot down miners at Featherstone; a Communist Government is engaged at present in the murder of libertarians in Russia; yesterday a Labour Government was destroying with bombs a number of people in Africa who could not see eye to eye with them; while Conservatives carry on their flag the glorious name of Peterloo, where hussars, the "flower of England's chivalry," rode down and sabred helpless women and children, and received the thanks of the authorities for so doing. When will the people have their eyes open? The days of their puppyhood ought to have passed long since.

The Independent Labour Party has been holding a school at Claughton which is near Scarborough, and the figures of the party have been figuring with the usual results. A naught added to a naught makes naught. There was a discussion on disarmament, which was initiated by Mr. Norman Angell, who became the party's convert during the war and was immediately invited to explain the attitude of the I.L.P. on the war, in its official organ, a job which apparently none of the other and older members of the organisation was able to take on. Among the speakers was that ingenious son of a missionary, Mr. Fenner Brockway, who did his war service in prison by the way, who propounded a plan for the suspension of party discipline whenever the Army and Navy Estimates were due to come up for discussion. By his method, granted they were clever and accommodating enough, they could go into the lobby against the Government without turning it out. Should it ever happen that the Government was defeated on a sincere vote on this issue, no harm would be done, as the day would then have dawned for the introduction of a policy of total disarmament.

It is evident that Mr. Brockway by nature was intended for a Jesuit. He is prepared to vote for his convictions only when no harm will be done to the Labour Government. Principle, for him, has a much smaller value than interest. And even at the risk of hurting his feelings I am going to tell Mr. Brockway that if he believes in disarmament, as he says he does, he will go the whole hog and get out of a party from which, according to Baillie Dollan, the last absolute pacifist will have disappeared in twelve months' time. The sea-green incorruptible I.L.P. is in the road to Government, and is engaged in eating its propaganda of the past. That is the explanation of everything, even of Simon Pure Brockway.

The majority of people are not, thank goodness, concerned about government or governmental institutions until they come into personal contact with them. But there are a few, unfortunately for us all, who come into contact with government only to be infected by its virus, which develops in them the itch to govern, not themselves, but all and sundry. And each individual of them is quite convinced that no one can possibly do the job as well as he or she can do it. So, with specious promises and much chin-chin, they get elected to Government; and they find, and we all find, that the sort of Government they put up is the same old variety carried on by the same old methods of repression and taxation and circumlocution. Supposing we decided to do without Government for a change! But that's Anarchism! Precisely!

JOHN WAKEMAN.

Anarchist Conference Suggested.

Our comrade E. Zaidman has sent us a letter suggesting a conference of comrades in Greater London, with a view to stimulating our propaganda, which is now at a very low ebb. Our work in the past, he says, has been wasted owing to lack of organisation, which alone can make it successful. Among the subjects he proposes for discussion are the organisation of Anarchist Communists; propaganda, discussion circles, and speakers' classes; improving the circulation of FREEDOM; a press fund; and a national conference. Zaidman thinks a London conference is necessary and would be successful. He is willing to act as secretary and to do all he can to bring it about.

We have also received a letter from a comrade who signs himself "The Irish Rebel," who wants a conference of all Anti-Statists in London, the principal purpose of which would be the inauguration of a leaflet propaganda to enlighten the workers on the points of

difference between Statists and Anti-Statists, to be followed, when funds permit, by the publication of a weekly journal in which the man in the street could state his own attitude toward the programmes and tactics of the various parties.

We welcome these signs of an awakening and hope something will be done to shake off the apathy which has afflicted the movement for some time. If those willing to help in bringing comrades together in conference will write to us, we will put them in communication with our comrade Zaidman, so that, if sufficient interest is shown, the necessary arrangements can be made.

Emma Goldman Coming to London.

We are pleased to announce that our comrade Emma Goldman has been granted a permit to come to England, and will arrive in London about the 20th of this month.

"Freedom" Guarantee Fund.

The following amounts have been received since our last issue: G. W. Tindale 10s., C. Sewell 5s., R. H. 10s., Volonta Club (San Francisco) £4 9s., G. P. 4s., N. B. Ells 16s., H. G. Russell 5s., L. G. Wolfe £1, J. Petrovich 4s. 3d., A. D. Moore (July and August) 4s., E. Firth 3s., L. Keyser 12s. 9d., J. Hey 2s. 6d., L. Newman and E. Richmond 10s., F. Goulding 1s., Stelton Anarchist Group £1 1s. 3d.

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West London Anarchist Communist Group.—Open-air Meetings at The Grove, Hammersmith. Every Wednesday and Saturday, at 8 p.m. Sundays, 7.30 p.m. Speakers welcomed.

CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

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