

Freedom

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NOTES.

Russia.

The many changes in the political world of Russia, and the censorship, make it very difficult to speak with confidence as to the future; but telegrams from Moscow during the recent Conference point to the fact that the propertied classes, led by Miliukoff, the ex-Foreign Minister, are marshalling their forces for an attack on the power of the Soldiers' and Workers' Committee (the Soviet). They have adopted a resolution demanding that the Government break finally with the Soviet and all other democratic organisations, and that they re-establish discipline in the army and navy, besides abolishing all local democratic committees, replacing them by centralised officials. Kerensky, the autocrat, made a speech in which he said that any attack on the Provisional Government would be "pitilessly repressed with blood and iron." The destructive period of the Revolution had passed, and the time had come to consolidate the conquests of the Revolution. Kerensky is trying to sit on two stools at once, which may have the usual fatal results. There is one side of the Revolution of which we hear practically nothing—that is, the action of the peasants. We know that when the Revolution broke out they seized the land in many parts of the country, being assisted in this expropriation by the many thousands of soldiers who left the Front in order to obtain their share. To us, this question is much more important than the political squabbles in Petrograd and Moscow. If the Russian Anarchists were to concentrate their propaganda among the peasantry, they might make great headway with Anarchist and Communist ideas, as the primitive communal life the peasants have lived for centuries provides a splendid basis. Aided by the great Co-operative Societies, they could defy any Government in such a vast country. The economic question is much more vital than the political, and would appeal strongly to the peasant soldiers. Whilst these questions are in the balance, the Allied Socialists are meeting to discuss how they shall conquer the Socialists of the Central Powers, instead of helping the Russian Revolution.

Henderson and Lloyd George.

Lloyd George has surpassed himself in the methods he adopted to force Henderson out of the Cabinet. It seems certain now that the telegram which he said came from the Russian Government, and was inspired by Kerensky, was sent without the Russian Government's knowledge in answer to a telegram from someone in London, who evidently asked for the message to be sent. Then Lloyd George puts it forward as a spontaneous message from Kerensky, and before it can be contradicted puts it forward as his reason for accepting Henderson's resignation. Henderson complained in bitter words about the way in which the Press Bureau was used in the matter, the lying statements being circulated among the newspapers by that organisation. He also says that the Bureau circulated the Premier's acceptance of his resignation before he knew himself. But surely Henderson cannot complain if he has to put up with the same sort of gruel that he knew was being served out to the people all the time he was in the Government. He knows the deliberate lies about the war that have been circulated by the Press Bureau. Remember how the Bureau dealt with the various strikes and other matters affecting the workers. He never raised a protest in those cases, and we can find no sympathy for him now. The light thrown on the inner workings of the Cabinet, however, shows us what a happy family it must be. Barnes acting as doorkeeper to Curzon, Milner, and the other titled "democrats," and Henderson waiting on the doormat to know his fate. When next Lloyd George and his colleagues indulge in flights of oratory about fighting to "safeguard our honour" just remember the dirty tricks used to defeat the Stockholm Conference, and ask if it is possible for such people to know what honour means.

Stockholm.

The two conferences of the Labour Party on the question of Stockholm have left matters in a very indefinite position. Had the adjourned conference maintained the majority by which the first one passed the resolution in favour of going to Stockholm the Government would have found it difficult to refuse passports. But a 3,000 majority shows that the Labour movement is divided owing to the clever manœuvring of the Cabinet, and so for the present passports will not be granted. A lot turns on the conference of Allied Socialist and Labour Parties in London now being held. If they were to demand the right of going to Stockholm their respective Governments might give way, but it is certain that no Government will allow anyone but themselves to have the credit for making terms of peace. They are too jealous of their powers to permit that. So unless the Conference is to be merely consultative and advisory they will put every obstacle in the way of its being held. Balfour's defence of secret diplomacy shows how the old gang will stand up for their privileged positions. Meanwhile it would be interesting to know which of the miners' leaders changed their mind, and what honours they will receive from Lloyd George later on.

Anarchist Revolt in Spain.

Little news is allowed to come through of happenings in Spain, but it is sufficient to show that the workers are fighting hard in the cities to gain that "bread and freedom" which has long been the watchword of their movement. That they have been educated by events in other countries is shown by the words of the Premier, Senor Dato, which were published in the Press on August 15. Speaking of the revolt, he said:

"We are face to face with an Anarchist movement which makes no demands nor entertains any political hopes from a change of Government."

Considering how many revolutions have meant merely a change of masters it certainly is encouraging to find the workers in Spain fighting to abolish them altogether. Later telegrams speak of barricades and fighting in the streets of Barcelona and other cities, in which the Government got the upper hand, as might have been expected as long as the army remained "loyal," but as soon as the workers in the army recognise that their interests are the same as those of the workers in field and factory the Government would collapse as easily as that of the Tsar did in Russia. But we hope they will not put their faith in a Spanish Kerensky.

The Atrocities of War.

The devilry of war at the front is usually hidden from our gaze whilst the papers speak of the light-hearted heroism of our troops as they "go over the top." When the Germans started poison gas and liquid fire we knew that the chemists on the Allies side would soon find something to surpass those horrors. Writing in the *Paris Journal*, M. André Tudesq thus describes a recent German frontal attack before Lens:

"As a German brigade was moving forward from its cover two English barrage fires took them on the flank and turned them aside into a sunken road. The enemy in dense formation, believing himself safe, gave battle, as was expected. Then 500 cans of burning oil burst forth from special British engines and enclosed those Huns in their circle of fire. Yells rose for a moment from the sunken road, but the barrage fires redoubled and made all action impossible. A deadly silence soon fell upon the heap of carbonised humanity."

This is being done in a war to "save civilisation," and young men in most of the countries of the world are being torn from their homes and forced to take part in atrocities such as this at the bidding of their respective war lords. A "civilisation" that uses such methods had better be left to die, as it is impossible to expect it to produce any good for humanity.

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT.*

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

PART I.

That the Governments at present existing ought to be abolished, so that Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity should no longer be empty words but become living realities, and that all forms of government as yet tried have only been so many forms of oppression, and ought to be replaced by a new form of grouping, so far all who have a brain and temperament ever so little revolutionary unanimously agree. In truth one does not need to be much of an innovator in order to arrive at this conclusion; the vices of the governments of to-day, and the impossibility of reforming them, are too evident to be hidden from the eyes of any reasonable observer. And as regards overturning governments it is well known that at certain epochs that can be done without much difficulty; there are times when governments crumble to pieces almost of themselves, like houses of cards, before the breath of the people in revolt. That has been seen, clearly seen, in 1848 and in 1870; and will soon be seen again.

To overturn a government—this for a revolutionary middle-class man is everything, for us it is only the beginning of the Social Revolution. The machine of the State once out of gear, the hierarchy of functionaries disorganised and not knowing in what direction to take a step, the soldiers having lost confidence in their officers—in a word, the whole army of defenders of Capital once routed—then it is that the grand work of destruction of all the institutions which serve to perpetuate economic and political slavery will become ours. The possibility of acting freely being attained, what will revolutionists do next?

To this question the Anarchists alone give the proper answer, "No Government, Anarchy!" All the others say "A Revolutionary Government!" and they only differ as to the form to be given to that government. Some decide for a government elected by universal suffrage in the State or in the Commune; others decide on a Revolutionary Dictatorship.

A Revolutionary Government! These are two words which sound very strange in the ears of those who really understand what the Social Revolution means, and what a government means. The words contradict each other, destroy each other. We have seen, of course, many despotic governments—it is the essence of all government to take the side of the reaction against the Revolution, and to have a tendency towards despotism—but such a thing as a revolutionary government has never been seen, and the reason is that the Revolution—synonym of "disorder," of upsetting and overthrowing of venerated institutions in a few days, meaning the demolition by violence of the established forms of property, the destruction of castes, the rapid transformation of received ideas about morality, or rather about the hypocrisy which takes the place of it, individual liberty and freedom of action—is precisely the opposite, the very negation of government, this being the synonym of "established order," of conservatism, of the maintenance of existing institutions, the negation of free initiative and individual action. And yet we continually hear this white blackbird spoken of, as if a "revolutionary government" were the simplest thing in the world, as common and as well known to all as Royalty, the Empire and the Papacy!

That the so-called revolutionists of the middle class should preach this idea is nothing strange. We know well what they understand by Revolution. They understand by it a bolstering up of their Republic, the taking possession by the so-called Republicans of the lucrative employments reserved to-day for the Bonapartists or Royalists. It means at the most the divorce of Church and State, replaced by the concubinage of the two, the sequestration of the goods of the clergy for benefit of the State, and above all for that of the future administrators of these goods; perhaps it may mean the referendum, or some other political machinery of the same kind. But that Revolutionary Socialists should make themselves the apostles of such an idea—we can only explain by supposing one of two things. Either they are imbued with prejudices which they have imbibed without knowing it from literature, and above all from history, written to suit middle-class ideas; and still possessed with the spirit of servility, product of ages of slavery, they cannot even imagine themselves free. Or else they do not really desire this Revolution which they have always on their lips; they would be content with a simple plastering up of present institutions, provided that they would secure power for themselves, leaving to the future to decide what they should do to satisfy "the beast" called the People. They only go against the governors of the present time in order to take their places.

With these people we care not to argue. We will then only speak to those who honestly deceive themselves.

Let us begin with the first of the forms of "Revolutionary Government" which is advocated—the elected government.

The power of the Royalty or some other we will suppose has just been overturned, the army of the defenders of Capital is routed; everywhere there is fermentation, discussion of public affairs, everywhere a desire to march onward—new ideas arise, the necessity of important changes is perceived—it is necessary to act, it is necessary to begin without pity the work of demolition, in order to prepare the ground for the new life. But what do they propose to us to do? To convoke the people to elections, to elect at once a government and confide to it the work which we all of us, and each of us, should undertake of our own initiative.

This is what Paris did after the 18th of March, 1871. "I will never forget," said a friend to us, "those delightful moments of deliverance. I came down from my upper chamber in the Latin Quarter to join that immense open-air club which filled the Boulevards from one end of Paris to the other. Everyone talked about public affairs; all mere personal preoccupations were forgotten; no more was thought of buying or selling; all felt ready body and soul to advance towards the future. Men of the middle class even, carried away by the general enthusiasm, saw with joy a new world opened up. 'If it is necessary to make a Social Revolution,' they said, 'make it then. Put all things in common; we are ready for it.' All the elements of the Revolution were there, it was only necessary to set them to work. When I returned to my lodging at night I said to myself, 'How fine is humanity after all, but no one knew it; it has always been calumniated.' Then came the elections, the members of the Commune were named—and then little by little the ardour of devotion and the desire for action were extinguished. Everyone returned to his usual task, saying to himself, 'Now we have an honest government, let it act for us.'" What followed everyone knows.

Instead of acting for themselves, instead of marching forward, instead of advancing in the direction of a new order of things, the people, confiding in their governors, entrusted to them the charge of taking the initiative—this was the first consequence of the inevitable result of elections. Let us see now what these governors did who were invested with the confidence of all.

Never were elections more free than those of March, 1871. The opponents of the Commune admit it themselves. Never was the great mass of electors more influenced with the desire to place in power the best men, men of the future, true Revolutionists. And so they did. All well-known Revolutionists were elected by immense majorities; Jacobins, Blanquists, Internationalists, all the three revolutionary divisions were represented in the Council of the Commune. No election could give a better government.

But what was the result of it? Shut up in the City Hall, charged to proceed after the forms established by preceding governments, these ardent revolutionists, these reformers found themselves smitten with incapacity and sterility. With all their good will and their courage they did not even know how to organise the defence of Paris. Of course, people now blame the men, the individuals for this; but it was not the men who were the cause of this failure—it was the system carried out.

In fact, universal suffrage, when it is quite free, can only produce, at best, an assembly which represents the average of the opinions which at the time are held by the mass of the people; and this average at the outbreak of the Revolution has only a vague idea of the work to be accomplished, without understanding at all how they ought to undertake it. Ah, if the bulk of the nation, of the Commune, could only understand before the movement what was necessary to be done as soon as the government should be overturned! If this dream of the Utopians of the chair could be realised, we never would have had bloody revolutions; the will of the bulk of the nation once expressed, the rest would submit to it with a good grace. But this is not how things are done. The Revolution bursts out long before a general understanding has been come to, and those who have a clear idea of what should be done the next day are only a very small minority. The great mass of the people have as yet only a general idea of the end which they wish realised, without knowing much how to advance towards that end, nor much confidence in the direction to follow. The practical solution will not be found, will not be made clear until the change will have already begun; it will be the product of the Revolution itself, of the people in action—or else it will be nothing, the brain of a few individuals being absolutely incapable of finding solutions which can only spring from the life of the people.

This is the situation which is reflected in the body elected by universal suffrage, even if it had not all the vices inherent in representative governments in general. The few men who represent the revolutionary idea of the epoch find themselves swamped among the representatives of the revolutionary schools of the past,

* This series of articles, though written over twenty years ago, accurately foretold the progress of a "Revolutionary Government," as shown by the Russian Provisional Government and the Dictatorship of Kerensky. Comrades will find the articles excellent propaganda among Revolutionary Socialists.

and of the existing order of things. These men who would be so necessary among the people, particularly in the days of the Revolution, to sow broadcast their ideas, to put the mass in movement, to demolish the institutions of the past, find themselves shut up in a hall, vainly discussing how to wrest concessions from the moderates, and how to convert their enemies, while there is really only one way of inducing them to accept the new idea—namely, to put it into execution. The government becomes a parliament with all the vices of a middle-class parliament. Far from being a “revolutionary” government it becomes the greatest obstacle to the Revolution, and at last the people finds itself compelled to put it out of the way, to dismiss those that but yesterday it acclaimed as its chosen. But it is not so easy to do so. The new government which has hastened to organise a new administration in order to extend its domination and make itself be obeyed, does not understand giving up so easily. Jealous of maintaining its power, it clings to it with all the energy of an institution which has not yet had time to fall into senile decay. It decides to oppose force with force, and there is only one means then to dislodge it, namely, to take up arms, to make another revolution in order to dismiss those in whom the people had placed all their hopes.

There you see the Revolution divided against itself! After losing precious time in delays, it now loses its strength in intestine divisions between the friends of the new government and those who see the necessity of dissolving it. And all this happens because it has not been understood that a new life requires new forms; that it is not by clinging to ancient forms that a revolution can be carried out! All this for not having understood the incompatibility of revolution and government, for not having seen that the one is, under whatever form it presents itself, the negation of the other, and that outside of Anarchy there is no such thing as revolution.

It is just the same with regard to that other form of “revolutionary government” so often extolled—a Revolutionary Dictatorship.

(To be continued.)

TOWARDS THE LAND.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

Dear Comrade,—Being interested in the formation of Communist colonies, I crave a few lines in which to criticise “L.A.M.’s” letter in the August FREEDOM. Our comrade declares that “we 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.” Now, this seems to suggest that our comrade’s sense of humour has deserted him, for ’tis certain that if we did contemplate “wholesale expropriation” we should *also* have to dabble in dynamite in order to realise our objective. Such propaganda would prove much more spectacular than any number of colonies could prove to be.

Also to talk of “Anarchist nunneries and monasteries” is slightly misleading after the previous reference to “Anarchists, Free Thinkers, and Free Lovers.” I take it our comrade means the enforced isolation from the rest of the world which he thinks would follow Communal groupings.

Having given some little thought to the colony proposals, I cannot help thinking that they might conceivably offer a better chance of real joy in work than can ever be obtained from working for a master. One must, of course, take into account the hardships which would undoubtedly follow any such Communal attempt, but I think that the fact that our work to-day does not provide scope for the free expression of ourselves, combined with the absolute lack of real fellowship, constitute the chief arguments against life in Capitalist society, and therefore in favour of the colony idea.

I am more than ever convinced that Labour lacks breadth of vision, and it is unthinkable that the wholesale expropriation of fields, factories, and workshops could be made possible whilst yet the mass of Labour is addicted to reforms of the sticking-plaster type. To me the chief value in any such Communal attempt as that outlined in “Proposed Co-operative Colony,” lies in the initiative it would undoubtedly develop in those participating in such an effort. It could only fail in its object if the colonists lost their ideals and became too satisfied and exclusive. On the other hand, such attempts might conceivably become “propaganda by deed,” and do more to convince the unconverted of the manifold blessings that would follow the universal adoption of Anarchist Communism than any amount of arguments in favour of expropriation. For it is very certain that the mass of the workers at present do not desire expropriation, and even if such a course were desired and possible of achievement, the very fact that the workers are only used to the tyranny of the factory or workshop boss would militate very seriously against such *successful* expropriation, for expropriation is one thing and reconstruction after expropriation

is another, and it is absolutely necessary that Labour should understand the ideal that expropriation might make possible of realisation. If this ideal remains hazy, as at present, then all such efforts would be fruitless, and the workers would probably end by accepting State Socialism as the only solution, and bow down anew before some State demagogue.

Hence the supreme importance of, first, the conception of the Anarchist ideal, and, secondly, propaganda by deed by means of the formation of Communist colonies.

I think we Anarchists have been too prone to talk of expropriation without realising all the forces that might make of it an evil instead of a blessing. Let us show that it is possible for us to become successful producers, organising our own affairs, and reconstruction on Anarchist lines becomes an immeasurably easier task.—Fraternally yours,

M. B. HOPE.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

Dear Friend,—Please accept my thanks for having printed my letter, and, according to your last reply, I find that it is useless discussing any further the difference of our point of view, which, after all, is not so deep as it looks.

As long as you admit being an Anarchist Communist, you will find it more interesting to see, as I understand it, that an Anarchist colony will never be a monastery. If for the moment there are not sufficient of us having the idea to start a colony, there is certainly a hope to see an increase in our numbers. The difficulty is to meet one another, but I think it may be overcome by making our scheme known by propaganda in FREEDOM and other Anarchist papers. I agree with you that the mass of the people cannot afford to experiment in colonies, neither can they understand Anarchism. Nevertheless, I am sure that you would not stop Anarchist propaganda. Certainly, wholesale expropriation of fields, factories, and workshops is the goal of our propaganda; but until the people have learned this necessity, what have I to do? Read an Anarchist newspaper once a month, have a big collection of Anarchist literature, and discuss Anarchism from time to time? Do you think that is sufficient to be an Anarchist? No, that is not and never can be enough, because the people will say: “Your speech on freedom is fine indeed, but what are you doing? If you are so keen on Anarchist principles, why don’t you try to practise what you preach?” If you answer: “Under this system it is impossible to do so; we must wait for wholesale expropriation,” the people will treat your ideas the same as they treat every-day politics, and will not trouble any further. They are right, because preaching is far easier than practising.

Therefore, it is obvious that Communism is the best economic force to oppose Capitalism, on condition, as I have already said, that it is based on an ideal. Communal life will bring us a complete change, as it includes women and men on equal terms, and by this fact we can hope to see the regeneration of humanity. We all feel nowadays the strong influence of our surroundings, which we have a great struggle to get away from. In the colony the children would not feel this bad influence, and that will be one step towards their improvement. They will certainly be better off than us, and I hope they will teach us what is really freedom. I take this side of communal life first because I think that by solving the children question we lay the foundation of a natural life which should be the Anarchist life. On the other hand, if the workers are working together there would be no chance for a master to come in. That means suppression of exploitation, at least as far as production is concerned.

Altogether, that leads to a revolution, as you say; but this revolution relies more on evolution than on force, and therefore will not only destroy but rebuild.—Fraternally yours,

MAURICE.

FRIENDS OF AMERICAN FREEDOM.

Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman have been arrested, charged with advocating in their paper, *Mother Earth*, that those liable to the military draft who do not believe in the war should refuse to register. That they would be arrested on some charge and subjected to bitter persecution has been inevitable ever since they appeared as the spokesmen of a working-class protest against the plans of American militarism. Whatever you may think of the practicability of such a protest, you must, with their friends, pay tribute of admiration for their courage and devotion.

Alexander Berkman is one of the few men whose character and intelligence ever stood firm through a quarter of a life-time in prison. Emma Goldman has followed her extreme ideal of liberty for thirty years, up and down, in better places and worse than the Federal penitentiary. They can both endure what befalls them. They have more resources in their souls, perhaps, as they have the support of a more absolute faith than we have who admire them.—*The Masses* (U.S.A.).

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LABOUR AND GOVERNMENT.

Arthur Henderson, the Labour member of the War Cabinet, has been kicked out because he refused to do the work for which he was paid £5,000 a year. This has caused a great deal of indignation amongst Trade Unionists, who consider the action of Lloyd George an insult to the Labour Movement. But we Anarchists can only smile at the innocence of working men who imagine that Labour members are taken into the Cabinet on equal terms with the members of the capitalist parties. When Henderson was asked to join the Coalition Government, it was not on account of the Prime Minister's recognition of his great abilities as a statesman, but because the Government knew that his inclusion in the Cabinet would lead the workers to believe that their interests would be looked after during the war, and would help to keep them quiet. But the ruling clique who control the national purse paid Henderson his £5,000 to carry out their orders. Lloyd George's contemptuous treatment of him shows he recognised that Henderson was an employee, and Curzon, Milner, Carson, and himself were the people who employed him. As he showed signs of insubordination, he was sacked, just the same as happens to a workman in a factory or a mine, or on the railway.

Surely anyone who looks at the incident and examines it calmly will recognise the truth of what we say. This country is a capitalist country—that is, a country where the capitalists—the great financiers and employers of labour—control the Government of the day. In August, 1914, a small section of them decided that to protect their financial interests it was necessary to declare war on Germany. The people had no voice in the matter at all. Having declared war, the capitalists looked round for people who could help them in carrying it to a successful issue. They knew that many things would have to be done which would make the workers uneasy—conscription, for instance—so they decided to get some of the Labour leaders to help them. Some of these men were immediately put on recruiting committees, which travelled up and down the country at the public expense, inviting the workers to join the army. There were other important and well-paid jobs for the big men, and minor offices for the small fry; but every Trade Union secretary or Labour Party official who was willing to take a job was given one. In this way official Labour was enlisted on the side of the capitalists and their war.

The heads of the Labour Party, however, had much higher views of their own importance, and, as Mr. O'Grady afterwards so nicely put it, did not intend to be mere "office boys" in the Government. So when the Coalition Cabinet was being formed, Henderson, as Chairman of the Labour Party, was asked to take office—and a nice fat salary—and he agreed to do so, a few of his colleagues taking some minor Government posts. But in all these cases the position of employer and employee was maintained. Henderson and his colleagues may have flattered themselves that they were going to help in the government of the country and to carry on the war, but they must have found out their mistake very soon. When Capital invited the co-operation of Labour, it was to carry out the plans of Capital. Of course, they also hoped to conciliate Labour during the war, and were prepared to use a little judicious flattery, and also spend a little cash. But the limitations of Labour's position are strictly defined, and as soon as a man steps over the boundary line, and begins to act for himself, he is pulled up. As Henderson acted in a way that displeased his employers, he was promptly turned down by them.

Now that so many Labour men are hobnobbing with the wealthy and exploiting class, the workers should thoroughly understand the position. The Government always represents the master class—always! If a Labour man accepts an official posi-

tion, he is paid by the masters, and must do their work while in that position. He cannot serve both masters and men, as their interests are opposed to each other. Mitchell, the first secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions, took a Government job; Cummings, the next secretary of the Federation, took a Government job; Shackleton, at one time Chairman of the Labour Party, also took a Government job, and has been knighted this year. Many other Labour men have been taken into Labour Exchanges and other Government jobs. Were these men given these jobs by the master class so that they could look after the interests of the workers? Of course not. Mitchell, Cummings and Shackleton had an inside knowledge of the Labour movement which would be useful to the masters in their fight against the workers, and for that reason were given large salaries to leave the workers' side and join that of the masters. And when Henderson, Hodge, Barnes and others joined the Government, they did exactly the same. In many cases they have acted contrary to resolutions passed at Trade Union Congresses, especially regarding conscription, which shows that they were determined to keep their jobs by pleasing their employers. Henderson thought himself of such value to the Government that he could take risks by acting on his own responsibility; but he lost his job.

All this is so simple and so obvious that it should not be necessary to say it. But the case of Henderson shows how very few understand the position. The trouble is really due to the workers blindly following so-called "leaders," and the masters bribe the leaders to lead the workers in a certain direction. If the workers always thought and acted for themselves they could get what they want without leaders. The recent engineers' strike was a good instance. The men said they would not have "dilution of labour" on private work, and went on strike. Their "leaders" in Government jobs rushed up and down the country bullying them, and ordering them to go back to work and accept "dilution." But the men knew what they wanted, and were determined to have it, and stood firm in spite of threats of imprisonment and of being drafted into the army. Now Winston Churchill announces, on behalf of the Government, that "dilution on private work" will not be carried out. This is a very striking object-lesson, and will show the workers that their strength lies in themselves, not in "leaders." But the principal lesson of the Henderson affair is the hollowness of political action. After many years of hard work in building up the Labour Party, the workers find their leaders made sport of by the Prime Minister of the day. The "great men" who they looked up to for guidance are shown to be no wiser than themselves, scrambling for jobs at the hands of the masters, and "blacklegging" on each other. No wonder Lloyd George and Co. show such contempt for them.

The workers having learnt their own strength by their struggles on the Clyde, in South Wales, and in the engineers' strike, should definitely abandon Parliamentary action, which leads nowhere, and adopt revolutionary direct action. There is no other way of getting rid of the exploiting and wealthy class, who fatten on their labour, and force them to fight to protect their profits.

THE DIRGE OF LABOUR.

This is the song the whole day long
Of the men at the bench and wheel,
And it sounds its moan in a monotone
In the clang of the burnished steel.
Oh! it's endless toil for the men who spoil
As the weary years roll by,
And every slave gets a pauper's grave
When he ceases toil to die.

The rhythmic click of the miner's pick
Doles out the song in drede,
How he must bow and sweat his brow
For the sake of his master's greed.
Oh! it's weary work where the shadows lurk,
And he hears his children cry,
And he can discern that some day he'll earn
A grave wherein to lie.

They are weary years, full of woe and tears,
As the toilers sadly plod;
And they lose their all, at their masters' call,
From the mine, the bench, and sod.
'Tis a sad, sad song from the toiling throng,
Rolled on their laboured breath;
But they bend their backs to the restless racks,
And they labour on till death.

R. S. WOOD.

THE LABOURER'S HIRE.

The animated discussion that waged round the Corn Production Bill demonstrated that now, as ever, the Government is chiefly concerned in aiding the landowning class, whilst keeping the agricultural labourer an economic serf. Under the terms of the Bill the State has provided for a bounty to the farmers and landlords to the extent of over £68,000,000. On the other hand, the minimum wage fixed for the agricultural labourer, although it reaches the magnificent sum of 25s. weekly, is only the equivalent of 14s. or 14s. 6d. in normal times.

The Government in arguing, as usual, that the farmer could not afford to pay a living wage to the agricultural labourer, overlooked the fact that efficiency and high wages have usually gone together. In point of fact, the Government gave the lie direct to the precious cant in which they have indulged for three years, that the workers are fighting for their country and freedom. The present treatment of the agricultural labourer is thus only a repetition of previous Government's efforts to keep the labourer enslaved.

Writing in "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," Thorold Rogers declares:

We have been able to trace the process by which the condition of English labour had been continuously deteriorated by the acts of government. It was first impoverished by the issue of base money, next it was robbed of its guild capital by the land thieves of Edward's regency. It was next brought in contact with a new and more needy set of employers—the sheepmasters who succeeded the monks. It was then, with a pretence of kindness, subjected to the Quarter Sessions assessment, mercilessly used in the first half of the 17th century, the agricultural labourer being still further impoverished by being made the residuum of all labour. The agricultural labourer was then further mulcted by enclosures and the extinction of those immemorial rights of pasture and fuel which he had enjoyed so long. The Poor Law professed to find him work, but was so administered that the reduction of his wages to a bare subsistence became an easy process and an economical expedient . . . tied him to the soil by the Law of Settlement, and starved him by a prohibitive Corn Law.

And again:

The condition of the agricultural labourer has been different from that of the artisan. Scattered and incapable of combined action with his fellows, bowed down by centuries of oppression, hard usage and hard words, with, as he believes, every social force against him, the landlord in league with the farmer, and the clergyman in league with both, the latter constantly preaching resignation and the two former constantly enforcing it, he has lived through evil times.

This description of the common lot of the humble tiller of the soil, although penned in 1883, is still true of to-day. The villages still remain relics of feudalism, and the economic and social condition of all who labour with their hands is deplorable. Trade Unionism, since the days of George Loveless onwards, although it has done a little to palliate the lot of the labourer, has nevertheless left things very much where they were, because of the failure to touch the basis upon which our social structure rests. Moreover, Trade Unionists have never been inspired with the vision which William Morris does something to convey in "News from Nowhere." They could never accept the absolute necessity for social reconstruction upon a Communistic basis, and so all their labour has merely resulted in making intolerable conditions slightly more easy to bear.

To the Anarchist it is of prime importance that each country should aim at becoming as self-supporting as possible, and it should be the chief concern that the necessities of life should be guaranteed. That we are at the present time only producing in this country a fraction of the food the population consumes is the direct result of the actions of those statesmen and masters of industry who guided the destinies of England from 1750 onwards. To these people it was infinitely more important that we should produce cotton, woollen, and iron goods and coal for export than grow an abundant food supply. Foreign wheat and meat, they argued, could be exchanged for manufactured articles, and so the workers of this country would be benefited. The net result might easily have been foreseen—increased wealth for the few and abject poverty and physical deterioration for the many.

The strangulation of agriculture that followed is bearing rich fruit in the impoverished production of to-day, and it has taken just three years of national subsistence upon the capital accumulated during our period of so-called commercial prosperity to make the upholders of the Manchester School of thought realise the importance of agriculture. Thus we have the panic legislation of

the past few months, with the usual failure to touch the root of the evil. So much for the Government point of view; but what can be said of those wage-slaves who have patiently accepted the conditions into which they have been born, and at best have only asked that their chains should be loosened just a little, in order that the area of pasturage should be enlarged sufficiently for them to gain increased efficiency for their master's benefit? The Greek poet spoke truly who said: "Half a man's worth is taken away on the day that he becomes a slave."

Thus it is that the Anarchist, in claiming economic freedom for all workers, insists rightly upon the needs for a community based upon the free development of agriculture and industry. He pleads for a breadth of vision that shall see beyond the wire-pulling of politicians and the authoritarian methods of the Labour leader. He contends that no political Moses can lead the workers to a promised land which so far they have been incapable of seeing.

The Anarchist wisely enough has insisted upon the need for de-centralisation, de-specialisation, the overthrow of all authoritarian and bureaucratic methods, and has aimed at each worker himself seeing the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and so taking, in conjunction with his enlightened fellows, those steps that shall at last give him that economic and social liberty which it has been the work of successive Governments to keep from him.

In order to understand a little of those forces ranged against us, a review of the past few centuries might usefully be made, and then we might ask our fellow wage-slaves how far they are still justified in supporting a system that permits Government the perpetual license of legal robbery of all that should go to make life harmonious and beautiful. For it is the worker, by his inherent cowardice, that helps to subvert the ends of Nature. When all the earth lies responsive to the hand of Nature it is the worker that permits the violation of natural law, and a social condition to exist which is that of deep-seated disease. The war conditions have helped many to diagnose that disease, but how many will be courageous enough to take the first step forward to health and Communism?

(To be continued.)

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?*

If Jesus Christ were now alive,
What would he do about the War?
Would he wade ankle-deep in gore?
Or would he not prefer to strive
To keep his fellow-men alive,
And thus refuse to shed their blood?

Dear me! the answer's clear as mud:
He'd straightway run and get a gun,
And start to smash the hateful Hun;
Or rush to join the R.F.A.,
(One kills so many more that way!)
Or he would win enduring fame
By skill in spurting streams of flame;
Or, in a mighty Super-Tank,
Send hordes of Hunnish blanks to Blank;
Or, with the gallant Flying Corps,
Above the Hunland cities soar,
And heavy showers of bombs release—
As harbingers of Christian Peace;
Or he in holy zeal would yearn
To "do his bit" at each in turn;
And then, he'd ne'er be such an ass
As not to choke the Ghouls with gas:
At length, becoming tired and hot,
He'd call on God to blast the lot!

T. S.

*When the Master of Balliol had finished speaking on "Religion and National Life" at Hampstead yesterday a young man asked: "If Jesus Christ was on earth to-day, was under 40 years of age, and was not in Holy Orders, do you think He would be engaged in making German widows, or prefer to be in prison for holding conscientious objections?" "I don't like that form of question," replied the Master of Balliol. "There are many historical incongruities you can bring out by simply imagining this, that, or the other. For instance, Julius Caesar at the telephone! Can you imagine any religious leader or religious-minded man holding back if he saw things done to children for whom he was responsible, and not doing all he could to prevent them? If you can, then your imagination is keener than mine, and I bow before it."—*Daily News*, 10/8/17.

FROM THE GHETTO.

It is, as the French say, from the East that there comes the light. In the East of London is the Ghetto. In the Ghetto are perhaps the great part of London Anarchists. For your real Anarchist is international, and it is in the Ghetto that Internationalism thrives.

Nevertheless, it is in the Ghetto that racial exclusiveness is strong. It is not an assertive quality. It permeates. It rebuffs. But it is an armour rather than a weapon. It is not turned against you. It is not used, as is a sword. But it is there. The Jew who is also an Anarchist seems nevertheless to be a Jew. He is an internationalist, but he clings to his Yiddish. And so, to get to know them, I started on Yiddish.

I started on Yiddish at one of the Modern Schools. It was held in Whitechapel. Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, all children, were there. The teacher was some kind of Russian; the girl who lent me her book from which to learn Yiddish came from Odessa. We started with the alphabet. At least they did. Aleph, Beth, and the rest. I did not start with the alphabet. To this day I do not know the names of the alphabet; but I can write tolerably well that light is from education, and that no-education is the darkness, and that the work makes the life sweet. Also can I ask if you are in the sound health and to reply that it makes with me very well.

The Modern School is a good school, but I do not think it is necessary to learn the precise order and names of the alphabet in any language. But that is, of course, not the fault of the Modern School. The Modern School, I have said, is a good school. But I should have said that it *was* a good school, since the Modern School is no more. So far as London is concerned, it is dead, it is defunct; it partakes of the Ewigkeit, the Nothingness.

First it started at Stepney Green; then it drifted down the road, since the good neighbours did not like the noises inseparable from the children when they are in a goodly company. Then there were difficulties. The group of elders did not blend somehow with the youthful. And so there was a strike, and a splitting-up, and eventually a reconciliation, a coming together that was, after all, never as strongly cemented as of old. Then one teacher was interned; two others went to America. The other reason for the final break-up that came was so many growing up and passing into the fighting ranks of the movement. The lad that span his top, the girl that skipped with the clothes-line, both are now at the street corners with peace propagandists and peace literature.

The Modern School had its country mansion. This was Epping Forest. In a hollow where the trees lie thick you will see them. But they are not so many now. The break-up is too general, too palpable. One has to hunt up comrades. They are in all places. Some are in prison for keeping to the principles they learnt with regard to the evil of militarism. Others are in doubt as to when their turn will come. Yet withal they are all cheerful.

After the war will come the Great Reunion and the Great Things.

Of course, I do not know. It is easy to say "after the war." But we are scattered. We are broken up. Even as the Modern School is broken up, so also are we, the elders, broken up. There are few of us left to do the work. We look round in vain for the help we need, we the few. The others? The others are in prison, they are interned, they are in hiding perhaps. Who knows? Suddenly, after vain seeking, we meet him whom we sought. He is thinner, but he is safe. Greetings. He goes. The world swallows him up till we see him again. He appears; then goes. That is all. Others also appear, then go. It is as in the Russia of old. There are new names, but the same old, dear comrades. Faces change; beards grow or are shaved. We do not recognise. The hand of a bearded man we do not recognise is held out hurriedly, surreptitiously in passing, and a greeting is whispered, and we look back vainly. The grip on our hand and the greeting, that is all.

But after the war all will be well. It will be changed. We shall be reunited. Never so anxiously did the early Christians look to the coming of the Judgment Day as the movement seems to look to the day of the Great Reunion. Never so vainly.

The war came. Then Conscription. Then internments, raids, imprisonments, suppressions; a general breaking up, partings, scatterings; the life underground, the false names, the strange faces, the false papers, and the sunderings. The war did all this. Ergo, when the war goes we shall be as before.

Then the Great Day—and the Great Things.

After the war, yes. . . . But now we are doing the Great Things. Yes, now. We are fighting with our ranks decreased, with our munition output diminished; the enemy is consolidated, his ranks are close set; but we are still fighting. These are the

days when everything is on a great scale, we cannot measure our efforts. But one thing we lack, we lack the consolidation that the enemy has. Few as we are, we are not bound together except by the loosest threads. We are doing well. But better is better than well. We can do better. We should do better. We should link up.

Then we can concentrate our fire instead of being scattered snipers. We are groping in the dark. The hands that we grasp, are they of our friends? We cannot tell, we cannot see. We must gather under the Light.

The Light, yes. Will it come from the East? Is it that the light is there for our seeking? Who knows?

Shall we not seek it, this light? We may not find it at first, but it is there, nevertheless. Let us seek it now. Not wait till after the war.

L. A. M.

OUR APPEAL.

The following sums have been received from July 26 to August 24 in answer to our appeal on behalf of FREEDOM and SATIRE: G. Lee, 3d.; W. Holton, 1s. 3d.; S. Jones, 3d.; J. Martin, 3d.; per H. Ellis, 10s. 2d.; G.K., 2s.; T.A., 2s.; H.S., 2s.; J. Foster, 5s., Anon., 1s.; B.L., 1s.; Hull Vagabond Group, 10s. 9d.; M. Goldberg, 2s. 6d.; W. Shubsacks, 2s. 6d.; L. Semp, 1s.; M. Hyman, 6d.; A.G., 1s.; J. Rosenberg, 1s.; Halevi, 6d.; Gogol, 6d.; H. Cohen, 6d.; R. Cohen, 6d.; S. Northman, 6d.; M. Minkin, 2d.; M. Cohen, 3d.; L. Semp, 1s. 7d.; H. Lipman, 2s.; J. Harrison, 6d.; G. Frost, 2s. 6d.; D. McCarthy, 1s.; G., 1s. 6d.; H. Smith, 5s.; T. Prentis, 2s. 6d.; L. Batts, 10s.; Abercrave Comrades, per V. Garcia, 15s.; H. W. Journet, 10s.; J. Thurgood, 1s.; Voeltzel, 1s.; M. White, 2s. 6d.; E. C. Batstone, 2s. 6d.; J. Archibald, 1s.; J. Welsh, 6d.; E. Carr, 6d.; T. Burt, 6d.; A. Campbell, 1s.; P. Mitchell, 1s.; T. Pennycook, 6d.; A. Smith, 2s.; D.T.G., 2s.; J. W. Gordon, 6d.; J. Hindley, 6d.; M. Cronin, 1s.; H. Todd, 6d.; H. Berridge, 1s.; E. Leigh, 3d.; A. Leach Williams, 6d.; A. Kimber, 3d.; A. Humphreys, 6d.; R. Peddie, 2s. 6d.; E. J. Jones, 5s.; W. Craine, 2s.; Anon., 2s.; A.L., 1s.; G.R.G., 1s.; Tolstoyan, 5s.; A Few Rebels at Princetown, 6s.; Gateshead Sympathisers, per G.W.T., 14s.; A. Perry, 4s. 6d.; A. and C. Jones, 2s.; J.G., 1s.; Leo V., 1s.; Phillips, 6d.; R.S., 1s.; C.O., 2s.

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