

Freedom

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NOTES.

Trade Union Delegation to Russia.

The Trades Union Congress delegation to Russia have issued a preliminary report in which they set forth in glowing colours the great improvement in the social, industrial, and economic conditions since the visit of the Labour Party delegation in 1920. It is truly a wonderful document—a tribute to the childlike simplicity of the members of the delegation—or most of them—who were whirled from one show-place to the other by their astute hosts. We can imagine the chuckles of the Bolsheviks when they bade farewell to their visitors, pumped full of the fairy tales that had done duty on so many similar occasions. In 1920, the year with which comparisons are made, the economic system was going to smash because, owing to the forcible requisition of their grain by the Bolshevik Government, the peasants refused to grow more than was necessary for their own requirements. The Bolsheviks then realised that the peasants had defeated them, so they abandoned the policy of “military Communism,” allowed the peasants to sell their grain, and instituted a small tax in place of requisitioning. The New Economic Policy was not a voluntary act on the part of Lenin, as is so often maintained, but was forced on him by the sheer obstinacy of the peasants, to whose increased productivity is almost entirely due the improvement in economic conditions, although the delegation give the credit to the Bolsheviks. In their statement on Georgia, signed by all of them except John Turner, they excuse the Bolshevik annexation of that country by saying that, “apart from the Great Powers, no really independent country can exist,” and if the Russian Government had not annexed the country, some other Power would have done so. This is the usual argument of our own Imperialists regarding Egypt and India. Yet when Mr. Purcell was at Baku he not only welcomed the formation of a local “Hands Off Egypt” society, but said that he would organise a similar society in England. So what is right for the Bolshevik Government is wrong for the British Government.

Looking Backwards.

The Irish people are now finding out that a change of flag on Dublin Castle does not necessarily bring with it the great changes in social and economic affairs which they hoped for. At present, when it is not engaged in its quarrel with the Republicans, the Free State Government is occupied in forcing a Gaelic culture on its subjects. With a patriotic desire to wipe out all English influences, it has made the Gaelic language essential in all State service and an essential part of education in the schools. As a result, says a writer in the *New York World*, "a generation of students is rising up and calling the Government cursed because they have to learn science and Euclid, and algebraic equations, English literature, history, and geography, and all the rest, in the language that the Government says must be native to them, but isn't." In spite of a depleted exchequer, most of the official reports are printed in two languages, thus doubling the cost of printing. Local bodies have been changing the names of towns and villages from English into Gaelic, causing much confusion. Dublin remains Dublin to visitors, but all mail matter arrives and departs not from Dublin but from "Baile-athacliath," which means "the town of the ford of the hurdles." That is the official Post Office title. We can understand the necessity for two official languages in countries where two races are thrown together, such as South Africa and parts of Canada; but Ireland has for all practical purposes been an English-speaking country, and, while Gaelic may claim great literary value, in their attempt to impose it on all and sundry the Free State authorities are trying to revive a language that will have little practical value and simply act as another barrier between the Irish and other nations. The new

States that have sprung into existence since 1918 have proved to be almost as reactionary as the Empires from which they broke away. The War that was to make the world "safe for democracy" brought into being a swarm of officials whose main aim in life seems to be to make it as difficult as possible for the common folk to come together and understand each other.

More Fascist Outrages.

During the last week in December the Opposition papers in Italy published a memorandum by Cesare Rossi, former Chief of the Government Press Bureau, and now in prison for connection with the murder of Matteotti. In it Rossi charges Mussolini himself with directly instigating various Fascist crimes, including the murder of Matteotti. Mussolini's reply was the immediate suppression of all the Opposition papers and the arrest of thousands of his political opponents. This was followed by attacks on newspaper offices and the offices of political associations, Trade Unions, and Co-operative societies. The notorious black shirts ran amuck in an attempt to terrorise everyone who was suspected of what the Dictator termed "subversive" opinions. Some of the suppressed papers have since been allowed to resume publication, but not a word of criticism of the Government is permitted, although the Fascist papers are full of threats of assault and murder. Reports have reached this country to the effect that working-class organisations have been especially singled out for attack by the Fascisti, several workers having lost their lives in the struggle. It seems an extraordinary thing to us that a great nation, famed for its achievements in science and the arts, should allow these hordes of murderers to dominate and dictate to them. Unless they soon put an end to the rule of Mussolini the world will conclude that Italians have lost their fighting spirit and are on the down grade. While the rival political parties may be left to fight their own battles, we think it is about time the Labour movement in this country took steps to help the Italian workers, morally and financially, in their struggle with the Fascisti. We are pleased to see that a meeting has already been arranged for this purpose. We hope the workers will rally to the support of their hard-pressed Italian comrades, and at the same time oppose with all their might the growth of Fascism here.

The Dotage of Liberalism.

The leaders of the shattered and battered Liberal Party are trying to revive the spirit of its adherents so that it may once again take the field, but they have a hard task before them. However, there is nothing like trying, so the National Liberal Federation has issued "a declaration of Liberal principles and aims" which might almost have been written by an Anarchist. It says:—

“The aim of Liberalism is to bring about a state of society in which all men and women shall have a real opportunity of making the most of their own powers, in their own way, so long as they do not interfere with the rights of others. This is what we mean by liberty; and we believe that liberty in this sense is a condition of human happiness and the motive force of progress.”

Well, we have watched Liberal politicians for many years, but we never knew that that was what they were working for. This declaration looks very much like the deathbed confession of a man who has led a misspent life and who tries to imagine what he might have done if he had not been led astray. But when the declaration goes on to say: "It is an essential of liberty, as we conceive it, that the weak should be protected by law against oppression or exploitation by the strong," we get a clue to the past. The laws passed by the Liberals in years gone by were designed to protect the rich, who are weak in numbers, against oppression or exploitation by the poor, whose strength lays in their masses. We may be wrong, of course, but we cannot think of any other explanation.

CHattel SLAVES v. INdIAN WAGE SLAVES.

The idea that Capitalists in Western Countries abolished slavery for the sake of humanity, because it was immoral and a brutal degradation of mankind, and an exploitation of the weak and ignorant by the strong and powerful, at first sight seems very plausible; but it is mendacious and misleading.

Humanity is one thing and Capitalist lust for profits is another. No power on earth can explain the love of mankind to the capitalistic mind. The reason why slavery ceased was because it had become too expensive; a cheaper and more plentiful supply of "free" labour had been found in other parts of the world. When the Capitalists and Rulers of England secured possession of India, and through the Imperial annexation and taxation of her population robbed them of their liberty, millions were compelled to sell their labour-power at a lower rate than slaves. That is the real cause of the abolition of the African slave trade, with all its brutality—the "free" labour of the Indians had become more profitable.

From 1788 to 1840 the Christian gentlemen of England and other Western Countries captured on an average 150,000 slaves per annum; but from 1840 to 1848 the average fell to 65,000, and between 1848 and 1860 to 30,000 per year. ("Slavery and Emancipation," by R. D. Owen.) This falling off in the supply compelled British slave holders to look for other sources of cheap labour. One slave proprietor, Mr. Gladstone, in a speech at Westminster on March 30th, 1838, said:—"You have the means in India at a very little expense of obtaining all you require from free labour." A similar expression is to be found in "A Short Review of the Slave Trade and Slavery," by H. Hodgson. He says:—"By a determined encouragement of free labour we may not only compel other European nations to abandon the slave trade by making it not worth their pursuit, but we may also compel our own Colonial subjects, and the subjects of every other Power in America, to abandon slavery itself."

The owners of plantations used to pay on an average 150 dollars for an African slave, and his cost was 2s. a day; while the cost of East Indian free labour was reckoned at 3d. per day. ("Six Lectures on India," by George Thompson.) However dirty and filthy the place of shelter for a slave might be, the master had to provide it; and when death occurred the slaveholder would lose his 150 dollars. In proof of this statement, Mr. Thompson quotes a letter from the Anti-Slavery Society of Massachusetts, U.S.A., to a similar society in London:—

"I am rejoiced to hear of your new movement in regard to India. It seals the fate of the slave system in America. The Industry of the Pagan shall yet wring from Christian hands the prey they would not yield to the commands of conscience, or the claims of religion. Hasten the day, for it lies with you when the prophecy of our Randolph (himself a slaveholder) shall be fulfilled—that the time would come when masters would fly their slaves instead of slaves their masters. So valueless would be a slave's labour in comparison with his support. To you, to the sunny plains of Hindustan, we shall owe it."

That day has gone, but so far as India is concerned the condition of slavery still remains. Unthinkable poverty, disease, premature death, lack of education; and anxiety in the search for bread and butter have made the workers of India worse off than slaves. Under the chattel system they would at least have been free from the worried search for employment. But without insurance, poor law relief, or any kind of social organisation to guard their interests, their "freedom" under Capitalism is worse than slavery.

Famines have become part and parcel of Indian society, because to pay the heavy foreign dividends, food and raw material go out of the country. Sir William Digby, in his book, "Prosperous British India," says that from the beginning of the 11th Century to 1745, India suffered 18 famines, but since British Rule in the 19th Century she had the bitter experience of 31 famines with 32,500,000 deaths. In the 20th Century also there have been famines—during 1906-7, 1913-14, and 1918-19. The *Times* acknowledged in its issue of February 23rd, 1924, the death of 6,000,000 in 1918-19.

If these workers had been chattel slaves—i.e., the property of their masters—the slave-owners would not have been willing to suffer the loss of hundreds of millions of pounds. The most pernicious part of this policy of Western Commercialism is that during all the famine years the Capitalists have secured their dividends. I should like to give a slight picture of famines from "Six Lectures on India":—

"Tender and delicate women, whose veils had never been lifted before the public gaze, came forth from the inner chambers in which Eastern jealousy had kept watch over their beauty, threw themselves on the earth before the passer-by, and with loud wailings implored a handful of rice for their children. The Hoogley every day rolled down thousands of corpses close by the porticos and gardens of the English conquerors. The very streets of Calcutta were blocked by the dying and the dead. The lean and feeble survivors had not energy enough to bear the bodies of their kindred to the funeral pile or to the holy river, or even to scare away the jackals and vultures who fed on human remains in the face of day. The proprietors of East India stock were uneasy about their dividends. It was rumoured that the Company's servants had created the famine by engrossing all the rice of the country; that they had sold grain for eight, ten, twelve times the price at which they had bought it; that one English functionary, who the year before was not worth a hundred guineas, had, during that season of misery, remitted sixty thousand pounds to London. . . . No revolt, no murders, not the least violence prevailed. The unhappy Indians, resigned to quiet despair, confined themselves to the request of the succour they did not obtain, and peaceably waited the relief of death."

This slavery can only be abolished by the united effort of Indians, assisted by the sympathetic action of comrades in all parts of the world. Let them not be afraid that by elevating the worker of India harm will befall them. Freedom never harms anyone. If, however, Capitalism is allowed to make Indian and Chinese coolies the hewers of wood and drawers of water for the white races, then will danger assert itself. But let them be free men, and lo! they will render free service for free service in the shape of raw material in exchange for labour-power. Comrades! You who are free from the poison of patriotism and race hatred, my hope is to see you busy studying the problems of the Indian working class—one-fifth of the world's population. Then only will India arise.

N. J. UPADHYAYA.

VAGABOND.

Dunno a heap about the what an' why,
Can't say's I ever knowed.
Heaven to me's a fair blue stretch of sky,
Earth's jest a dusty road.

Dunno the names o' things, nor what they are,
Can't say's I ever will.
Dunno about God—He's jest the noddin' star
Atop the windy hill.

Dunno about Life—it's jest a tramp alone
From wakin'-time to doss.
Dunno about Death—it's jest a quiet stone
All over-grey wi' moss.

An' why I live, an' why the old world spins,
Are things I never knowed;
My mark's the gypsy fires, the lonely inns,
And jes' the dusty road.

JOHN MASEFIELD.
("Salt Water Ballads.")

The State is the curse of the individual. . . . The State must be abolished! In that revolution I will take part. Undermine the idea of the State; make willingness and spiritual kinship the only essentials in the case of a union, and you have the beginning of a liberty that is of some value. The changing of forms of government is mere toying with degrees,—a little more or a little less,—folly, the whole of it.—*Ibsen*.

FREEDOM.

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The Poor Record of 1924.

The past twelve months brought very few blessings but many disappointments to those who are working for radical changes in our social system. In this country it will be remembered as marking the coming of the first Labour Government. Although in a minority in the House of Commons, many of their supporters fully expected them to strike a bold note and put forward a policy which would be a direct challenge to the upholders of Capitalism. This they failed utterly to do. Their one aim seemed to be to convince the propertied and privileged class that they need have no fear that their interests would be endangered, while at the same time their spokesmen were telling working class audiences that they were going to put an end to the system which robbed and oppressed them. Nervous investors who sold their stocks and shares when the Labour Government was formed were soon reassured, and prices on the Stock Exchange rose again to their normal level. MacDonald and his merry men were not expropriators, but could be safely trusted not to undermine the foundations of "Society." Their Budget brought more profits to the food profiteers, and their housing scheme would have brought more wealth to the bankers and their clients. Landlords were promised many millions for their land if and when it was nationalised, which, of course, would be paid by those who worked. And the workers—what was their share to be? They were assured that if the Labour Government could stay in long enough they would have plenty of work. What more could they want? Security for the privileged class and security for the exploited class! In a word, State Capitalism.

In their foreign policy, "continuity" was the keynote. The Russian Treaties certainly were an attempt to break down the boycott of Russia, but the influence of the banking fraternity was too strong to allow any solid basis on which to build, and they were not worth the paper on which they were written. The aspirations of Egypt and India for self-government met with the same blunt treatment as usual; but friendly relations were maintained with Primo de Rivera, the Spanish Dictator, and Mussolini!

When the other parties decided that this experiment in Labour Government had run long enough, it was soon brought to an end. In fact, Mr. Baldwin warned the French Ambassador in August that a Conservative Government would soon be in power again. The Labour Party had only been allowed to take office in order to maintain the fiction that this is a Constitutional country. We shall soon see how much the Constitution is worth whenever the privileges of the ruling class are in danger. Now the Labour Government have been turned out, hardly a ripple marks the spot where they disappeared.

The year abroad has seen reaction seated firmly in the saddle. Of Spain, of Italy, of Central Europe and the Balkans, the same story can be told—the workers' organisations defeated and all liberal tendencies suppressed. In the U.S.A., in spite of the oil scandal and war contract scandals with which it was tainted, the Republican Party was returned to power by an overwhelming majority. Look where one may, there is little sign of the imminent collapse of Capitalism of which Socialists and Communists often speak. To us, it seems as though the privileged class are more firmly entrenched than ever, except that some of the privileges may have changed hands since 1914. That, however, is no consolation to the exploited masses,

who find little relief whether they live under Constitutional Governments or Dictatorships. Some of them still cherish the delusion that if they could only choose a Dictator of their own or a Government of their own, life would be much brighter and happier for them. It is the work of Anarchists to destroy this delusion, but the credulity of the workers and their belief in saviours make our task look almost hopeless. Still, there can be no hope of freedom until it is accomplished, and if we put our backs into it we may find the New Year more fruitful in results than the one which has just passed.

THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT IN CHINA.

(From a Letter of a Chinese Comrade.)

... China is not an industrial country; there are very few proletarians and they are quite unorganised. That is why the Anarchists, too, are unable to find a way out of the present situation. True, the Chinese have been acquainted with Anarchism now for more than twenty years. At first their work consisted exclusively of literary propaganda. After the Revolution (1911) in China, two social tendencies became apparent: the Socialist and the Anarchist. After two years the Anarchists were defeated by bourgeois Socialism. From 1913 to 1919 Anarchism found a place for itself among the students and the working men (for the most part, though, it was the *intelligentsia*, as our language is difficult and the workers are illiterate).

Recently (since 1920) a Bolshevik organisation sprang into existence—thanks to Russian money—and they have considerable influence among the students; at one time even some Anarchists worked with them. Afterwards the influence of Bolshevism somewhat waned; but the politicians are beginning to participate in the Bolshevik movement.

At the Fifth Congress of the Communist International the Moscow dictators decided that the entire Chinese Communist Party, as also the Students' Union, must join the bourgeois party (the Democratic Party, "Go-Min-Don"). On this subject Radek wrote an article, stating that in a non-capitalist country the proletariat must work together with the revolutionary bourgeoisie. It is strange, however, to note that the "Go-Min-Don" is at the present moment joining with the reactionary "Jan-Tsun-Min" and "Din-Di-Tse" parties; the "Jan-Tsun-Min" (the Chinese and the Bolsheviks have both called it Monarchist) comprises the most reactionary elements in China. Formerly, the Bolsheviks used to attack it severely, while now, through the "Go-Min-Don," they are actively working together. A month ago a conference of the "Go-Min-Don" took place; at this they proclaimed the principle: "To create a People's Government."

In some places our comrades have organised workingmen's associations, and some of these propagate Anarchism among the soldiers. Two tendencies have been noticed among our comrades: some are for peaceful propaganda, while the others stand for an "aggressive" Anarchism; they consider that a revolution cannot come about without the use of force. So long as our workers are unorganised, they contend, the only method to bring about a revolution is to utilise the army.

Just now there are published three monthly journals and a few periodicals appearing irregularly.

It seems to me that to explain the Russian Revolution is an important task at the present moment. I have already written three books about Russia: "A Collection of Essays on the Russian Revolution," "The Position of the Russian Revolution," and "Two Years in Russia." I intend writing still more on this subject.

Bao-Puo.

(Translated from the Russian.)

Bolshevism requires a very great deal of government, and more control of individual lives by the authorities than has ever been known before, whereas China has developed personal liberty to an extraordinary degree, and is the country of all others where the doctrines of Anarchism seem to find practical application. — *Bertrand Russell* ("Problems of China").

In France we leave unmolested those who set fire to the house and persecute those who sound the alarm bell. — *Chamfort*.

THE EVOLUTION OF A. SHLIAPNIKOFF.

The press is talking of the arrival in Paris of the personnel of the Soviet Embassy. Soon after Krassin's name follows that of A. Shliapnikoff, Counsellor of the Embassy of the Workers' and Peasants' Government.

What a title! and yet not later than . . .

It was in January, 1921. The Russian Communist Party was going through its first internal crisis, and could see its forces dissipating themselves in three different ways on the question—a burning one then—of the rôle of the Trade Unions in a country victorious in Proletarian Dictatorship.

The Workers' Opposition in the midst of the Communist Party was making itself felt. Kollontay was writing her pamphlet, "The Workers' Opposition," since published in many languages. But the undisputed leader of this opposition was then—A. Shliapnikoff, to-day Counsellor of Embassy.

What did Shliapnikoff say, when president of the All-Russian Metalworkers' Union, on the working class in Proletarian Russia? In his speech at a committee meeting of the Moscow branch of the Communist Party, held on January 17, 1921, he was telling his friends certain truths which it would be well to repeat.

Commenting on the militarist methods Trotsky was then introducing in the country, Shliapnikoff was saying: "The secret of the psychological deviation of Trotsky is that he has decided to make use of the knowledge gained by him in the Red Army to check the Russian masses and their organisations." But Shliapnikoff is telling us that military methods are worthless in the economic field; something else is needed. He goes on to say: "Only by developing the independence of the masses can bureaucracy be vanquished, by putting back into the hands of the workers a greater influence on the progress and the work of the economic organs."

Shliapnikoff also criticises the heads of the party in this tone:—

"Bukharin, who proposes to make a small step forward, is always marking time; he remains in the same group as Trotsky, and it is with pleasure that he hands over all power to doubtful 'specialists' and is frightened, as of the devil, of remitting the rights of management of the national economy to the producers. All his friendly wishes, such as the decisions at the 8th and 9th Party Congresses, are wiped out by a scratch of the pen of the bureaucrats who fill the offices and cancel all our participation in the organisation of production, in the name of which we are working in our Trade Unions.

"If we do not wish to mark time, if we do not wish to corrupt the producers, who see all the evils of the present system and ask for our intervention, we must take a new road in accordance with our experience. I have never heard anywhere on the part of the workers any protest against the system of management of national economy which we are advocating, because they know full well that our system offers a real possibility of fighting against bureaucracy: to vanquish it we must oppose to it a system organised by the Unions. This system gives the Unions the right of organising any industry to its fullest capacity in the interest of the country, with the aid of the energies of the whole country."

Shliapnikoff shows us the condition in which he finds the Russian Trade Union movement:—

"Who decides the policy of the Russian Trade Unions? The policy is directed by telephone calls from Trotsky, from Krestinsky, or from any member of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party who wishes to do so. It is they who are the real masters of the Trade Union movement."

Shliapnikoff also explains the true rôle of the Trade Unions in this way:—

"What we ask in the political and economic management is, that the working class shall be the organisers of the national economy and not those hussars of Trade Unionism, the Commissars, nor even the Executive Committees. . . . If you think you will be able to get the chestnut out of the fire with the help of the cat's paw, if you think it possible to create Communism with the help of the bourgeoisie, well then! we can no longer march together. In our tactics we are basing ourselves on a profound belief in the creative force of the working class, and we are opposed to all those who have spoken here. Our proletarian system will give to each worker who participates in production the possibility of vanquishing the bureaucracy which exists in our national economy."

After this tirade Shliapnikoff proposes the adoption of the

theses of the "Workers' Opposition." I have in front of me these theses, published on January 18, 1921, in pamphlet form, with the following note on the cover: "For members of the Russian Communist Party only." Herein is set out in detail the proposals put forward by the "Workers' Opposition" for the transfer of the control of the national economy from the bureaucracy to the All-Russian Congress of Producers, united in their professional and industrial Unions.

Certainly, in all these declarations of Shliapnikoff there is still too much devotion to the Proletarian State, to the holy of holies, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, etc. Nevertheless, a good idea can be found in them.

Everybody knows the result of the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, held in March, 1921: the victory of Lenin—an intensified struggle against the "petty-bourgeois tendencies" in the party, death to Anarchist-Syndicalism. Shliapnikoff is gagged, and submits to his fate.

In the same speech of Shliapnikoff on January 17, 1921, addressing himself to his opponents of the Communist Party on the question of Trade Unionism, he shouted at them: "We are going to fight and we shall see who will be victorious. There is no other issue!"

Alas! Shliapnikoff has finished by finding another issue. He is Counsellor of Embassy in France, in the same way as his colleague in the Workers' Opposition, Madame Kollontay, has also found an issue just as diplomatic—the Embassy to Norway! What a pitiable fall for a man who spoke of fighting!

In certain countries sinecures and well-paid jobs are obtained by a wise distribution of monetary favours. It is different in Russia. You play the part of "Opposition" without being too sincere—and a diplomatic career is assured to you.

A. SHAPIRO.

(Translated from *Le Libertaire*.)

A RETORT TO EMMA GOLDMAN.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—The letter addressed to comrades, in your November-December number, includes, I presume, all comrades in the revolutionary struggle, and I have claim to be one.

My reply (it is a retort) to the writer of the letter, Emma Goldman, is that I am dumbfounded to learn that her anti-Bolshevism is of such a nature that she lines up, shoulder to shoulder, with the dirtiest hacks of the dirtiest Press that has ever polluted the minds of the masses, and that at a time when Reaction is in the ascendant.

That the Russian Communists made a mistake, in that they imposed themselves on the peasant masses rather than identified themselves with their revolution proper, does not excuse the means she has taken to let that mistake be known. Whatever she does through those channels will not add one jot to the enlightenment of the people, but will simply help to confirm, in the popular mind, the lies trotted out daily about the very Anarchists she so rightly seeks to have liberated.

Such tactics, furthermore, are associated, in this country, only with renegades and disappointed super-individualists, and are certainly not the stock-in-trade of one who cannot forget the hungry eyes, the hungry ears, and the tired hearts of the people aching for some clear way out of their helpless misery—and against the Anarchists the masses number millions to one.

Whatever steps Emma Goldman takes in future, of any value to the revolutionary peasantry of Russia, will be dogged by her reactionary associates, and damned by her own unscrupulousness.—

Fraternally,
Heptonstall, Yorks.

ALFRED HOLDSWORTH.

[It is quite evident that Alfred Holdsworth has not read Emma Goldman's illuminating articles in the *Sunday Times*, as otherwise he would not have written such nonsense about her lining up with "the dirtiest hacks" of the Press. It is because Emma Goldman "cannot forget the hungry eyes, the hungry ears, and the tired hearts of the people aching for some clear way out of their helpless misery" in Russia that she is determined to break down the conspiracy of silence of the Labour press and counteract the lying propaganda of the Bolsheviks, and thus help the workers in other countries to avoid the mistakes made by their comrades in Russia. As the Labour and Socialist press was not open to her, she accepted the offer of the editor of the *Sunday Times*. What there is "unscrupulous" about that we fail to see. Emma Goldman's long record in the Anarchist movement is sufficient refutation of Alfred Holdsworth's baseless insinuations. Our comrade Wm. C. Owen also deals with this matter in another column.—ED. FREEDOM.]

IN DEFENCE OF EMMA GOLDMAN.

Mr. Alfred Holdsworth is the editor of an Anti-Fascist paper entitled *The Clear Light*. I cannot imagine a more admirable title, and wish we had ten thousand papers devoted loyally to what it signifies. Because, from the merely material and utilitarian standpoint, light is the first essential. On it all life depends. Without it we cannot grow, cannot advance, cannot hope to strike a single telling blow.

The bold experiment on which a small band of Russian Marxists entered seven years ago should have been the greatest of enlighteners. It should have exhibited plainly to the eyes of the onlooking world the respective merits and demerits of two opposed philosophies, by one or other of which individuals and nations are compelled, whether they like it or not, to shape their course. It should have given us a clear lead and rescued us from the Desert of Muddledom in which the Labour and Revolutionary movement still wanders round distractedly, getting nowhere, achieving nothing, and finally dying, as generation after generation drops broken-hearted into its grave, of sheer exhaustion.

What are these two opposing philosophies? The answer is simplicity itself. On the one hand there is the conviction that You, the God, the Redeemer, the Holy Father, the benevolent ruler, the all-wise counsellor, are called on, not to help your fellow-men to win their liberty, but to govern them, in your superior sagacity, for their supposed happiness and welfare. On the other hand there is the conviction that liberty is the first essential; and that You are not called on to redeem and govern your fellow-man, but are required to struggle side by side with him for equal opportunities of self-government and self-redemption. Into one of these two categories all thought and action fall. The first, which is the creed of kings and priests and legislators, of all who deem themselves "the chosen," implies of necessity a fundamental disbelief in Life, which it regards as containing, in the mass, more bad than good. The second believes that the good, if given a chance, will always overcome the bad, and that Life, learning by every mistake and gathering fresh strength from every fall, is quite capable of looking after itself, of mastering all its problems, and of marching on from height to height triumphantly.

I presume that Mr. Holdsworth understands this as well as I do. I presume that he recognises this as being the great issue which mankind, now passing through the first stage of an epoch-making struggle, will have to settle. I presume he will agree with me in saying that we shall either sink or swim; either shake ourselves entirely free or pass under a yoke far heavier than that we are now wearing; either become, individually and collectively, our own masters, or be mastered completely for centuries to come. That is the issue which ultimately will have to be decided one way or the other; but its tremendous significance the masses, as yet, have not begun to grasp.

Bolshevism is at present a great disturber of the peace. That certainly does not shock us, for the sleepers need to be disturbed. The Russian Dictatorship has been guilty of many hideous atrocities, but so has every other Government; and we understand thoroughly that he who establishes himself in the business of coercing his fellow-creatures into obedience to his authority cannot allow that authority to be assailed. He also is fettered by the chain his own ambition forged. If he cannot conciliate he must destroy the rebel who puts his rule in danger. He must suppress the propaganda that disaffects his subjects. He must abolish whatever freedoms threaten to undermine his power. The truth of this, which should be in itself sufficiently obvious, all history proves. It is not, therefore, on any question of detail that we are at war with Bolshevism. Our quarrel is that it has switched the revolutionary movement on to a track leading straight to universal dictatorship; to the universal enslavement of the governed many by the governing few; to total ruin.

Upon that, as upon all forms of tyranny, economic and political, we must make war. We cannot look on passively at the creation of a new form of despotism in the guise of revolution. We have to fight it tooth and nail; not because, like all other Governments, it has imprisoned and tortured and shot down our brother Anarchists, but because the freedom of all mankind is once again at stake. And we must make our war quite openly, quite candidly, using every honest weapon at our command and occupying every field of propaganda within our reach.

Naturally I am expressing my own personal opinion, but I

imagine that my own views will not differ greatly from those held by Emma Goldman. I imagine that to her also the main importance of the Russian Revolution lies in its demonstration of the impossibilities of authoritarian State Socialism. It is her proper business, as an expert in this special subject, to turn on it the light; to flood the country with it; to set it flaming as a beacon on every hilltop available; to make her message heard. Mr. Holdsworth objects that she will be misunderstood. It is nothing, for in Labour and revolutionary circles, as elsewhere, new pathfinders are always misunderstood. He objects that she will be assisting the enemy, which also has no love for Bolshevism; and I reply that in attacking the Russian Dictatorship she is attacking the whole authoritarian system, under which some hold the lives of others at their mercy, and that this is the Anarchist's great task. He considers also that her message should not be conveyed to the masses through the capitalist press. Here, as it seems to me, there is a foginess of thought. It is not for Emma Goldman's sake that editors are printing her articles, but because, in their judgment, readers find them interesting, and circulation is what they always want. Moreover, it is the truth or falsity of the message that is important, and not the particular rostrum from which it is delivered. Christ himself, they say, taught habitually in that temple which he cursed so roundly—"that not one stone shall stand upon another"—simply because it was a place of general resort.

Neither we nor any honest person should ever be afraid of free discussion. If we are wrong we are properly chastised by our opponents, and are all the better for it. In any event Truth is the gainer, and she alone is worth considering; for she is the one and only guide who can disentangle us from the labyrinth in which we wander lost. In a word, I am for getting out into the open road; for making no embarrassing alliances, but, at the same time, for not shrinking from contact with anyone, be it even His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, or Beelzebub himself.

WM. C. OWEN.

ELECTION DAY.

Fetters, fetters! The mob roars at the top of its voice. Horns, whistles, cranks, and all available loud instruments used this day, to let the world know that Americans are fettered good and hard. Like swirling ants they rush to and fro on the streets. It is the day for deciding which charlatans shall rule and keep them in bondage.

Here I am strolling the streets as an onlooker, and, ye gods, how painful a picture this mass represents! Mob, thou art doomed, more so when in this mad race participate the Socialists and the American Communists, who are imitating the Bolsheviks of Russia.

Here I stand and picture in my mind's eye the market scene of Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Brutus; of the mob that is clay; of this very mob that would send you to your doom if you dared openly to decry the greatest lie of all the ages—the voting for other men and women, the dirty liars who ride on the crest of the mob's bigotry.

I close my eyes for a moment and the "Tale of Two Cities" is before me. I see the scenes of horror and delight of the French Revolution. I see the avalanche sweep forward, but with what pitiable results! It is with shame I realise that all this has been for naught; that even the heroic deeds and sacrifices of our comrades in the Russian Revolution have been remunerated with long terms of imprisonment and deportation to ice-bound islands. Yes, in all the struggles we have lent a hand, but have helped only to strengthen the domination of the shrewd rulers.

In this "land of the free" the Government no longer respects individual privacy or individual personality. A Western judge recently announced that modern progress had destroyed the old, outworn notion that a man's house was his castle. What no English king dared do, namely, enter a man's house without a formal warrant, American inspectors and investigators of one sort or another may now, according to this judge, do freely without incurring any risk of legal reprisal.

This great issue is surging up: Is an American to be the slave of Government and of the mob inspired by Government methods, or is he to recover the personal privacy, the personal initiative and individuality that create greater men than the meek, dumb voter of to-day?

ALEXANDER PECK.

Chicago, November 4.

ANARCHIST COMMUNIST CONFERENCE.

This Conference was held on Saturday, December 13, at the Circle House, Great Alie Street, E. The attendance was not so good as was expected, but those who came were inspired with a desire to awaken interest in our movement and push forward the propagation of our ideas. The principal business was the formation of a new group to undertake this work. After a prolonged discussion of ways and means, names were given in for this group, which now meets every Monday evening, at 8 o'clock, at the *Workers' Friend* office, 163 Jubilee Street, Mile End, E. Comrades willing to help are requested to write to E. Zaidman, at that address.

The question of increasing the circulation of *Freedom* was also discussed, and as a means of inducing newsagents to stock the paper it was suggested that a poster be printed every month, the expense being met by the increased sales. Comrades willing to co-operate in this way are asked to canvass newsagents in their district and let us know as soon as possible how many copies they can take each month. If we get sufficient new orders, we shall print a poster.

Now the ice has been broken, we hope comrades will come forward and give a helping hand. Let us show that we have faith in our ideas, and spread them broadcast among the workers.

The Kropotkin Museum at Moscow.

We, the newly founded Kropotkin Group, have taken the initiative to aid financially the Kropotkin Museum and Institute by regular monthly contributions. We appeal to all comrades and readers of *FREEDOM* to assist us in our task by pledging themselves to contribute their monthly share. Do not hesitate; forward your first contribution to-day, and say whether you are willing to become a regular donor. If every reader would only contribute a few pence monthly, our work would be a success.

Address all communications and monies to W. RUBCHINSKY, Secretary, 163 Jubilee Street, London, E.1.

Emma Goldman's Meetings.

Our comrade is now making arrangements for a series of meetings outside of London, at which she will speak on Russia. Comrades willing to help in arranging meetings in their district are requested to write as soon as possible to Emma Goldman, care of Freedom Press.

"Freedom" Guarantee Fund.

The following sums have been received since our last issue up to January 10:—R. V. Harvey 10s., A. Sanders 1s. 3d., C. Sewell 2s. 6d., G. W. Tindale 2s. 6d., H. Miller 4s. 3d., S. A. Peck 4s. 3d., J. Levin 2s. 2d., A. Rabinovitz 2s. 2d., C. Krasnowsky 2s. 2d., S. Fox 2s. 2d., G. P. 2s., M. A. Cohn £2 2s. 7d., A. T. (Halesowen) 17s. 6d., A. J. R. 5s., J. S. R. (Clifton) 2s. 6d., R. Gundersen 5s., Vulcan 4s., H. G. Russell 2s. 6d., A. Smith 4s. 6d., Elizabeth £1, L. G. Wolfe £1, Z. Freedman 4s. 1d., J. Scarceriaux 4s. 1d., J. R. Armstrong 2s. 6d., D. H. S. 2s. 6d.

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