

Freedom

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NOTES.

Bonar's War Profits.

An interesting sidelight upon the profits made by shipowners was recently disclosed by Bonar Law in the House. He declared that he held some 15 investments in small shipping companies, amounting in all to £8,100. In 1915 he received in interest £3,847, and last year this was increased, so that his investment doubled in value in two years. Of course, the shipowners were angry at this little exposure of their lawful profits, but it is quite easy to see why the cost of living has advanced so enormously, and also why a minority with powerful interests to defend do not want the war to end. To kill the goose that lays the golden eggs would be sheer folly, and there is much logic in their opposition to peace. But placed against the small minority constituting the shipowning fraternity, is the great mass of the people ardently desirous of peace, a people that is tired of the endless recriminations between the British Premier and the German Chancellor, of the well stage-managed political war dances executed for the benefit of a credulous audience, each actor claiming that he alone can conjure up the figure of liberty. These exhibitions, together with the worked-up orgy of hate against "Hun frightfulness," have served their turn, but the masses are weary of the prancings of Premiers, the cant of politicians, the war whoops of the gutter press, and the swashbuckling of the ministers of religion. They see that the war years have left them bankrupt in all but a tradition of liberty, and all the evils they discern are suffered because to be bullied by the military, to be bossed by employers, and their thinking performed for them by the Northcliffe press, has become a habit, and starvation has not yet made them tighten their belts.

Allies Looking for Loot.

So the tragedy continues. The great mass of the people in all the belligerent nations are heartily tired of war, but only one nation has had the courage to declare for "no annexations and no indemnities," thus throwing down the challenge to the other belligerents. But despite the vapourings of Henderson, Vandervelde, and Co. concerning the purity of motive actuating the Imperialist masters of France and Britain, it is characteristic of British statesmen that they are out for loot. With their covetous eyes cast upon Mesopotamia and Germany's African Colonies, and with the vision of a re-annexed Alsace-Lorraine urging the predatory French Imperialists to fresh efforts, there is still a very remote prospect of peace unless definite action comes from all the peoples concerned. Lip service that we are fighting for the independence of small nations is now seen to be so much bunkum, and the recent outpourings of the German Chancellor and the British Premier will not deceive anyone. But although the gloom seems very thick we might turn for consolation to the inspiring legend of the Kilkenny cats, and in the difficulties that increasingly beset the Governments of Europe, see Labour's opportunity.

Impotency of Parliament.

The *Daily News* has been taking the Government to task for what they declare to be "levity and timidity." In its issue of July 20 Parliament is accused of being hopelessly bossed by the Cabinet oligarchy and taking it "lying down." In a nice little tirade the writer declares that there has been misrepresentation and inconsistency. "Floundering in the air and floundering over Mesopotamia, tricks and conflicts with labour, and over all an air of shiftiness, uncertainty, hand-to-mouth nimbleness that creates everywhere a sense of disquiet and concern," stating finally that "the administration of the country has fallen into a profligate habit which is imperilling our highest interests." The *Daily News*, in thus aptly describing the crimes of the present Government, does not see that they are the effects of well-defined causes. That wherever Governments and bureaucracies reach maturity these symptoms develop. That Parliament sits helpless and spineless is inevitable because they are paid £400 yearly to

meekly acquiesce in Governmental decisions. The whole Parliamentary procedure is a ghastly sham that continues only because voters believe the myth that they possess "representative government." These criticisms will fall on deaf ears until Labour awakes to a vision of a new heaven and a new earth.

No One to be Hanged.

The Mesopotamia scandal, following so closely upon the heels of the Dardanelles report, has made even the most crassly stupid understand something about bureaucratic genius. For ourselves we express no sort of surprise, because the folly and stupidity exhibited by those responsible are failings usually possessed by the men chosen to boss Government departments. The failure of the Cabinet to take any further action to punish the guilty has helped to disclose what sort of power we are up against, and it is realised that the Government is too much involved to allow of any form of judicial enquiry being held, for the members of the Government quite naturally prefer to hang together rather than to be hanged separately.

"An Irregularity."

The sufferings of the conscientious objector, Brightmore, having led to a question in Parliament on his behalf, evoked the characteristic reply on the part of the Government that those responsible for the torture he was subjected to had been guilty of "an irregularity." And there, we suppose, the matter will end, although it is no secret that up and down the country other commanding officers and brigadier-generals are also guilty of "irregularities" in their treatment of "conscience" men. The word used to denote the damnable torture inflicted upon this particular victim very aptly discloses the state of the official mind. Unable to understand the meaning of conscience and possessing no imagination to enable them to picture suffering, the term "irregularity" was indeed entirely suitable. Meanwhile, Brightmore is undergoing another court-martial, and we suppose he will be subjected to some fresh form of torture, and those guilty of the "irregularity" will go unpunished.

Lord Harcourt as Revolutionist.

Someone observed years ago that "We are all Socialists nowadays." Since the Russian Revolution happened we might almost say: "We are all Revolutionists nowadays." Lord Harcourt speaking on June 30 deprecated the idea of a Republic in this country, as "we had already the most perfect democracy that the world had ever conceived." But, in spite of this "perfect democracy," he still thinks a revolution necessary, for he went on to say:

"There was, however, a revolution in Great Britain which was desirable after the war—the immediate resumption and re-establishment in peace of personal freedom. During the war personal freedom had ceased to exist; but when the war was over without a moment's delay we wanted recovery of our personal freedom. The supremacy of the House of Commons had been destroyed; the supreme direction of affairs had passed into the hands of a directorate. Their fight, when peace came, must be against the assumption of power by Jacks-in-office who derived their authority not from capacity but from the Orders in Council which were the source of their creation."

So there still seems to be a few imperfections in our "perfect democracy."

The "Dispatch" on Michaelis.

The *Daily Dispatch* of June 21 made two very interesting comments on the speech of the new German Chancellor. On page 5 it said:

"He has out-Hindenbarged his master. His bellicose statement is Junkerism pure and simple."

On page 4 of the same issue we read:

"A Junker speech, whether in its leanings on home or on foreign policy, it certainly was not."

OUR MISTAKE.

We had occasion recently to recognise a certain defect in our movement. We flattered ourselves then that it was an error of tactics only. Alas! we now have to acknowledge another and more serious mistake, for it concerns the very essence of our theory.

We believed that freedom is the birthright of every human being; that all men, being born equal, have an equal right to it. Our opponents maintain that there is danger in allowing freedom to all; that not all men are capable of managing their own affairs. Therefore, there must be governors and governed—masters and men.

This was the opinion of all good Liberals and Radicals. Even the Social Democrats did not think it wise to entrust the people with their own destinies, and believed in the necessity of a long and painful process of evolution before they would be fit to be their own masters. We thought otherwise, and many a staunch and stubborn battle between us was fought round this problem.

So strong were our convictions, so firm our faith, that it needed a revolution to open our eyes: and the Russian Revolution opened them.

And now we know. We know it is dangerous and unsafe to give people freedom—still worse if they take it themselves. For how have the Russians made their revolution, and what has been their conduct since? With the example of all the great revolutions in history, we should have thought that after abolishing the old Government they would be satisfied, and leave it to the various political parties to fight it out between themselves as to who should now have the ruling power over them.

But they were not satisfied. They refused to disband, to lay down their arms. Even the declaration of the Provisional Government that now, when the Tsar is no longer on his throne, the revolution was over, and they (the people) should go back to work as before, proved of no avail. Nay, more; when they were told, in the most serious and solemn terms, that there was a great danger in armed force, "except in the hands of the Government"—which is amply and sufficiently proved by the present war—they still remained deaf and heedless, and even armed themselves more strongly than before!

Such action can only be ascribed to ignorance, not only of history in general, but of the more recent developments among their advanced West European brothers, who have progressed so far politically that a mere change of Ministry is regarded by them in the light of a great revolution; and not alone have they given up the idea of a radical change long ago, but are now busily engaged working out schemes for placing the system of the Servile State on a more secure and enduring basis.

No wonder our country was so slow and unwilling to recognise the Russian Revolution.

But if the action of the people in the towns is bad, that of the peasants in the country is still worse. Nothing but their dense ignorance of the modern meaning of revolution and liberty could lead them to commit such outrageous acts as taking back by force the land which belongs to them! In vain did the Provisional Government appeal to them not to disgrace the honour of Russia; to respect private property; or, at least, to wait till their acts will be sanctioned and legalised by special decree.

But the poor, benighted peasant sticks to his old and antiquated notions. Taking back what is by right his seems to him quite legal enough, whether it is on the statute book or not; and so he goes on tearing up deeds, cutting down forests, and taking possession of the land, without regard to what the politicians may think at Petrograd, or how revolutions are made elsewhere.

Worse than that, not satisfied with taking possession of the soil, they seem determined to keep and enjoy the fruit thereof also—a thing they never did under the old régime—which argues for the need of a strong Government—to be called "democratic," of course—to bring the misguided peasants back to reason. That they (the Government) will have a hard task is evident from the fact that no amount of money can make the peasant part with his corn. Let the rich, he says, feed their families with money; his he will feed with bread.

This is outrageous. Such language the bourgeoisie have not yet learned to understand. It is doubtful if they ever will. We may, therefore, expect with certainty that they will try by any and every means to take away from the peasant the product of his labour, even if he is allowed to keep his land.

In view of all this, we are bound to admit the truth of the Social Democratic formula, that before the peasants can be entrusted with their full freedom and independence they must first become thoroughly proletarianised; that is, enter the indus-

trial arena, and thus come under the same civilising influences as their brothers in the towns. For, after all, what is civilisation but a tendency to go farther and farther away from nature, and be freed as much as possible from those natural instincts and inclinations, that simple sense of right and justice which shows itself in Russia at the present moment in such threatening manner.

And nothing is more effective than the factory in hastening this process; for while it deadens in man all those instincts fostered in him by Mother Nature, it, at the same time, introduces him into the superior realm of bricks and politics. And it is in that realm that one so easily assumes the argumentative habit, becomes more and more tractable, and is less subject to those impulses which were so troublesome in his more natural state; and, what is more important still, his vision becomes widened, his views broadened, and his individual interests become, in due time, so enlarged and mingled with those of the State, until his whole individuality is lost in it—never to be found again. S.

A STEP TOWARDS REVOLUTION.

It seems probable that existing economic conditions are tending towards Servile State Socialism. An upheaval, attended by rioting and disorder, will in all probability, be necessary to the achievement of the political revolution which will usher in this servile form of Socialism. Believers in economic predestination, in economic fatalism, in the inevitability of economic "laws," will keep on propagating what they consider ideal Socialism or retire from the class-war temporarily and await the results of unconscious economic evolution. Those who believe that economic evolution can be guided, influenced, and moulded by ideas into certain definite directions (and all propagators of Socialism act as if they believed this) will take advantage of the unsettled, abnormal times to alter or accelerate economic tendencies. That this can be done will be readily granted if one considers what the results would be of the play of ideas on economic conditions if it were the case that the majority of the proletariat had studied and assimilated Kropotkin's "Conquest of Bread." The existing social conditions do not absolutely exclude this contingency from the realm of possibilities.

In past disturbances the aimless, purposeless insurrections of the workers were, because they were purposeless, drowned in their blood. Those which will in all likelihood take place before exorbitant profiteering comes to an end can be made insurrections with an end in view, if Progressives in every locality form themselves into Advisory Committees, the object of these committees being to prevent the brutal suppression and starvation of the purposeless rebels, and to expropriate the local means of production and distribution. In this way we can have decentralised State Socialism, a form of society suitable for the ready acceptance by the masses of Anarchist principles. The necessary details will readily occur to the minds of Progressives.

The ideas of Progressives, taken in conjunction with humanity's existing capacity for supplying the wants of society, really warrant the establishment of a more advanced form of society than decentralised State Socialism, but the ideas of the majority are only of such a nature as makes servile Socialism possible. The time which will elapse from the present moment until the disturbances or insurrections take place will in all probability be too brief to enable Anarchists to create the mental atmosphere necessary for the bringing about of a social revolution to inaugurate Communism. This crisis, looming ahead, gives us an opportunity to abolish unbridled Capitalism and cause economic evolution to progress more rapidly. This falls short of our ideal, and many Anarchists will consequently refuse to take an active part in the insurrectionary councils. The rôle of passive looker-on would be the best if it were not that evidence accumulates to prove that it is either restriction with the probability of extinction, or insurrection with the probability of extinction for all "cranks" in the near future.

If Anarchists were reasonably sure of being allowed liberty to propagate their ideas during the stormy period ahead, then, logically, an Anarchist Communist could not aid in the establishment of a restricted or authoritarian Socialism. The multiplication of laws and regulations makes it obvious that our "freedom" will be drastically curtailed. The choice is then between revolting to establish decentralised State Socialism or rebelling against laws and regulations to attempt what is now impracticable, the setting up of Anarchist Communism, only to get servile State Socialism. R. SELKIRK.

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TOWARDS THE LAND.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

Dear Comrade,—It is not my intention to continue this discussion unless you insert my letters in full, so that readers may see the whole of my arguments. The fact of your cutting out portions of my remarks to fit in with your points does not present a fair view of my reasoning, and I desire an equal discussion for both of us.

Referring to Russia, you appear to be playing with words. What is the difference between delegates and members of a Government? You say: "These peasants [Russian] did not elect the Russian Government, but sent delegates to watch over it. That proves how they trust Governments." Does not this really prove that they cannot get away from the old system, but must have Government (or delegates if you wish) to think for them? This was the first thing that struck me when the Russian Revolution took place, and is the reason, I say, that a revolution to-day would simply mean a change in the form of Government and not the total abolition of it, which I understand is the Anarchists' first ideal. So there is no change in Russia even now according to our point of view. Later on, however, when the Russian people realise how they have been tricked, they will say (with us) that "politics is a dirty business," but still, owing to the fact that they have no ideal, they must and will continue to be governed in some way.

Certainly I should like to see the people attending to their own affairs, as you say. Unfortunately, the people do not like to think for themselves. If they did, we should certainly not be at war for nearly three years, and, further, our principles would be spread and understood far better. Unhappily, the philosopher likes to imagine the people as he would like them to be. And this is where the mistake is made. Let us realise the people as they really are and do not be afraid to tell them the truth, that is our propaganda. Once this is done, the desire of an ideal would naturally follow, and the struggle for bread and butter would become less acute in the attempt to realise that ideal. This would be the first object, and for a short time probably bread and water would suffice, and the sacrifice would be made quite cheerfully so long as the ideal was kept in view (*e.g.*, the C.O.'s at the present time). It then follows that once the people understood their powerful economic position there would be no real necessity to be troubled with the bread-and-butter problem, for would not everything then belong to the people? So I maintain that an ideal is absolutely necessary for their liberation from the present system.

Now, how can you say that people are ready to enter into a communal life at the present time when you are yourself arguing about the probability of colonies? And, mind you, I can see very well that you do not understand Communism, otherwise you would not say that we should get on with our colonies purely to show how to grow cabbages and potatoes. M. B. Hope's pamphlet gives you a good idea of a colony, viz.: "It must be clearly understood that we are not running away from the fight but rather seeking it, as we expect to give an impetus to the struggle by carrying on intensive propaganda, such as the printing and distribution of pamphlets, addressing meetings, and issuing a paper advocating Communism and the formation of new colonies." So you can see that the Communist question is not solved merely by breeding pigs and growing vegetables together. Therefore, we shall certainly go to the people without waiting until the day comes; but does that mean we have to live with them and to remain slaves because they are content to remain in slavery? Obviously not. "A teacher is not to become as ignorant as his pupils."—Yours fraternally,

MAURICE.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

Dear Comrade,—The above letter explains itself. Briefly, in reply, the letters being addressed to me, I only chose items of general interest for my articles in FREEDOM. The idea was to get the main points discussed, not to get the better of an argument. I have never said the Russian Revolution was other than a political revolution. I am under no delusion as to delegates and members of a Government, my point being how far peasants trusted a self-elected Government. These peasant expropriators may not be Anarchists, it is true, but they will know precisely the value of a Government when it begins to interfere with their expropriations. I have always agreed about the need of an ideal, but I insist it must be linked up with bread and butter. *Vide* Ricardo Flores Magon, the Mexican revolutionist: "When you

are in possession of the land you will have liberty and justice, for liberty and justice are not decreed, but are the result of economic independence; they spring from the fact that the individual is able to live without depending on a master." You cannot preach colonies to the people as "the way out" and insist, as Miss Hope seems to do in her pamphlet, that they should be Anarchists, freethinkers, and free lovers. The mass of the people cannot afford to experiment in colonies. Either preaching colonies to the people is preaching expropriation of the land (which leads to a revolution) or it means setting up Anarchist nunneries and monasteries (which would be a comic spectacle in itself). We Anarchist Communists, I take it, are out to convince the people that freedom is only possible with wholesale expropriation of fields, factories, and workshops. We might just as well dabble in dynamite as in colonies. They are both spectacular, but "it's dogged as does it."—Fraternally,

L. A. M.

COMMERCE AND THE STATE.

The commercial world is always very anxious to have the assistance of the State against foreign competitors or against workmen on strike, but no one can be more outspoken when bureaucracy interferes with their business or profits. In *Common Sense* of July 14 a Cardiff correspondent writes:

"South Wales is having an expensive object-lesson on State interference with trade. The regulations issued with respect to the export and home consumption of coal are such that colliery proprietors, middlemen, exporters, and factors find themselves bewildered. Regulation succeeds regulation until a volume is needed to instruct them how to conduct business without offence to existing rules.

"The Government's avowed object is to make a profit out of the coal trade, not only for the proprietary, but also for the country. In other words, the Government intends to try and lift itself by its own boot straps. Having the collieries, railways, ships, and docks under its control, there is evidence of an attempt to create that wonderful co-ordinated system of economy which for years has been the chimera of Socialists. The scheme must not fail, for it would throw discredit on the designers. Therefore its deficiencies must be hidden and the whole fabric bolstered up, with the result that what is gained in one direction is lost in another.

In the "Science and Industry" Supplement of the *Manchester Guardian* (June 30) some scathing remarks on our Government's attitude to scientific methods are made by Professor H. E. Armstrong, who after referring to the "extraordinary forethought exercised by the Germans in the past," goes on to say that in England the scientific method "has never yet penetrated into the dull head of a single politician. The schools have never made the least attempt to teach it; scientific method, in fact, is outside the ken of headmasters, and the Board of Education will not hear of it."

But the hardest blows at the Government are dealt out by W. J. Pope, M.A., Professor of Chemistry at Cambridge University, in an article in the same Supplement dealing with the necessity of the Government providing facilities for universities and municipalities to encourage scientific education and research. He says it is difficult to believe that the Government will take such a step without heavy pressure. And then the worthy Professor hits out from the shoulder:

"The main concern of the twentieth century British Government is to ensure the position of the parasite upon creative industry. To guard a full auriferous diet for members of the legal profession, to confer dignity—without honour—in the New Year and Birthday lists upon notorious creeping things, and to play general post with lucrative and influential Ministerial portfolios are main issues to which national interests are subservient, even in war time."

That paragraph is almost good enough to attract the attentions of "Dora." The State idol is beginning to lose its sanctity.

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THREE YEARS OF WAR.

We have now completed three years of the most terrible struggle known to the human race, and in spite of rumours of peace no one can prophesy the end. With America's entry into the war, it seems to have taken a fresh lease of life, although we are of the opinion that the capitalists of the United States are less concerned with the war in Europe than with a desire to build up a big army for use at home, and a big navy for the purpose of checking Japan's growing influence in China, where the U.S.A. have great financial interests. We have been so often told about the entry of some newcomer being the deciding factor against Germany that we have grown sceptical. First, it was Italy that would settle the issue, then Roumania; but they merely intensified the struggle. And it may be that America's intervention will have little more effect for at least another twelve months. Transportation will be the stumbling block, especially with an increased growth of submarine activity.

The grip of famine should be a big factor next winter. The lack of labour on the land, owing to the demands of the military, will prevent any increase of production of foodstuffs in Europe or in America, and the stocks in reserve will probably be consumed before all the crops are harvested. If the loss of life on the battlefields has not caused the people to cry out for the war to be stopped, a lack of food may do so. And they would be bold statesmen indeed who carried on the war if the people began to cry for bread.

The military situation is still a deadlock. The great Spring offensives have come and gone, and the line in the West is practically where it was twelve—or twenty-four—months ago, in spite of the three million casualties which are reckoned from July last year to July of this year. We read in our papers of "heavy German casualties," but few ever see the totals of the Allies' casualties. France especially has suffered terribly, and the politicians of that country fear to make peace, because revolution may break out if they are unable to get Alsace-Lorraine as a reward for the people's sacrifices. The *New York Call* (Socialist), of July 10, publishes a letter from a Paris correspondent, who says: "That the French army soon will be too weak to effectively resist a heavy blow is the frank admission of a person in authority in the Government. France has no longer enough men to maintain both her lines in the trenches and her striking reserve. My informant says that all French military officers realise that France is beaten already. The arrival of American troops has heartened the masses, but the high army command knows well that the 30,000 American soldiers in France are of little value, except as an advertisement, and that it will be impossible to get enough men to France to be effective before several months, by which time the French resistance will have crumpled by sheer exhaustion."

Put side by side with the collapse of the Russian Army, and the growing exhaustion of Germany and Austria, the belligerents are in the position of two fighters who refuse to give in, and yet

have not enough strength left to give the "knock-out" to each other. But instead of two fighters we have many nations bleeding to death because their rulers are too callous of human life to put an end to the struggle, or cannot do so without confessing their mistakes which have caused the wholesale slaughter. The only hopeful sign is the Russian soldiers' refusal to fight, and as their rulers cannot or will not make peace, the soldiers and workers of all countries must do so themselves.

But do not let the people imagine that with the end of the war will come the end of their miseries. It will be their work then to destroy the system which has brought such a disaster upon the human race. No longer must it be possible for a comparatively small group of men in each country to hold the power in their hands to make war simply to safeguard or to increase their profits. Capitalism and Government must be destroyed root and branch if the world is ever to have peace. A change of Government is not the slightest use. We have to destroy the whole system under which the people are robbed of the wealth they produce, and then set to fight each other to decide how the robbers are to share it. Too long have we suffered that tyranny: let us make up our minds to put an end to it at the earliest possible moment.

WHAT HAVE WE GAINED?

The *Cambridge Magazine* of June 30 contains a remarkably outspoken article by H. Dennis Bradley, entitled "The Sinister Unrest." He says: "Nine millions of young lives lost, countless millions of treasure dissipated, civilisation, as we understood it, become a by-word—that is the debit side of three years' war. . . . The peoples of the world who are spilling their blood, the fighting fathers who see their sons growing to the age when they also will be sucked into the vortex, are asking 'how long?' And the end is not in sight." The writer then continues:

I meet men of every class—soldiers, sailors, workmen, business men, merchants, professional men, manufacturers, and capitalists—and do not seek to express my own opinion in this article; an individual opinion on a matter of such moment would be worthless. But all whom I meet are war-weary, their spirit is the spirit of revolt. Against what? I am convinced the vital moment has arrived when the truth should be spoken.

Surely no nation ever went to war with a more splendid spirit, with a nobler ideal. And, surely, never was the psychology of a nation so miserably misunderstood by its rulers. If ever a nation flamed into the purest patriotism, the British nation did in August, 1914. Reverses in the field, disappointments, sacrifices failed to dim the flame; then, why is the present spirit throughout the country the spirit of resentment and unrest?

We have been wrongly treated by our rulers, who have wholly failed to understand us and our aims. From the first we have been treated as children—children who could never be trusted with the realities and truth. At the most tremendous moment in its history the nation is inarticulate. Does anyone assume that the Defence of the Realm Act, a hurried piece of emergency legislation, would be passed in its present form by a representative Parliament? This war has taught us one thing—nothing is immune from criticism, there is no human institution that is sacrosanct, not even the Defence of the Realm Act.

The liberty for which we are fighting is already gone. The nation is stricken dumb, bound hand and foot, hemmed in, thwarted, tongue-tied, and, worse still, goaded to unrest by restrictions it never contemplated, does not understand, may not discuss, and which can serve no possible end except to conceal the failures of the politicians and the bureaucrats. We are enchained by the most unsatisfactory autocracy, an intelligent nation has ever writhed under, an autocracy in which every little bureaucrat makes his own particular hell, in which he and his satellites devise new ordeals for the citizens.

There is resentment and revolt in the heart of nearly every man in every class in the British Empire to-day. And the cause is the utter lack of psychology on the part of the few who are attempting to govern. Why is it, when Prussianism stinks in the nostrils of the world, the nation asks, "What are we fighting for?" That question, as the men who govern fail to understand, is ironical. In reality it means "We are in the third year of the war, and have lost: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Press, Liberty of the Subject, Rights to Property, a Representative Government. What have we gained? Broken Pledges, Bureaucracy, Profiteering, Corruption."

MARRIAGE AND THE STATE.

In a leading article on "Our Marriage Laws" the *Daily Telegraph* of July 5 puts the case for a modification of the laws relating to marriage. It argues the case for the conversion of judicial separation into divorce after the husband and wife have remained apart for five years. In putting forth a special plea for reform, the writer hastens to assure the public that the members comprising the recent deputation to Sir George Cave for the purpose of advocating this measure "had no taint of the extreme, the eccentric, or the doctrinaire," and could not "be suspected of sympathy for the chimerical or preoccupation with causes which have no relation to the stern needs of the hour." Having thus at one bold stroke assured the nation that the reform advocated had no drastic revolutionary intent, and did not aim at any great chaotic disturbance of the moral fibre of the nation, the writer goes on to point out that indeed the State has urgent need of this reform, and quotes Lord Sydenham as saying that there are to-day one million persons in this country living under separation orders, many of whom are in the prime of life.

The main burden of the writer's contention is, of course, that the great State idol needs more victims than ever before, yet "our social and legislative system is planned to keep down the birth-rate by depriving hundreds of thousands of men and women of the opportunity of bringing children into the world save under the stigma of immorality and shame."

The whole argument is based on the assumption that human beings exist for the benefit of society, and that it is the first duty of men and women to produce children, whose lives shall be dedicated to the State. That is why the defenders of all that the State stands for view with alarm not so much economic exhaustion as a decline in the supply of men capable of becoming "cannon-fodder." As the *Daily Telegraph* puts it: "If England is to maintain her place in the world we must see to it that she has Englishmen to fight and work for her. . . . We are striving, and we do well to strive, that every baby may have more skilled care and a better chance of life; but that is not enough to safeguard the future. . . . Our English birth-rate has fallen fast for many years now, and yet there are those who ask us to be content with a condition of the law which leaves a million men and women, who should be fathers and mothers, married only in name."

The plea so naively put forward by the writer has a decided touch of the ironic about it. It does not appear to have dawned upon his intelligence what a beautiful ideal he is displaying in urging the claims of this new legislative sticking-plaster. In effect, the result aimed at is one which has been found so effective in British stock breeding—to raise healthy animals by means of careful rationing and good general conditions, and then at the psychological moment, when they are calculated to produce the greatest profit for their owners, they straightway meet their death at the butcher's hand. This, then, is the ideal which actuates those anxious to modify our marriage laws, and we are assured that it will inspire the exploited masses with fresh hope to lay down their lives for the State.

To our mind, the whole question of marriage is bound up with the Anarchist contention that each human being should alone possess the right of disposing of his or her own person, and that sex unions should have nothing whatever to do with Church or State. But if we trace the history of marriage we see how, from primitive times downwards, it always followed along the lines of economic development until to-day, under our Capitalist régime, it has become a property relationship, aiming at the production of legitimate heirs in order that property can pass from father to son. While the legislature has thus protected property by giving marriage the legal seal, the Church, true to its rôle of sanctifier to the State, has declared marriage to be a holy sacrament. It is to be expected therefore that while the latter body may appear to oppose any reform that may weaken its authority, it is very certain that as it is a mere appendage of the State, it, too, will withdraw its ban and give its blessing to the dissolution of such marriages.

To the Anarchist it is not remarkable that a Conservative paper should put forth a plea for this reform, as the exigencies of the moment demand it, but it fails to understand that men and women are growing a little in advance of the legislative machine, and will (should such a modification become law) remain unperturbed. The people are beginning to realise that the ceremony of marriage is a legal sham, and those who possess no property to leave to son and heir are allowing themselves to be guided by the dictates of nature and reason.

We contend that this new legislative sticking plaster, if applied, will fail to bring the desired grist to the State mill. Having regard to the economic condition of this country and the

increased knowledge of sex physiology, it is quite safe to say that those who bear "no taint of the extreme, the eccentric, or the doctrinaire" will be doomed to disappointment in the results of such a reform.

But this and other attempts to set the legislative machine in motion only serve to show in what a vicious circle we are still moving. Our politicians and labour men will not grasp the fact that it is not more sticking plaster we need, but a surgical operation carried out on the entire social body.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

In Paris the police have taken to systematically watching the railway stations for peace propagandists. It appears the "evil" had been attaining such dimensions that even chauffeurs had pacifist literature in their taxi-cabs. The propaganda was mainly concerned with soldiers on leave from the front, and the propagandists are alleged to have recruited their agents from among prostitutes, several hundreds of these (says *Le Matin*) having been arrested during the last few weeks. Station hawkers are likewise suspect and are under close surveillance. The propagandists are in some cases further charged with trying to excite the soldiers against the new kind of "flic." (It should be remarked that a policeman of any kind seems to be in public disfavour in Paris at present.)

We learn that some seventeen political prisoners in the Santé (Paris) have taken to hunger striking. Among them are Comrades Ruff, Lecoin, and Content, of the suppressed *Libertaire*. The above prisoners have issued a manifesto, presumably giving the reasons for their action, but this has altogether been censored in *Ce qu'il faut dire*, only the title and the names of the seventeen signatories appearing.

One of the prisoners, Féry, was charged with having advised workmen on strike as follows: "It is not only the strike we must adopt; it is the Revolution. Follow rather the Red Flag than the Tricolour. Do not hesitate, if you lack for boots, to take them where you can get them. Too long the masters have lived off our labour." For the foregoing our comrade was sent to prison for four years.

China.

The fourth issue of *Internacia Popolo*, a small four-page monthly printed at Canton in Esperanto and Chinese—mostly Esperanto—has an illuminating article by the Editor, Sro Sinpak, on the rupture of Chinese-German relations. He says:—

"The Chinese Government has broken off with the Germans. Possibly a state of war may follow. This will only lead to a slaughtering of the Chinese and German peoples. We stand to gain nothing; even if China were victorious the Government alone would reap; the people would suffer as before—most likely even more so. We can see these things from the slaughter-house of Europe; taxes increase, food is scarce, women are widowed and children orphaned. We are tyrannised by a Government that only wishes to annex foreign territory and markets by making us fight for them. If we refuse to kill we are ourselves killed. The only thing to do is for the peoples of the world to unite and refuse men, money, and munitions; and not only this, but we should abolish the army heads, the politicians and ministers, and set up in the place of our chaotic society, a new society based on justice and brotherhood."

Cuba.

The "Labour Sana" Group of Habana are about to launch a new Anarchist periodical under the same title as that of the group. The columns will be open for contributions on art, criticism, and sociology. Communications and donations should be sent to Secretario, Amargura 53, Habana, Cuba.

United States.

In our last issue we stated that our comrades, Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, had been charged with inciting men to resist conscription. We learn from *Common Sense* that they have both had the full penalty imposed on them—two years' imprisonment and a fine of £2,000, with deportation to follow. The latter part of the sentence is made possible now by the new Immigration Act which came into effect on May 1, and which provides that any alien who has preached Anarchism since coming to America, no matter how long since he or she came, is liable to deportation. The *New York Journal* says: "A general ridding of the United States of Anarchists and non-conscriptionists is con-

templated by Federal officials under this new law." Presumably they mean aliens, but we think that the bosses in the "land of the free" will find a big crop of native Anarchists spring up soon as a result of the war.

American capitalists are beginning to look for fat profits from Russia in the near future. The Special Mining Committee of the Russian Ministry has decided to recommend the transfer of the Island of Sakhalien to American capitalists for the working of the petroleum and coal deposits, and incidentally to counterbalance Japanese influence in those parts. The proposed transfer also includes, for the same purpose, several districts in Siberia, gold mines in the Altai Mountains, copper mines in the Caucasus, and railways in the Urals. However disinterested the American people may be in entering the war, American capitalists evidently look upon it as a good investment—and the conscription just beginning will help them to put a few more chains on their work-people. The above remark about Japanese influence is one more sign of the growing antagonism between American and Japanese capitalists, and may foreshadow the next war for supremacy in China and the East.

A NEW IMAGE BREAKER.

The Modern School, of Stelton, New Jersey, U.S.A., has discovered a young girl of nineteen who writes remarkable verses. Her name is Rose Florence Freeman, and two excellent pieces of original merit appear in the *Modern School* for January and April. Taking the latter one first, we find a pleasant metre and a quaintness of melodious expression that fits in with the subject. It is entitled "O-Jin-San," and we quote a few verses:—

"Smile your sleepily-twisted smile,
Stirring a vague and soft desire,
And you shall have a charm of jade,
And coral whose tints are fading fire.

Will you dance me the Raindrop Dance
To some low, monotonous, ancient tune?
Will you pluck me an iris flower
In the hazy glow of the misty moon?

My delicate, flower-like, fragile doll,
Carved on the hand of an ivory fan,
Cold is your sleepily-twisted smile,
I never shall win you, O-Jin-San."

The above cannot be called precisely iconoclastic, but it is at least better than the smooth-tongued insipidity of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. These are the dreams of youth, inconsequent and idle, not the polished *vers de société* of the *flâneuse*. If it has no fire, it has an original brilliance that promises much. The second poem reveals a profundity, an ardour, a wealth of splendour that overshadows and outstrips the mere verse-maker. We can but quote a few lines of this, which is entitled, "To My Body":—

"In the first golden glamour of my sex-dawn I stand sweetly
oppressed with palpable glory. . . .
The joy in my body, cupped up so long, is now distilling itself into
the quintessence of a delight that fills the farthest aisle of my
spirit with eternal perfume.
I could expose my body freely, defiantly, and as one exulting in
the possession of a marvellous treasure,—
My body enhanced by youth and fulfilled by love,—
Were I not desirous of cherishing it for the sacred few!"

This is poetry; this is image-breaking; this is the shattering of the gods of prudery, of money-made morality, of gilded lust. Here is the spirit of youth flinging its defiant manifesto at the world, at society, with their trappings of gay, close-doored prostitution, with its wedding rings and without.

The Modern School is no less to be congratulated on its artist-printer, who has fittingly framed these two pieces of exquisite beauty in a charming form, in a symmetry of type and illustration that shames the loudly garbed "art" of the profit-making magazines that pretend to monopolise æsthetic taste. We look forward with an anticipated delight and joyousness to future issues. We note that some of Rose Freeman's poems will shortly be published in book form by the above school, with the title of "Roses Blown Adrift."

L. A. M.

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