

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY: ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

Conscience Again.

That very tiresome and tenacious person, the conscientious objector is still busy trying to demonstrate his right to the possession of a conscience. And although in a few cases more civilised treatment has been accorded to him, there are glaring instances of actual torture having been applied to certain objectors. A recent case has come under notice where a Quaker resister was forcibly vaccinated and inoculated. His protests were useless, and force overcame his resistance. The nice full-dress discussions in Parliament upon the whole case of these gallant fighters for liberty make very choice reading, but when we get down to actual facts we find that even where the Government pledges its word to remedy some glaring evil, nothing is done because the military bar the way. Already we hear that they boast they are the supreme power and laugh at the Parliamentary decisions. Such is the Frankenstein fashioned by the Government with the acquiescence of the people of Briton. And this is the monster that is to keep inviolate our manifold liberties!

Military Abductions.

In the mad bad old pre-war days kidnapping was a misdemeanour punishable with imprisonment, but the military being a law unto themselves scorn the nicely-adjusted morals of ordinary people and consider such action wholly justifiable. A particularly bad case reaches us from near Bury St Edmunds. A shepherd who was ordered by the local tribunal to appear before a Medical Board was kidnapped by the military on his way thither. He was forced into uniform and sent to a unit without any medical examination. It is refreshing to know that the tribunal concerned discussed the advisability of obtaining a right of action against the people who arrested the man, the recruiting officer who authorised it, and also the Secretary of State for War! What sublime faith these people have in the long arm of the law!

"Wastage"

Speaking at a recent Annual meeting of the Royal Courts of Justice and Legal Temperance Society, Mr. W. Leif Jones M.P. is reported to have said the new commandment during this war was "Thou shalt not waste." A very nice platitude indeed, but one utterly at variance with the facts; with the wastage caused by wounds and death of some ten million soldiers in Europe, it shows an abject lack of proportion to say "Don't waste." Capitalism has during its few hundred years of life claimed the right to waste human life on a colossal scale, against which, in comparison, the few lives wasted annually through drink sink into insignificance. The outstanding fact to remember is, however, that Capitalism is largely at the root of this particular "wastage." Given healthy congenial occupations and a chance of human expansion in a properly organised form of society, there would be little fear of this or any other of the ghastly wastage that occurs in all the ramifications of Capitalism.

Looking Ahead.

Another form of wastage has been engaging the attention of our experts. This time it is infant mortality. Dr. T. R. Whipman, of Mayfair, has discovered that "If proper precautions had been taken 20 years earlier we should have a quarter million more men of fighting age than we have at present." Now that our pastors and masters have come to regard each struggling scrap of male humanity born into this world as being so much potential cannon fodder, one can hardly regret the loss of the babies. They are happier in never having tasted the joys and advantages of our armour-plated civilisation.

Bonuses for Future Cannon Fodder.

A similar touching concern for the unborn babies has been agitating the minds of many great men of France. Evidently they are sceptics over there with regard to the Malthusian theory, for they have discovered that at the past rate of peace time depopulation, in a hundred years time there will remain no happy, free French people to inherit the glorious fruits of the European war. Who then will pay the mighty interest on the war Loans and who provide victims for Capitalist exploitation? But a brilliant remedy is at hand, very much on a par with the expedient which saved to the nation the 1936 class of recruits to the French Army. The suggestion is that a bonus of 500 francs each for the mothers of every first two children born, 1,000 francs for the third, and 2,000 for the fourth, every baby after that number bringing another 1,000 francs grist to the family mill. All these sums to be paid when the child has reached its first year. Wise precaution which will avoid the risks of the heavy mortality during the first year of life. With such heavy expenditure as this on the part of the State, it needs very little imagination to picture the slave compounds of the future, with that unit of capitalism the family, nicely regimented and organised for the profiteers that run society.

Organising Child Labour.

Still another case of war on wastage. A schoolmaster this time. He puts forward the suggestion that the boys this year might take a *useful* holiday. Delightful adjective, but hardly compatible with the word holiday. The idea is to employ the boys on unskilled agricultural work. We have cited these cases to show that the profiteer is alive to the necessity for preventing wastage and for speeding up, if he is to get his usual pre-war dividends and so keep the flag of Empire flying. They serve to show what we are likely to expect in the shape of industrial organisation in the future. Everything will be sacrificed to the Capitalist demand for retrenchment, and not only the adults, but also the children, will be organised more assiduously for the production of profits.

News reaches us from South Africa that the iron heel is everywhere being planted upon the necks of the depraved beings who dare revolt against military despotism. All anti-war publications are vigorously suppressed. Even remarks made in public are liable to cause the individual to be seized and charged. A most glaring case of class justice is that of a Socialist comrade in Cape Town. He was charged with having published a pamphlet calculated to excite public feeling and after a farcical trial, convicted and sentenced to a fine of £50 or six months hard labour. But this atrocious sentence appears to have staggered the Governor General who graciously reduced it to a fine of £5 or four days imprisonment. This and other incidents only serve to show that wherever the Union Jack flies, military despotism is triumphant. How long will the outraged people allow it to continue?

To those of us who have been faced with the uphill fight against enormous odds, it is very heartening to receive encouragement in the shape of a resolution passed by the Cape Town Social Democratic Federation which has just reached us. The fact that comrades from beyond the equator should have stretched their hands across in friendly greeting and appreciation of our work, will help us to fresh effort in our common fight against governmental tyranny. The resolution declares:

"That the Social Democratic Federation, Cape Town, expresses its admiration at the uncompromising anti-militarist attitude adopted by FREEDOM which has been the cause of the outrage on its office by the authorities; and also expresses the hope that the callous injustice of the said authorities will have the effect of increasing rather than suppressing the efforts of FREEDOM which have so long stood for the cause of humanity."

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Our Editor Sent to Prison.

The truism that some people are fated to have fame thrust upon them has been borne out yet once again in the passing of our comrade Lilian Woolf and our editor from our midst. The sentences of two months and three months respectively which on Saturday, June 24, were passed upon them for daring to criticise and oppose conscription after it had become the law of the land, are ones which they will cheerfully serve in the consciousness that we live in a period when the cause of Freedom can only be upheld in such a way.

To few of us indeed ever comes the rare privilege of testifying to our beliefs in this manner. To most of us an armchair sort of philosophy dominates our mental horizon, and we do not perhaps feel ourselves called upon to receive this rare gift at the hands of fate.

Before the war this may also have been the outlook of our comrades, but the outbreak of hostilities and the consequent loss of the few liberties we still prized, brought the vital conviction home to them, that although life outside the prison walls is dear, yet immeasurably dearer is the life in the prison cell when it is the price paid for freedom's fight. To have taken up any other attitude towards the vital questions of to-day would have been impossible to them, and so throwing down the gauntlet to the authorities they defied them to do their worst. Thus two more names are added to our lengthening roll of honour. Through such action is the fact being forced home to all thinking persons that prison is no longer looked upon as the effective means of chastising the disgraced wrongdoer but as the cherished reward granted those who have dared to defy constitutional authority. It has in fact defeated the end for which it was instituted.

The police court where authority sits enthroned in the person of the magistrate, the correctly attired counsel, and all the parasitical crowd of pestiferous humanity always associated with the administration of man-made law, is not quite the place perhaps to convince one of the glory of our great British constitution.

The earnest thinker is indeed filled with contempt for the pettifogging meanness of the whole procedure. To those that pocket huge fees and turn their smug comfortable smile of benevolent contempt upon the defendants, it means nothing at all that a man or woman has been brought within the clutches of the law because they possessed ideals. Their horizon has been limited in proportion as they were able to pocket extravagant fees, and when the aspirations of revolutionists come under their purview they see only individuals who, never wise enough to acquire any considerable wealth, would destroy the very pillars of society.

But even in such a court it must have roused the magistrate out of his boredom, when our comrades attacked the State, showed up the hypocrisy of the members of the Cabinet, and exposed the rampant militarism that we are up against. Tom Keell forced home the point that, although might was on the side of the law, the right was undeniably with us.

Thus by their action they have struck another blow at tyranny, and shown the people of Britain that a few at least of their countrymen and women are willing to disappear behind prison doors in order to demonstrate the principles for which they stand, and although the result may not yet be apparent, they are helping to create that public feeling which in time will assert itself and finally end in the overthrow of this accursed military despotism.

A stand such as they have made is never in vain, for the period in which we live has demanded this proof of sincerity and faith, and it will surely inspire us to renewed activity and greater efforts in the cause of liberty. Let therefore our tribute to these courageous comrades be an ever-expanding growth of our movement and an increase in the circulation of FREEDOM and the VOICE OF LABOUR. For thirty years has FREEDOM endeavoured to keep alive in the people the spirit of revolt, and now with our Editor in prison it remains with us to go forward unhesitatingly, secure in the belief that determined resistance alone to all forms of tyranny, will win back our lost liberties to us and lead us on to lasting victory.

CONSCIENCE AND THE STATE.

The gallant fight put up by the conscientious objectors against the grim forces of militarism has done something to stir the mind of the very unimaginative Englishman. In the sturdy opposition of these men he is beginning to see the will and spirit of those ancestors whom he has been taught to believe fought for and obtained the very liberties he is supposed to be enjoying to-day. The martyrdom of the conscientious objector might well find a parallel in the stand made by the Dissenting and Puritan elements that fought against the religious intolerance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their battle-cry then as now was liberty of conscience, and the enemy the priestly tyrants, who, like the military to-day, deemed that they were a law unto themselves and held the power of life and death over their victims. But that was before the Church had been subsidised by the State, and the priest was more or less supreme, the reigning monarch either being his fellow-conspirator against the liberties of the people, or at best a plastic being moulded after the fashion of the priestly mind.

But though the fires of Smithfield were kindled and torture did its worst, the moral power of the martyred few overcame the forces of reaction and won the right of freedom of conscience. The very freedom, be it noted, that our rulers declare to be the corner-stone of the British greatness to-day! The revival of the Inquisition and torture chamber by the British military make us realise the necessity for guarding the individual against the ever-growing tyranny of the State and its inevitable weapon—militarism.

Being accustomed to take everything for granted, taught to believe in the "State" myth, and accepting without refutation the assertion that the State is our guardian and exists to protect us, we have submitted almost without protest to the despotic power which the State has caused the military to wield.

It does not seem to have occurred to the average Englishman to glance at European history. Had he done so, he would realise that mankind lived for centuries without the beneficent arms of the State around it; that it is an entirely modern institution and came into existence after the centralising process which began in the sixteenth century, and ended in giving us the present map of Europe with its huge empires and mighty armies. It is in fact the crystallised expression of modern Capitalism, and its development followed the lines of capitalist evolution.

Let us disabuse our minds of the myth that the State is society. Society has existed from those prehistoric times when mankind first dwelt in droves or tribes until to-day, when we see society organised for the purpose of legal plunder by the State, which operates through the Government of the country. Government being founded on force, is impossible without that blessed trinity, the army, the navy, and the police force. The Government is the god-head to which the people bow and do homage to the eternal mystery the paternal State.

Turning back the pages of history, it is refreshing to know that there was a period when the people of Europe did not venerate the modern idol—authority. But the State has been the chief instrument in establishing this mighty menace to our freedom. Capitalist society is only possible when composed of units all more or less automatic in their mode of life and thought. Capitalism, in moulding the huge machine that runs society, had no use for the original thinker or the man who dared question the authority of the State. That is why the subjection of the people to-day is a more ghastly thing than the serfdom of the middle ages, and why the heroic resistance of the conscientious objector appears as the one bright ray across a black horizon. He is doing more to demonstrate the truth that liberty and the State are incompatible than any revolutionist of our time. He dares to strike a blow at the sacredness of authority and is forcing even the inert, placid, respectable member of society to question the wisdom of the State. He is saving us from moral

ruin and intellectual dry-rot. But because of that are we to voice no organised protest against the horror of this hateful period? Are we to argue in nice set phrases about the breakdown of Capitalism when all the time the military have gained supreme command of our destinies? It is not enough that we look with admiration at the resistance of these men, it is not by submitting to tyranny that reaction can be checked. Active opposition is the only shot that gets home. So by tearing aside the veil of mystery from the State we can sow the seeds of doubt in the minds of the masses. We can prove that militarism became powerful only when the State became powerful, that liberty of conscience can have no real existence so long as the State claims to do our thinking for us. That moral and intellectual expansion is only possible when we cease to be mere appendages of the State. What shall it profit us if the State with our help wins the whole of Europe? Nothing at all, for we have given up our freedom to become the nicely adjusted, well-disciplined, automatic machines demanded by the military. What more entrancing condition can we aspire to? And lest we grow to accept this death in life our active protests must join those of the resisters who are fighting the real battle of freedom.

There is no *via media*; either we accept the tyranny of the State and the appalling thing for which it stands, or else we join the swelling ranks of the conscientious objectors. For as Kropotkin so eloquently declares: "There are struggles and conflicts that kill. And there are those that launch humanity forwards."

M. B. H.

THE TRIAL.

At Clerkenwell Police Court on Saturday, June 24, Comrade Tom Keell and Lilian Woolf were charged before Mr. Bros with committing offences under the Defence of the Realm Act.

The charge against our comrade Woolf was in connection with the leaflet "Defying the Act" a reprint of the front page of the *Voice of Labour* of April 15. The two charges against comrade Keell were for printing and publishing this leaflet and with attempting to prepare for publication an article on the Irish Rebellion.

There were many sympathisers and comrades in court, which was cleared during the evidence of the military witness. Both comrades made telling comments during the proceedings, Tom Keell giving an excellent and well-reasoned defence. Lilian Woolf who pleaded guilty, remarked "that there seemed little to say as her whole crime appeared to be that of telling the truth." If the Realm really was in danger through the truth being told, she was undoubtedly guilty and did not regret her action whatever the penalty.

Tom Keell in his speech said among other things, "I have always heard that the State existed for the benefit of the people. As a matter of fact it exists quite apparently for the benefit of a few individuals.

"I deny the right of the State to take away any man from his ordinary occupation and compel him to be a soldier.

"We find the people had been persuaded to accept the Registration Act under false pretences. They were told it would not be used for the purpose of conscription. We know now that honourable and gallant gentlemen in the House of Commons lied.

"My actions have been consistent all the way through. As an Anarchist I deny your right to command my actions. I deny your right to my body.

"There was a Man who was brought up before Pilate, who said, 'Call no man master.' If He were here to-day He would be endangering the safety of the Realm. Would you punish Him for it as you are punishing me?

"The best writers, the best minds through the ages have always registered their voice against compulsion. I stand on the same ground as the best men of this country."

A penalty of £100 fine or three months imprisonment for the offence in connection with the leaflet was inflicted on Tom Keell and £25 or two months on Lilian Woolf. The second charge was withdrawn on Tom Keell challenging the court to prove that because an article was in type it would necessarily be printed. The magistrate listened patiently and impartially to both our comrades, and one hopes that some of their words have had good effect.

THE MARTYRS OF IRELAND.

From *Coast Seamen's Journal*.

Another Irish revolt against English rule has come to an end. It is a strange coincidence that a little over a century ago there occurred an uprising in Ireland strikingly similar in plan and result to the one which has just been so ruthlessly suppressed. Instead of voyaging by stealth from Germany to Ireland, the leader of that other uprising voyaged by stealth from France. Instead of encouragement and arms supplied by Germany, encouragement and arms were supplied to the United Irishmen in 1803 by France. But otherwise the undertakings were alike in plan and purpose. Arms had been gathered secretly, and it was agreed to, that the Dublin contingent should seize the English Viceroy, the Castle and the public buildings. At the same moment the men of the secret society were to rise in the counties and march upon Dublin. Unfortunately, the expected help failed to come from France, the contingents from the counties were misled by false reports of informers and secret agents, the uprising was put down and eight weeks later the young leader of the rebellion was given mock trial, in which he had been betrayed in advance by his counsel, and was hanged as a felon.

It was said then, as some men say now, that the spirit of revolt was crushed forever, and the base and cowardly among the "conquerors" exulted with abusive words and insulting cartoons above the dead then, even as the base and mean and cowardly in spirit exult above the dead to-day.

But Robert Emmet did not die the day his body was hanged upon the gallows. He lives yet and will live forever while there beats a manly heart or dwells an intrepid soul in the breast of a free man anywhere in all the wide world.

Still this courageous voice speaks hope to the oppressed and defiance to tyranny. Though his body has long mouldered in the grave, his soul goes marching on. And now the hands of the executioners have given Ireland other names to link with that of Emmet's soul; have added others to the bright list of the brave and hapless who have died for Freedom's sake.

In the merciless haste characteristic of military trials, which are always a mere mockery of justice, the scholarly and lovable Pearse, John McBride, "Jim" Connolly, John McDermott and others who had the courage of their conviction were led out and shot to death because they loved freedom better than life. Such is the brief chronicle of the last and most cruelly stupid blunder committed by a government which has for centuries exhibited nothing but cruelty and stupidity, or both, in its dealings with the people of Ireland.

Surely the oppressors and tyrants of this world must some time learn that the surest way to feed the flame of liberty burning on the hidden altars of an oppressed people's heart and soul is to pour upon that flame the blood of martyrs. If we mistake not the teachings and verdicts of history, the executions which seem to have smothered in blood the aspirations of Irishmen for liberty and independence of their native land have made that liberty and that independence as certain to come as the rising of to-morrow's sun.

The execution of the captive rebel leaders automatically and inevitably defeated its own purpose; for in the very instant of their death rebellion was crowned and glorified with the halo of martyrdom.

These plain men, some of whom were all but nameless and unknown, suddenly put on the immortality of heroes and entered into the company of the deathless ones who in all ages have been chosen to die for their people. . . . A few captives who could do no possible harm in prison are shot dead, and the very name of England becomes abhorrent to millions of the Empire's unwilling subjects.

It is doubtful if all the humiliations of twenty inglorious months have so emphasised the lack of wise and far-sighted leadership in England as has this stupid and fatally harmful execution of the captive leaders of poor Ireland's desperate and hopeless effort to achieve liberty and independence. For the conquerors have crowned the vanquished with victory and made of these poor prisoners an invisible army that can never be beaten—a moral force which in the long run will be invincible.

So these dead, who so wholly failed of their purpose living, will command success from their graves. Peace to their ashes!

ANARCHY.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal.—*Century Dictionary*.

THE WAR AFTER THE WAR.

The above heading is taken from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of June 13, and below it we find these words of the one and only—thank heaven!—Mr. Hughes, drum whacker to the Empire: "All our sacrifices will have been made in vain if after being victorious, we leave Germany the means of again beginning her commercial war." There, in plain English, the cause of all modern wars is stated—Commercialism. The aims of the recent conference at Paris are clearly shown in the resolutions passed thereat, but that we may be quite sure that we are not misunderstanding or mis-stating, here is what the *Pall Mall Gazette* says:—

"What is aimed at is the creation of large Allied trade and industry units protected against German competition in the home markets, and enabled to compete against German trade in neutral countries by means of cheapness of production and marketing obtained by the co-operation of big key industries of all the Allied countries, and by special measures as regards the "natural products" of each allied country, which will be reserved for the Allies."

A most sinister programme for the worker! Protection and cheapness of production. We know what that means! Low wages and high prices. "Key industries" is a vague term, but presumably means "trusts" and "combines;" we know what they mean for the worker! In short, the Governments are going to fasten tighter and heavier chains upon the worker as his reward for having blindly sacrificed himself in this war! It was ever thus! Will it be ever thus? Yes, just as long as—but no longer than—the worker allows *his* land and *his* "natural products" to be stolen and owned by the capitalist, and his labour to be exploited by him.

The war after the war!

That is to say the war which has been waged for centuries, is being waged now, as far as it can be under military rule, which will undoubtedly be waged with unexampled bitterness after the present strife is over and the Allies have made their mercenary arrangements for smashing German commercialism. Oh! How these capitalists love one another. Remember this too! Asquith and Co., have told us again and again that we are fighting and making those sacrifices, of which Mr. Hughes speaks, not in any contest against the German people. Oh, no! But we are out to crush the wicked Prussian military caste; that's all. But now, that apparently, our politicians see the end of the struggle approaching they are letting poor pussy out of the bag, and are crying out that it is high time to prepare for "the war after the war"! We must crush German commercial competition.

The war after the war will be the battle between labour and capital, more fierce than ever it has been before because on the worker's part it will be a fight of desperation. Before the war their case was evil enough, but after the war it will be far worse because their blind leaders have betrayed them, giving away every little bit of liberty which was the outcome of years of strenuous strife. The one comforting point is this, that surely now the workers eyes must be opened and be able to see clearly that capitalism has but one ambition—to make as much money as possible at the expense of the worker. The issue is clear cut now; it will be war to the death—the decease of the capitalist or the enslavement of the worker. The capitalist is skilfully and strongly entrenched. The Government is in his hands and the Law is his ally. The workers—their forces are disorganised, the Government is against them and the law stands between them and their foes. Labour Parties, Trade Unions, State Socialism, all are futile; they may possibly help us on the way toward freedom, but they are only Governments of other kinds. Government is the enemy against which the worker must aim his blows—that will be the war after the war, the destruction of *all* forms of Government and the reward will be—freedom, complete and individual. In brief, the workers' one way of salvation is Anarchism, each for all and all for each and no lap-dogs.

W. T. S.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

A Neutral on the Naval "Victory."

What the German and English newspapers gloat over as a naval victory *Solidaridad Obrera* of Barcelona describes as "the assassination of thousands of beings" referring to Beatty's and Jellicoe's reports, regretting the death of officers but intimating that the loss of the *S. O. S.* does not affect the English cause because there are many to replace them, *Solidaridad* compares "these English admirals" with a

Spanish editor who stated in connection with a railway accident "Fortunately the carriages were third class." Our confrère concludes: "what a mad world!"

Spanish Agricultural Strike.

A strike of field-workers is threatened in Jerez in connection with the terms of work for 1917.

Italian Agricultural Congress.

At Milan there has been held a National Congress of land workers. Nothing very striking seems to have occurred, the Congress discussing mainly small palliative measures.

Argentine Labour Martyrs.

Agitation continues strong in the Argentine on behalf of the nine comrades sentenced to 25 years imprisonment in connection with a strike at The Cold Storage of La Plata more than a year ago.

Tyranny In Porto Rico.

At a commission of enquiry as to the abominable treatment of the workers on the sugar and tobacco plantations in Porto Rico a witness stated that under the rule of the United States the workers had even lost many of the small privileges they had under Spanish rule. "Is not that in accordance with the invariable practice of the Anglo-Saxon in dealing with foreign races?" asked a member of the Commission.

Swiss Militarists.

In Switzerland the capitalists are conducting a campaign against deserters who have taken refuge in the free Republic.

L. J. S.

An Appeal for "Freedom."

We urgently appeal to comrades to support us at this moment, as we wish to make *FREEDOM* an eight-page paper again as soon as possible. We also have to replenish the stock of books and pamphlets taken away by the police. Some comrades have already come to the support of our Guarantee Fund, but we must have much more money for the above purposes. Let us have cash as soon and as often as possible, and thus show the authorities that their persecution will strengthen rather than weaken our propaganda. Money should be sent to the Manager of "*FREEDOM*."

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(June 2—June 27.)

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