

Freedom

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The Revolution in Russia.

The Russian Revolution has lately entered into a new phase. Dark gloom hung about the country during the months of January to April. Now it is all bright hopes owing to the unexpected results of the Duma elections all turning in favour of the Radicals. But before speaking of the new hopes, let us cast a glance on that terrible gloomy period which the country has just lived through.

In every revolution a number of local uprisings is always required to prepare the great successful effort of the people. So it has been in Russia. We have had the local uprisings at Moscow, in the Baltic provinces, in the Caucasus and in the villages of Central Russia. And each of these uprisings, remaining local, was followed by a terrible repression.

The General Strike, declared at Moscow in January last, did not succeed. The working men had suffered too much during the great General Strike in October, 1905, and the partial strikes which followed. And when the provocations of the Government compelled the Moscow working men to strike, the movement did not generalise. Only a few factories on the Presnya and a few railway lines joined it. The Grand Trunk—Moscow to St. Petersburg—continued to work, and troops were brought on it to Moscow.

As to the troops stationed at Moscow itself they showed signs of deep discontent, and probably would have sided with the people if the strike had been general and a crowd of 300,000 working men had flooded the streets, as they did flood in October last. But when they saw that the General Strike had failed they obeyed their commanders.

And yet the week during which a handful of armed revolutionists—less than 2,000—and the workers on strike in the Presnya fought against the artillery and the soldiers, and when several miles of barricades were built by the crowd—by the man and the boy in the street—this week proved how wrong were all the “fire-side revolutionists” when they proclaimed the impossibility of street warfare in a revolution.

As to the Letts and the Estonians in the Baltic provinces, their uprising against their haughty and rapacious German landlords was a great movement. All over a large country the peasants and the artisans of the small towns rose up. They nominated their own municipalities, they sent away the German judges, refused to work for the landlords, paid no rents,—proceeded in short as if they were free. And if their uprising was finally drowned in blood, it has shown at least what the peasants must do all over Russia. In fact the latent insurrection continues still.

The repression which followed the uprising was terrible. The British press has not told one-tenth of the atrocities which were committed by the imperial troops in the Baltic provinces, along the Moscow to Kazan railway line, in the Caucasus, in Siberia, or in the Russian villages. And when we tried to tell the truth about these atrocities, either in some widely-read English review, or before large public meetings, we always felt the dead wall of some inexplicable opposition rising against us. The treaty or agreement which has been concluded a few days ago between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia explains now the cause of the opposition to the divulgence in this country of facts which were openly published in the Russian papers, in Russia itself.

The repression was a story of a wholesale murder, accomplished by the troops systematically, in cold blood. Modern history knows only one similarly savage repression: the wholesale murders by the middle-class army at Paris after the defeat of the Commune, in May, 1871. And yet these murders were committed after a fierce fight, in the lurid light of burning Paris.

The detachment of the guard which was sent along the Moscow-Kazan line had not one single shot fired against it. The revolutionists had already left the line and disbanded when that regiment came. But at every station Colonel Minn, head of this detachment, and his officers shot from ten to thirty men, simply taking their names from lists supplied to the troops by the secret police. They shot them without any simulation of a trial, or even of identification. They shot them in batches, without any warning. Shot anyhow, from behind, into the heap. Colonel Minn shot them simply with his revolver.

As to the peasants in the Baltic provinces it was still worse. Whole villages were flogged. Those men whom a local landlord would name as “dangerous” were shot on the spot, without any further

inquiries—very often a son for his father, one brother for another, an Ivanovsky for an Ivanitsky. . . . It was such an orgy of flogging and killing that a young officer, having himself executed several men in this way, shot himself next day when he realised what he had done.

In Siberia, in the Caucasus, the horrors were even more revolting. And in the villages of Russia, where the peasants had shown signs of unrest, the same executions went on, sometimes with an unimaginable cruelty, as was, for instance, the case in Tamboff, with that governor's aid, Luzhenovsky, whom the heroic girl Spiridonova killed. “When I came to the villages and saw the old man who had grown insane after having been tortured under the whips, and when I had spoken to the mother of the girl who had flung herself into the well after the Cossacks had violated her, I felt that life was impossible so long as that man, Luzhenovsky, was going on unpunished.” Thus spoke this heroic girl on her trial.

But worse than that was in store. All the world has shuddered when it learned the tortures to which Miss Spiridonova was submitted by the police officer Zhdanoff and the Cossack officer Abramoff after her arrest. The tortures of our Montjuich comrades and brothers fade before the sufferings which were inflicted upon this girl. And all over Russia there was lately a sigh of satisfaction when that Abramoff was killed and the revolutionist who killed that beast made his escape, and again the other day when it was known that the other beast, Zhdanoff, had met the same fate.

The gloominess which prevailed in Russia when the Witte-Durnovo ministry had inaugurated the wholesale shooting of the rebels could not be described without quoting pages from the Russian newspapers. Over 70,000 people were arrested; the prisons were full to overflowing. Batches of exiles began to be sent, as of old, by mere order of the Administration to Siberia. The old exiles, returning under the amnesty of November 2, 1905, meeting on their way home the batches of the Witte-Durnovo exiles. The revolutionists of all sections of the Socialist party, Revolutionary Socialists, Anarchists, and even Social Democrats, took to revolver and bomb, and every day one could read in the Russian papers that one, two, or more functionaries of the Crown had been killed by the revolutionists in revenge for the atrocities they had committed. Scores of men and women, like Spiridonova, the sisters Izmailovitch, and so many other heroic women and young men, felt sick of life under such a system of Asiatic rule, and made the vow of taking revenge upon the executioners.

It was under such conditions that the elections to the Duma took place. And now the few supporters of the Tsar had to discover that their satrapes had overdone the oppression. Various measures were taken by the Government to manipulate the elections so as to have a crushing majority in their favour. The Liberal candidates were arrested, the meetings forbidden, the newspapers confiscated—every governor of a province acting as a Persian satrape on his own responsibility. Those who spoke or went about for the advanced candidates were most unceremoniously searched and sent to jail. . . . And all that was—labour lost!

The reaction had developed within these three months such a bitter hatred against the Government that none but opposition candidates had any chance of being listened to and elected. “Are you against these wild beasts or for them?” This was the only question that was asked.

And the Constitutional Democrats obtained a crushing majority in the Duma (pronounce Dooma), such a majority that the Russian Government are now perplexed as to what is to be done next.

The Revolutionary Socialists and the Social Democrats abstained from taking any part in the elections, and therefore there are very few avowed Socialists in the Duma. But apart from that the Duma contains all those middle-class Radicals whose names have come to the front during the last thirty years as foes of autocracy.

The most interesting element in the Duma are the peasants, who have nearly 120 representatives elected. With the exception of some thirty men, who are of unsettled opinion, the peasant representatives are absolutely and entirely with the most advanced Radicals in political matters, and with the Socialist working men in all the labour demands. But, in addition to that, they put forward the great question—the greatest of our century—the land question.

“No one who does not till the land himself has any right to the land. Only those who work on it with their own hands, and every one of those who does so, must have access to the land. The land is the

(Continued on page 18.)

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NOTE.

HENRIK IBSEN.

With the death of Ibsen passes away one more of the great minds that, working in disregard of all formulas, has helped to rend the veil that hides the future from the present. He formulated no system, preached no philosophy, belonged to no "school." Like Socrates, his desire was to help men to think. To this end he gave us in drama form those relentless analyses of the conflict of human wills struggling in the corrupt medium of a dying society. His characters, whether for good or ill, pass before us so naturally, so free from all previous dramatic conventions that when first performed something like a cry of pain burst from the "pillars" of the corrupt life he so ruthlessly exposed. One after another the social and domestic ulcers were laid bare—the merciless greed of the money-monger, the cant of the religious hypocrite, the mockery of the marriage system, the morbid developments arising from false social relationships—none was spared. But amidst all this he also gave us instances of what was grand in human nature, of what made for progress; and few things are better known than brave old Stockmann—the moral personality—struggling against the "compact majority;" and the glimpses of the beautiful comradeship that might exist between men and women in a free society. Critics are still quarrelling as to the moral of his plays, but it is only those who have the courage to face the inevitable conclusions forced upon us by his life-pictures that can gather the full fruit of his genius. One thing, however, is certain: the future will pronounce him to be, as we to-day know him to be—the great dramatist of the Revolution.

REPORT.

Leeds.

We have had a very important congress here in Leeds during the Easter holidays. The agenda comprised suggestions for increasing the circulation and size of our little journal *Freedom*, the organisation and the federation of the Anarchist Groups, and methods of outdoor propaganda. Comrade Pollock read a letter from *Freedom* Office inviting suggestions for the future of the paper. This letter drew our attention to the fact that *Freedom* had been in existence for 19 years, supported only by voluntary effort and without recourse to advertisements as a means of income. This speaks well for the untiring devotion and persistence of those who have carried on the work of producing the paper. Nevertheless it is felt that more remains to be done, hence our comrade's invitation to send them suggestions. Some of the comrades doubted the expediency of refusing to use advertisements as a means of paying for the cost of producing the paper, arguing that we are compelled to adopt methods which are obnoxious to us when under a capitalist régime. They argued that if by so doing we should be able to increase the size and the circulation of *Freedom*, thereby promoting its usefulness, the "end justifies the means." Every one of us agrees that the taking of human life is bad; but every one of us would justify the assassination of a tyrant if thereby we could prevent aggression. What we do, we do under protest. Capitalism forces us to adopt tactics which we deem dishonourable, but which we are obliged to adopt if we would maintain our propaganda. We are obliged to fight them with their own weapons, as they have the upper hand. Others argued that as the paper has fought for 19 years without resorting to stupid advertisements it would be an insult to our comrades to suggest it. It was also suggested that a fund be started to pay for increasing the size of the paper.

A. K.

For a Persecuted Comrade.

K. Morleit 10s., L. Barron 10s., French Group 10s., Vogelsang 11s., Kroll 10s., Hay 10s., Dophuit 10s., Collected at "The Poor Devil" 12s. 6d., R. Schwarz 5s., Hassfeld 10s., Kasacz 2s., Mandl 5s., Mors 5s., Kapfer 1s., Uhrin 2s., Lustig 1s., H. Th. 1s., Littmann 1s., Roth 5s., F. Steiner 3s., Handel 1s., N. N. 1s., A. M. 1s., Mecklenburg 2d., Lawrecke 4d., Jean 6d., Hurra! 3s., Alland 6d., Benz 6d., Bonolino 1s., H. Stenzleit 6s., Baumkirchner 3s., A. Schreiber 2s., Buchbauer 4s. 6d., G. St. 6d., Hummel 6d., Lovnijk 6d., Bak 6d., Meyer 6d., B. Mandl 2s. 6d., W. S. 2s., R. Schwarz 2s., Mors 1s., Hassfeld 6d., Rotmann 1s., Polacek 6d., Narhelm 2d., A. Ullrich 1s., M. Homm 1s., J. Henkers 6d., T. Wlopa 6d., S. Frischork 6d., Dr. Buss 2s. 6d. Total £8 7s. 2d.

The entire proceeds of the collection have been handed over to the comrade, who has already left his abode of refuge.

M. HAY, Secretary.

(Continued from page 17).

nation's property, and the nation must dispose of it according to its needs." This is their opinion—their faith, and no economists of any camp will shake it.

"Eighty years ago we were settled in these prairies," one of those peasants said the other day. That land was a desert. "We have made the value of all this region; but half of it was taken by the landlords [in accordance with the law, of course; but we, peasants, do not admit that a law could be a law once it is unjust]. It was taken by the landlords—we must have it back."

"But if you take that land, and there are other villages in the neighbourhood which have no land but their poor allotments, what then?"

"Then they have a right to it, just as we have. But not the landlords!"

There is all the Social Question, all the Socialist wisdom, in these plain words.

"If the peasants seize the land, then the factory hands will apply the same reasoning to the factories!" exclaim the terrified correspondents of the English papers in reporting such plain talk.

Yes, they will. Undoubtedly they will. They must. Because, if they don't do it all our civilisation must go to wreck and ruin—like the Roman, the Greek, the Egyptian, the Babylonian civilisations went to the ground.

* *

Another important feature. The Russian peasants don't trust their representatives. These men from the plough have understood the gist of parliamentarism better than those who have grown infected gradually by Parliament worship. Their election fell upon this or that man; but they know they must not trust him. Election is somewhat of a piece with gambling. And therefore a number of private peasant delegates are now seen in the galleries of the Russian Duma, whom their villages have sent to keep watch over their representatives in Parliament. They know that these representatives will soon be spoiled and bribed one way or another. So they sent delegates—mostly old, respected peasants, not fine in words, not of the self-advertising class, men who never would be elected, but who will honestly keep their eye upon the M.P.'s.

However, although the Duma has been only a few days together, a general feeling grows in Russia that all this electioneering is not yet the proper thing. "What can the Duma do?" they ask all over Russia. "If the Government doesn't want it they will send it away. How can 500 men resist the Government if they makes up their minds to send them back to their homes?"

And so, all over Russia the feeling grows that the Parliament and its debates are not the right thing yet. It is only a preliminary to something else which is to come. "They will express our needs; they will agree upon certain things" . . . but a feeling grows in Russia that the action will have to come from the people.

And the underground work, the slow work of maturing convictions and of grouping together, goes on all over Russia as a preparation to something infinitely more important than all the debates of the Duma.

They don't even pronounce the name of this more important thing. Perhaps most of them don't know its name. But we know it and we may tell it. *It is the Revolution: the only real remedy for the redress of wrongs.*

JOHN MOST.

(Continued from No. 206.)

But here the Chicago tragedy had destroyed all illusions. As to Most he scarcely ever had any illusions about the Americans. Their mechanical skill is indeed immense; San Francisco will be rebuilt before the ashes are swept away from the alleys of Naples! But the hunt for the almighty dollar absorbs all other faculties, and that immense continent, the invaluable natural resources of which fell after the splendid War of Independence into the hands of the sturdy free citizens of those days, is now under the control of trusts and millionaires, assisted by the vilest press on earth and by the fullest bloom of religious cant. Civilisation is but skin-deep, freedom a mockery, human feeling totally absent as negro lynching, the immigration laws and the Gorki incident show up to date. The Labour movement has always suffered by this general disposition of minds; successful trade unions think no further of solidarity, but establish monopolies of their own; successful labour leaders use their position often as the political "bosses" do, and their action in the labour struggle is but a stepping stone for their future advancement. In the days of Most's arrival the Powderleys and Van Pattens were at the head of the unionist and Socialist movements, what has become of them? Most, who, with all his cynical way of talk in which he often indulged, was a German idealist of the old days which are gone for that country too, was disgusted at what he saw in America. Those who come from a country where a great part of the labour and political struggle is waged to obtain free speech, the full right of association, etc., overrate the power of these factors, and think that in England or the United States, where these liberties obtain, they would be continually used by all to the utmost for revolutionary propaganda until the people is roused to action. But in

reality capitalism decrees in these free countries that these beautiful liberties are written in golden letters in the statute books, but must not be used by the people, or they will be imprisoned or hanged just as in despotic countries. Thus the real difficulties of popular movements are the same in every country, and Most, who had had a warning of this in London soon got other warnings in the United States.

Had he been found anywhere in Illinois in May, 1886, the time of the Haymarket meeting, he would have been hanged like Spies, Parsons and their comrades. He happened to have delivered at that time a lecture at New York, and a lying press report of that lecture, supported by the testimony of journalist scoundrels, served to send him for a year to the New York Penitentiary. On one or two other occasions he was sent there again; for the last time he was thrown into prison after the death of McKinley. Whenever a revolutionary act was committed in the United States, the New York press called for the imprisonment or hanging of Most, and a pretext for another prosecution was soon found. But the old man treated all this with scorn and indifference, and kept his good humour.

It is to be regretted that this shameful treatment by the mass of the Americans, and the unfavourable impression which he obtained of the Labour movement on the whole, made him overlook the one redeeming factor in American life—the existence of numbers of independent, free men and women who work for their ideas by their example and by their serious discussion; it is those who began the Abolitionist, the early Anarchist, and many other progressive movements. Most, a born agitator, had no patience for their methods, which imply a degree of toleration towards opponents, whilst his natural impulse was to hit hard. In this way he remained separated from the American progressive elements who endeavour to convince individuals to act for themselves, whilst he strove to rouse the masses to destroy the system. It must be said, however, that the fault was not entirely on his side, that these Americans did nothing to meet him, nay, did worse—witness the “firebug” article of *Liberty*.

Most fell out with a great many people, but, a few instances excepted, his opinion was usually justified some time later by facts. He welcomed all genuine efforts of American propaganda, e.g., John Turner's first American tour. It was touching to read how P. Kropotkin's personal visit had delighted him. We all regret that he could never find the means to visit Europe again. He made many lecturing tours all over America, and the *Freiheit* was regularly published until his death. In 1886-7 it had to migrate to New Jersey; in the nineties it went for a short time to Rochester, N.Y., where Most then edited the daily German paper of that town, but soon found that a daily paper is a money matter and cannot be a propagandist paper. All the rest of the time the *Freiheit* was published at New York, and with the *Révolution (Temps Nouveaux)*, born also in 1879), Tucker's *Liberty* (1881), *Worker's Friend* (1885), and *Freedom* (1886), it was one of the oldest Anarchist papers.

Most was the author of Socialist songs which are still popular in Germany and Austria; he is said to have been impressive as an actor in “The Weavers,” etc., and when he began to tell of his early life or other less abstract subjects in the *Freiheit*, a poetic vein will not be denied to him, I believe. His pamphlets are numerous; the “Deistic Pestilence and Religious Plague of Man” is translated into many languages; in religious matters he was from first to last uncompromisingly atheistic and materialistic, and set his foot on all those modern humbugging efforts which in a roundabout way lead back to religious mental enslavement. His life work cannot be guessed from the inspection of these pamphlets, but is before us in the twenty-seven volumes of the *Freiheit*; some day a couple of volumes of well-selected articles will make him better and more lastingly known than he was of late years.

For the *Freiheit*, which had come to America as a refugee paper and had been unable to leave when many of its original supporters left or retired, had been too uncompromising to cater for local American popularity, and Most and his friends had to strive hard to keep together those who enabled the paper to live through all these years. It is, in face of the untimely death of Most, an item of consolation to me that he died before the *Freiheit*, and that his life's work has not died before him.

Death at barely sixty is untimely indeed, and with him a comrade died of uncompromising tenacity of purpose, plenty of good sense, real intellectual faculties, and good humour to boot: we have not many to lose like him.

M. N.

International Revolutionary Labour Union.

A new and interesting movement is being organised in Leeds, and, as the above name indicates, its object is, broadly speaking, to obtain Labour's immediate demands without resorting to political tactics. In other words, what is known as Direct Action and the General Strike are the means chosen for compelling capitalist concessions, while at the same time the complete overthrow of the present system by revolutionary means is kept constantly in view. In our next issue we shall print the manifesto that is being issued together with other details, and in the meantime we wish it every success, as such an effort to bring the workers into line for the economic struggle is emphatically the need of the moment.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Italy.

The events of the past month call for particular notice from those interested in the development of Socialist tactics. Less than two years ago we could point to an immense general strike in this country as a proof and example to the world; lately we have had a phenomenon of almost equal importance. Two years ago the Socialist forces of the country were united in action: the Parliamentarians lent their influence to at least the inception of the strike. They called it a political strike, and subsequent events proved it to have been, *as such*, a disaster. Plainly it was nothing more or less than a noble manifestation of working-class solidarity. But this aspect of it was somewhat obscured by the fact that party discipline, regulated by the Deputies, was thought to have been the chief incentive. Now, however, we have had a most unquestionable example of an independent labour demonstration.

This is made clear by the words of Turati (as reported by the official party organ, the *Avanti*) during the deliberation of the Parliamentary group. The question was the advisability of a general strike, and someone advanced in its favour the evident desire of the proletariat to so express their hostility to the action of the police and military at Turin. Turati answered, “It is not for us to act according to the will of the people, but to express our own.” They had a long discussion of a projected Bill for the regularisation of the intervention of the authorities in trade disputes; they tried to come to an understanding with the local (Rome) Chamber of Labour, but without result. Their influence on this body was so small that as soon as they agreed to disagree a general strike was proclaimed. This strike, carried out with thoroughness (excepting the railway men), has been scoffed at by many observers because of the absence of working men in any mass among the crowds that for three days were pushed about by the police; but surely a military tactician would not so scoff? Meantime the Deputies followed out their policy in the Chamber to the bitter end. They moved the adjournment to discuss the action of the authorities at Turin. None stood with them. They send in their resignation in mass. This was unanimously rejected. They insisted; and are now standing for re-election.

But this is not the historical event we set out to record. That took place with little deliberation, and, be it noted, without any orders from any Central Committee whatever. The local Chambers of Labour were solely responsible for the local action. It was not a national strike like two years ago, for it was not simultaneous, it did not reach the smaller and less highly organised provincial towns, and it did not include Genoa, where there was a split in the Chamber of Labour, now made permanent by the foundation of a second Chamber by the advanced party. But at Turin, Milan, Rome, Naples, to give only the names most widely known, the local organisations carried out completely and orderly general strikes, which in duration varied from one to five days. Throughout the country it was the same report of solidarity where labour is organised, and the same show of self-restraint in the face of armed provocation.

At Milan there was one tragic incident. The Anarchist Angelo Galli and other strikers were trying to persuade some porters to join them when they got to words and blows with the employer, who drew a knife and stabbed Galli, who died, and also wounded Carlo Gelosa, editor of the *Cry of the People*. Four thousand followed Galli to the cemetery, and at one moment, owing to the interruption of the armed forces, it looked as if there was going to be an ugly time for them, but happily the indignation was turned into that channel of cumulative determination which will accomplish more than mere vengeance.

K. W.

France.

Perhaps in France there has never been a more bizarre May Day than the one just past; bizarre from more than one point of view, whether political or proletarian. It has stripped the glamour off Clemenceau as a man of forceful character and strong Labour sympathies, to show the world what he is—a mere political puppet, while the expected General Strike for an eight-hour day resolved itself into a series of local demonstrations and partial strikes only. Labour came out, pelted the waiting troops with stones, oranges, and a whiff of powder, started sundry strikes throughout the country, and was demonstrative at will; but the original plan of general action failed, if it was even tried; there was no show of standing shoulder to shoulder in a compact mass and refusing to work till the eight-hour day was conceded. That has yet to come. We stated there would be difficulties in unanimously voicing the desire for an eight-hour day; it was probably owing to these difficulties, which might well seem insuperable in a first attempt of the kind, that a general strike did not take place. In spite, however, of the failure or lack of connected action, the workers proclaimed their grievances in no uncertain tone, and did something more than wrench many small concessions from “patrons” as small—they frightened the Government, police, and bourgeoisie into fits. Clemenceau, of course, and perhaps unconsciously, aided greatly thereto by his theatrical preparations (in view of coming elections) against a Clerical-Orleans-Anarchist led anti-Republican plot (apparently he was uncertain what to call it), which lashed the ministry into a compliant mood for the taking of reactionary measures. These began a week before May Day. Comrade Delesalle's home and the office of *Temps Nouveaux* were raided by the police, many arrests and expulsions took place, and domiciliary visits were paid to well-known labour agitators and clubs; Paris was filled with troops, and panic seized the bourgeoisie—they fled. The result was that on May Day the streets were turned into arsenals and drill-grounds; never since 1871 had there been such a display of troops, while every square became a police parade. The natural consequences followed. The workers collected, their processions were charged by cavalry and police, stone-throwing began, until as night fell Clemenceau's Cabinet-made revolution subsided into slumber and broken heads. The day in more senses than one was a farce—and yet good will come of it. Signs of the times, still small voices, made themselves heard. A military officer looking in at the Paris Bourse du Travail declared he was one with the people, and if ordered to fire on them would refuse to do so. Again, the flight of the bourgeoisie proved their terror at the bare threat of a general strike, or indeed of any solidly organised demonstration on the part of the workers. More and more clear it becomes that direct action—the General Strike—is the weapon of the future, and one that, guided by calm and sensible hands, must strike home as no other has yet done. Meanwhile on May Day, 1906, the strike idea held good in many respects. Many of the trade unions in the country at large had arranged for the men of certain factories to cease work simultaneously, and rather than fight with their employees the masters in many cases conceded every

demand. By the middle of the month a hundred thousand men were on strike in Paris alone, resolved on shorter hours and better pay; the same tale comes in from the provinces, in spite of military and police repression. But the strike of miners is broken for the present. Weakened by want of solidarity or the promises of the masters, the greater part of the men have resumed work. In every other industry, however, there are signs of increased restlessness and self-reliance on the part of the workers. May Day in France has not been without results. From Amiens comes the report that the brothers Régnier have sold their locksmith shops to an English firm, on condition that the works are removed elsewhere. This is their answer to the strikers of Fresenville, who it will be remembered lately burnt down their country palace. It is interesting to note that the first French strike in the modern sense (that of tanners) took place at Amiens in 1349. The next was of Paris jewellers two centuries later, which resulted in an enormous increase in the workmen's wages. The strike seems to have annoyed Francis I., for he made it actionable for more than five workmen to hold a meeting without their employer's leave.

The anti-militarist crusade in two senses continues—arrests are on the increase, with renewed activity of the propagandists. Our comrade Locquier, editor of the *Ville of Epinal*, has been sent to prison for six months, and the publication of his little paper is consequently suspended. In poor circumstances, his imprisonment is a great hardship for his family, but we do not suppose it will change his sentiments. That the seed of anti-militarism should sprout and grow beside Anarchism—which stands for belief in a Social Revolution—is become the dread of every Government in Europe. They know they are upheld by force alone, and anything which saps that force must be instantly crushed. But the nut will not be an easy one to crack. At every French arsenal anti-militarists are busy. Brest especially is one of their strongest centres, for the Socialists in the municipality are one with them. The burden of huge armaments falls never on the rich but only on the poor, and Brest thinks it is time the poor, especially the poor who have to be marines and men-of-war'smen, should have a word in the matter. If report is true, more than one French ironclad numbers an anti-militarist delegate among its crew, and the work of propaganda goes on in spite of continual arrests. Moreover, the idea is creeping over Europe. It has taken firm root in Switzerland, and has for over a year been discussed in Sweden, where at the very moment of conflict with Norway young Socialists were distributing appeals to the conscripts to refuse to mobilise, war; especially against a sister nation, being, as they said, a monstrous and contemptible thing. In view of the enthusiasm of the young Swedish revolutionary Socialist party the Government has taken fright, and talks of passing laws to gag all anti-militarist talk. But it is easier to pass a law than to kill an idea.

Since we are on the subject of May Day, we may state that the day was one of demonstrations and strikes among our Czech comrades, and they suffered for their principles in many parts of Bohemia. *Práce* had two of its issues seized by the police for containing articles that pass current elsewhere—one being a translation of Kropotkin's *Commune of Paris*! Later the editor, Kacha, and two of his staff were arrested, their homes being searched.

United States.

The May number of *Wilshire's Magazine* contains a full report of the manufactured circumstances that led to the arrest of the three members of the Miner's Federation, accused of the murder of ex-Governor Steunenberg, of Idaho, last December. And the more one reads the more one marvels at the extraordinary power the wage-earners of the States have, during the passing of time, quiescently permitted their capitalists and press to assume. To every society or State rules and order of sorts must be conceded, or owing to the world being (as William Morris used to say) so full of fools—and others—work could not be done nor efficient progress and growth assured. But instantly that a mania for order and law points to the formation of political bodies as the safest if not the only road for an aspiring society or State to travel, the trouble begins. Politics may not be corrupt, but there seems to be an essentially corruptive element in them, for no man who puts his hand to that plough is ever his true self again. Who could recognise in the modern nation of Americans, that simple, manly, brave-hearted band of English colonists who less than 150 years ago threw off the yoke of their German-bred king and defied tyranny under every form. With the rise and growth of wealth and politics every attribute of the founders of the United States seems to have vanished. True, Americans still retain their forefathers' obstinacy, much dauntless Anglo-Saxon courage, and not a little of the clean if narrow Puritan spirit of the "Mayflower" pilgrims (especially where it concerns the morals of foreigners), but the greed for wealth and maniacal worship of the ballot-box have wiped out the old simplicity of character and devotion to high ideals. Now every man is a politician because politics lead to power. He has become a snob because dollars mean more to him than clean hands and integrity of conduct; while childish vanity, love of display, and absolute indifference where waste of life and gold is concerned, shames even the spirit of Rome under the Empire. Nowhere on the face of the globe is to be seen a spectacle of such mingled retrogression and ambition, such titanic strength, such forcefulness of youth and hope as in the United States. And nowhere else are the workers such blind fools. For it is they, these aliens, who have built up the fabric of this vast country, they who have covered its surface with cities and towns, who have made a nation of the once scattered body of colonists, who evolved every fraction of its wealth, and who now die daily so that the "boss" may rule and devour the fruit of their blood and toil. And what a "boss"! The modern American capitalist, who, as soon as he gets a veneer of polish, quits the land that gave him birth and gold, to live in Europe and have his boots licked by its gambling, spendthrift aristocracies; or, if a stay-at-home, to rule over politics and the blind working man who believes in politics! Surely it is the last that has clouded his eyes that it is only in moments of conflict—when the boss says *thou shalt* and the worker answers *I shan't*—that he sees the meshes of the net encircling him. Out of past conflicts Socialism was born—but it is German-made, and one has but to look at the Fatherland to see what that is. So now in the States, it is an off-shoot from German Socialism—to wit, revolutionary—that dares the capitalists and their press to hang the innocent men in the Idaho jail. Not but what that other Socialism mutters, but fettered with red tape and trade-union precedents it skulks in the background, and almost refusing to believe that laws can be stretched or scotched where a trade-union official is concerned, would fain ask "those other fellows" to voice their indignation less loudly, for does not that ardent politician—Governor Gooding, of Idaho—promise a fair trial? We noted in *Freedom's* May issue the illegal proceedings connected with the arrest and imprisonment of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone. This gives promise of a fair trial indeed! *Wilshire* has devoted several pages to the inner history of the secret arrests, of the special train that carried the manacled prisoners out of their own State, of the unflagging energy of Chief McParland, head of the western section of Pinkerton's detective agency, to compass the execution of his prisoners, he having even openly declared that they would never leave his hands alive. Not content with the crimes confessed by his creature Orchard, he singles out one Adams, who promptly confesses to having buried bottles of Greek fire in a certain district as an agent of the Miners' Federation. A great digging operation takes place, Adams and Governor Gooding working and

chatting side by side. Nothing is found on that occasion; but later, through information given by the local chief of police, a tin can and a glass stopper are unearthed. Proof positive that the bottles of stuff had lain there, and been dissolved by the action of the fluid. The one glass stopper caused Gooding to joyfully proclaim that his last doubt as to the guilt of the accused was removed, and he invited Gompers to send a delegation to hear the confessions. Apparently all hangs on the construction a jury composed of farmers will put on the "confessions" of two rogues. The trial has been postponed to October, which will give McParland and his capitalist employers more time to knot the hemp, and enable Debs and our Socialist friends to create a wave of public opinion that shall unknot it. Supposedly, Orchard is the real assassin, and he went about the business like a stage villain. He had openly for days before reconnoitered his victim's house, fieldglass in hand. He posed as a dealer in explosives. His room in the hotel, a mile away, was littered with particles of dynamite. He made no effort to get away, but for two days waited for the police to call; when they arrested him he at once confessed to "a plot." The writer of the article in *Wilshire's*, who has visited every spot and investigated every fact connected with the case, states his absolute conviction that the Mine Owners' Association, with the help of their political machinery, the capitalist press, and Pinkerton's agency, are engineering the death of their prisoners; that every fact and shred of evidence is being distorted to this end, and that it will be as much as Labour and Socialism can do to save them.

Notices of Meetings.

The Agitator Group have been doing good work in South East London, and have arranged meetings at the following places on Sunday evenings at 7.30:—June 3. Woolwich, outside Arsenal Gates; June 10, Catford, near fire station; June 17, Deptford Broadway. Speakers: Comrades Carter and Casey.

Plaistow Group hold meetings at Green Gate, Barking Road, Plaistow, on Thursday evenings.

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