

Freedom

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NOTES.

Russian Revolutionists and the Allies.

Although it is difficult to piece together the scattered shreds of information concerning Russia that manage to filter through the censorship, it becomes increasingly clear that the enemies of the Revolution, in conjunction with the Allies, are deliberately trying to keep down the growing Anarchist and Communist tendencies of the masses. The new Coalition Government was only formed after very skilful manœuvring. The fact that property had to be protected and the Allied financiers placated made a bourgeois Government a necessity. The Democratic Conference held on October 4, to consider the formation of a new Coalition Government, decided in favour of a Coalition only after the Bolsheviks had marched out of the conference hall and the delegates of Zemstvo and the Co-operative Societies had combined with the Minimalist Socialists for this purpose. The *Nation* of October 13 says: "There is no doubt that the new Government will be pursued by the implacable hostility of the Bolsheviks. Forcible suppression of their Anarchic activities may well be necessary; but that is a matter for the Petrograd Government to decide. The duty of the Allies is clear. For the new Government much will depend on the success which attends Terestchenko in his mission to negotiate a revision and a plain statement of Allied war aims. He will be attended officially by a direct delegate of the Socialists. If the Allied Governments meet the Russian needs in an honest and liberal spirit the situation in Russia may yet be restored. If they do not, they will arm the Bolsheviks with new weapons, and hasten complete anarchy." But the Allied Governments at the present time are actually engaged in conspiring with the new Russian Government against the progressive and Communist movement in that stricken country."

Striking Against the State.

Australia has just emerged from the biggest strike of her history and, as usual, the capitalist press have discovered that the whole affair was "German-inspired." The strike appears to have been aimed at the introduction of "Taylorism," a system of speeding-up which has in the past proved disastrous to the workers. It is a significant fact that the men on strike in the workshops and factories were joined by the tramwaymen, the railwaymen, the miners, the wharf labourers, the seamen, and the slaughtermen; and other trades were preparing to follow suit when a settlement was patched up. From reports to hand it is obvious that a new Industrial Unionism has developed in Australia, which has at last broken down the old conservative barriers of Craft Unionism. The Sydney correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, writing on the strike, declared that the Australian workers "regarded the Unions as weapons of warfare not merely upon capitalists but also upon the State. Unionists were to work as they chose to work, and on terms dictated by themselves. They were to repudiate obligation of service, and were to get their way, not by law or by justice, but by tremendous strikes that would reduce the community to helplessness or impel submission to their demands. Hence the coal strike of November, 1916, and this far more sinister strike aimed directly at democracy." How democracy welcomed the strike is proved by the amount of money that was showered on the volunteer strike-breakers who manned engines and blacklegged generally. Yet it is the Democracy of the Empire that the redoubtable Billy Hughes has urged the workers of Australia to fight and die for! That he has not caught them napping has been very conclusively proved by the recent happenings in the "Workers' Paradise," as our island continent has been so facetiously named.

Reprisals.

The much boomed decision of the Government to indulge in reprisals has been very neatly criticised in the *Nation* of October 6. Referring to the speech made by General Smuts upon this subject it says:

"He argued that the air-raids on London and other open

towns were futile and immoral. What then is the point of our imitation of them? Apparently that we shall in some mysterious way do what they do without really doing it. We aim, we suppose, at producing on the Germans the effect of intimidation, which we deny that they produce on us. But we are not to achieve it, for we are to try and avoid killing women and children. The Germans bomb our towns and kill our children. We are to bomb theirs, and try not to kill their children. We are to have the name of reprisals without the thing. Or are we to have the thing without the name? We give it up."

The Berlin *Lokal Anzeiger* says that if France carries out her threat to bomb German towns, then Germany will for every German house demolished, destroy a whole street of Paris. The military parties have evidently been studying the Old Testament.

Standardising the People.

The proposals so enthusiastically received by the Press, that we are to have not only standardised ships to carry our commerce, but also standardised houses to dwell in, standardised boots to wear, and standardised food to eat, has demonstrated quite effectively the fact that the State is the enemy against which we must continue to fight vigorously. The ever-increasing proposals to standardise the workers of this country forcibly remind us of Buckle's description of the ancient empire of Peru. Speaking of the conditions of the masses in those days, he says:—

"The whole of the taxes were paid by them, the nobles and the clergy being altogether exempt. But, as in such a state of society it was impossible for the people to accumulate property, they were obliged to defray the expenses of government by their personal labour, which was placed under the entire command of the State. At the same time, with a system like this, feelings of personal independence were incompatible; they therefore contrived laws by which, even in the most minute matters, freedom of action was controlled. The people were so shackled that they could neither change their residence, nor alter their clothes, without permission from the governing powers. To each man the law prescribed the trade he was to follow, the dress he was to wear, the wife he was to marry, and the amusements he was to enjoy."

We seem to be approaching a similar state of affairs in these happy islands.

A Unique Strike.

The strike of Oldham cotton operatives occupies a unique position in our modern history of strikes. Unique because it has succeeded. It appears to have been directed not only against the Board of Control but against the employers and the Trade Unions. But perhaps that is why it has succeeded. The miserable succession of strikes during the past few years, carefully stage-managed by the Trade Unions, have made deplorable reading, not only because of their failures, but because the workers have acquiesced in useless methods and policies. But now that those who labour with their hands are beginning to adjust their grievances themselves there is hope for the future. The scrapping of a few Labour leaders and rule books throughout the country should promptly lead to a healthier vision on the part of all those most vitally interested, viz., the workers themselves.

Russian Workers' New Methods.

Yet there are other and perhaps more picturesque methods of settling disputes other than by strikes. News reaches us that our Russian comrades adopt a more determined attitude than our law-abiding selves. It is stated that the employees of the Electric Light Company of Kharkov recently arrested the directors and managers and kept them prisoners in the board room. Upon the employees holding a meeting to decide upon the fate of the prisoners, they rejected the proposal to inflict summary justice, but decided to keep their bosses prisoners until their demand for higher wages was granted.

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT.*

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

PART III.

To imagine that a government can be overturned by a secret society, and that secret society can take its place, is an error into which have fallen all the revolutionary organisations which sprang to life in the bosom of the Republican middle class since 1820. And yet facts abound which prove what an error it is. What devotion, what abnegation, what perseverance was not displayed by the Republican secret societies of the Young Italy Party! And yet all this immense work, all these sacrifices made by the youth of Italy, before which even those of the Russian Revolutionary youth pale, all the corpses piled up in the casemates of Austrian fortresses, and under the knife and bullets of the executioner—all this only brought into power the crafty, robbing middle class and Royalty!

It was the same in Russia. It is difficult to find in history a secret organisation which has obtained, with such limited means, results so immense as those attained by the Russian youth, or which has shown such energy or such powerful activity as their executive committee. It has shaken a colossus which appeared invulnerable—Czarism; and it has rendered autocratic government henceforth impossible in Russia. And still it is only simple fools who imagine that the Executive Committee will get into power when the crown of Alexander III. is dragged in the mire.* Other men—the prudent ones, who strove to make a name for themselves while the revolutionists laid and sprung mines or perished in Siberia, these others—the intriguers, the talkers, the lawyers, the journalists who now and again shed a few tears, very soon dried up, on the tomb of the heroes, and make believe they are friends of the people—these are the men who will come and take the place left vacant by the government, and will shout "Stand back!" to those "unknown persons" who will have prepared the way for the Revolution.

It is inevitable, it cannot be otherwise. For it is not secret societies nor even Revolutionary organisations that can give the finishing blow to governments. Their function, their historic mission is to prepare men's minds for the Revolution and then when men's minds are prepared and external circumstances are favourable, the final rush is made, not by the group that initiated the movement, but by the mass of the people altogether outside of the society. On the 31st of August Paris was deaf to the appeals of Blanqui. Four days later he proclaimed the fall of the government; but then the Blanquists were no longer the initiators of the movement; it was the people, the millions who dethroned the man of December, and proclaimed the humbugs whose names for two years had resounded in their ears. When a Revolution is ready to burst out, when the movement is felt in the air, when its success is already certain, then a thousand new men, on whom the organisation has never exercised any direct influence, come and join the movement, like birds of prey coming to the field of battle to feed on the victims. These help to make the final effort, but it is not in the ranks of the sincere and irreconcilable conspirators, it is among the men on the fence that they look for their leaders. The conspirators who still are possessed with the prejudice of a dictatorship work then unconsciously to put into power their own enemies.

But if all this that we have just said is true with regard to political revolutions or rather outbreaks, it is much more true with regard to the Revolution we desire—the Social Revolution. To allow any government to be established, a strong and recognised power, is to paralyse the work of the Revolution at once. The good that this government would do is nil, and the evil immense.

For what is it we have on hand? what do we understand by Revolution? It is not a simple change of governors. It is the taking possession by the people of all social wealth. It is the abolition of all the forces which have so long hampered the development of humanity. But is it by decrees emanating from a government that this immense economic revolution can be accomplished? We have seen in the past century the Polish revolutionary dictator Kosciuszko decree the abolition of personal servitude, yet the servitude continued to exist for eighty years after this decree. We have seen the Convention, the omnipotent Convention, the terrible Convention as its admirers call it, decree the equal division per head of all the communal lands taken back from the nobles. Like so many others, this decree remained a dead letter because in order to carry it out it was necessary that the proletarians of the rural districts should make an entirely new Revolution, and Revolutions are not made by the force of decrees. In order that the taking possession of social wealth should become an accomplished fact it is necessary that the people should have

their hands free, that they would shake off the slavery to which they are too much habituated, that they act according to their own will, and march forward without waiting for orders from anyone. And it is this very thing which a dictatorship would prevent however well intentioned it might be, while it would be incapable of advancing in the slightest degree the march of the Revolution.

But if government, were it even an ideal Revolutionary government, creates no new force and is of no use whatever in the work of demolition which we have to accomplish, still less can we count on it for the work of reorganisation which must follow that of demolition. The economic change which will result from the Social Revolution will be so immense and so profound, it must so change all the relations based to-day on property and exchange, that it is impossible for one or any individual to elaborate the different social forms which must spring up in the society of the future. This elaboration of new social forms can only be made by the collective work of the masses. To satisfy the immense variety of conditions and needs which will spring up as soon as private property shall be abolished, it is necessary to have the collective suppleness of mind of the whole people. Any authority external to it will only be an obstacle, and beside that a source of discord and hatred.

But it is full time to give up this illusion so often proved false and so often dearly paid for, of a Revolutionary Government. It is time to admit, once for all, this political axiom that a government cannot be revolutionary. People talk of the Convention, but let us not forget that the few measures taken by the Convention, little revolutionary though they were, were only the sanction of action accomplished by the people who at the time trampled under foot all governments. As Victor Hugo has said, Danton pushed forward Robespierre, Marat watched and pushed on Danton, and Marat himself was pushed on by Cimourdain—this personification of the clubs of wild enthusiasts and rebels. Like all the governments that preceded it and followed it, the Convention was only a drag on the action of the people.

The facts which history teach us are so conclusive in this respect, the impossibility of a Revolutionary Government and the injurious effect of that which is called by the name are so evident, that it would seem difficult to explain the determination with which a certain school calling itself Socialist maintains the idea of a government. But the explanation is very simple. It is that Socialists, though they say they are the followers of this school, have an entirely different conception from ours of the Revolution which we have to accomplish. For them, as for all the middle-class Radicals, the Social Revolution is rather an affair of the future about which we have not to think much at present. What they dream of in their inmost thoughts, though they don't dare to confess it, is something entirely different. It is the installation of a government like that of Switzerland or the United States, making some attempts at expropriation in favour of the State of what they call "public services." It is something after the ideal of Bismarck. It is a compromise made in advance between the Socialistic aspirations of the masses and the desires of the middle class. They would indeed wish the expropriation to be complete, but they have not the courage to attempt it; so they put it off to the next century, and before the battle they enter into negotiation with the enemy.

For us who understand that the moment is near for giving a mortal blow to the middle class, that the time is not far off when the people will be able to lay their hands on all social wealth and reduce the class of exploiters to a state of impotence, for us, I say, there can be no hesitation in the matter. We fling ourselves body and soul into the Social Revolution, and as on the road we follow, a government, whatever may be its device, is an obstacle, we will sweep from our path all ambitious men, however they shall come to thrust themselves upon us as governors of our destinies.

Away with Governments; make room for the People, and Anarchy!

(Conclusion.)

DO YOU KNOW

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* This was written before the death of Alexander III.

THE LABOURER'S HIRE.

(Continued.)

The Statute of Labourers of 1351, by means of which Parliament tried to fix the price of labour, naturally enough only fanned the flame of revolt already burning among the labourers of that day. Their cause was ably voiced by John Ball, the so-called mad priest of Kent, who seems to have been one of the first English exponents of social equality and Communism of which there is any record. His words have a very modern ring about them, for he declared:

"Things will never go well in England as long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom we call lords greater folk than we? On what grounds have they deserved it? Why do they hold us in serfage? If we all came of the same father and mother, of Adam and Eve, how can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them by our toil what they spend in their pride? They are clothed in velvet and warm in their furs and their ermines, while we are covered with rags. They have wine and spices and fair bread, and we eat cake and straw, and water to drink. They have leisure and fine houses, we pain and labour, the rain and the wind in the fields. And yet it is of us and of our toil that these men hold their state."

This peasants' revolt, which quickly spread through the South and Eastern Counties of England, was put down with great brutality. But, like many other more recent rebellions, the sacrifices of the revolting men had not been in vain, though it is worthy of note that the Parliament, composed of landowners, refused to grant the serfs the freedom so ardently desired, declaring that, though they all were to die in one day, they never would give their consent. More statutes were passed forbidding the child of any tiller of the soil to be apprenticed in a town. But all the laws of the land failed to achieve their purpose—economic conditions were fast breaking down the last strongholds of the feudal system. The extension of sheep farming was a big factor in settling the disparity existing between supply and demand of labour, and led to an influx of labourers into the towns, where the social and craft guilds were already growing in power and wealth.

Passing onwards, no great landmarks appear to show us the labourer in conscious revolt against the oppression and tyranny that were still his lot. Villeinage had certainly quite disappeared, but that the workers were conspired against and robbed is fully evidenced by the words of Sir Thomas More, who, writing in 1516, states:

"The rich are ever striving to pare away something further from the daily wages of the poor by private fraud and even by public law, so that the wrong already existing (for it is wrong that those from whom the State derives most benefit should receive least reward) is made yet greater by means of the law of the State."

And again:

"The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labour of the poor. And so soon as the rich decide on adopting these devices, in the name of the public, then they become law."

The position of the labourer is aptly described by More as being "a life so wretched that even a beast's life seems enviable." Yet no revolt appears to have been attempted against the prevailing wretchedness. The labourers seem to have accepted their lot with all becoming humility. Rent and prices of foodstuffs continued to advance, and the raising of rents, following any improvement by the tenant farmer, discouraged agriculture.

But wretched as the labourer's life undoubtedly was in the sixteenth century, it had not become as intolerable as during the latter half of the eighteenth century. By an Act of Parliament of 1592 it was decreed that each cottage built should be surrounded by four acres of land. Then, too, the common lands of the villages gave ample pasturage to cattle. On the other hand, the Law of Parochial Settlement sealed the fate of the labourer as a serf without land, which Thorold Rogers describes as "the most portentous phenomenon in agriculture." Yet all through this period of poverty and degradation, trade, manufacture, and agriculture were making progress, but always at the expense of the labourer. Inventions and improved methods of agriculture only brought increased poverty to him, and because all initiative had been destroyed and the labourer reduced to a mere machine, he became a tool in the exploiters' hands.

Speaking of this period, Thorold Rogers, after stating that English husbandry does not appear to have altered or improved for nearly four centuries, tells us: "The danger to English husbandry lies in the insecurity of the tenant, in the rapacity of the

landlord, and in the impossibility of developing self-reliance and courage under the terms of a precarious tenure." The unsettled period following the bourgeois revolution of the seventeenth century (when King Charles was beheaded) does not appear to have materially altered the position of the labourer, despite the improvement in agriculture. Certain it is that up to 1765 England was not only self-supporting but actually exported corn.

How the rise of the factory system reversed this and led to still greater degradation and poverty must be left for a subsequent article.

(To be continued.)

C.O.'s AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE.

We have received a letter on the above subject from our young London comrade, Willie Ruderman, who refused military service, and who writes from the Guard Room, Hazeleydown Camp, Winchester (October 19). Dealing with our comrade Corum's remark in last month's FREEDOM, that the attitude of Anarchists "must be more determined than that of those who support State compulsion in other matters, while objecting to military service," Ruderman is rather sarcastic at the expense of a few comrades who crossed the seas rather than stay here to fight "British Prussianism." He then says:

"Then there are one or two others who accepted the Home Office scheme of work of national importance. How an Anarchist can accept such an alternative from any government I absolutely fail to recognise. It is simply acknowledging the right of a State to force you to do such service as they may decide. Is that consistent with Anarchism? With regard to working in prison, my position is this: We are not only out to refuse any service under a Conscription Act ourselves, but we also want to smash the prospect of a permanent Military Service Act, and so save the future generations from the curse of militarism. It is for this reason I am willing to undergo any punishment the Government like to inflict, because I believe that by accepting the punishment for our principles we are gaining increasing support to the cause of anti-militarism. This is the only way we can smash a permanent system of Conscription, for we are, after all, only a minority, and we must have public opinion behind us, at least to some extent, before we can achieve our object. If we all took up Corum's attitude the possibility is that we might obtain our release, because the Government would not know how to deal with us, but it would not be an acknowledgment of the right of the C.O. to absolute exemption. That is the point we are out to establish. If this is done, Conscription is badly broken. That is the reason why I have never objected to working in prison, unless, of course, the work was for war purposes. For instance, at Winchester I worked in the basket shop, and while I was there an order was received for 700 ballast baskets for transport ships. We were asked to make these, but we (five in all) refused, and, in spite of all threats of bread and water, never made them. But otherwise I did everything asked."

"I often thought of the way we used to sneer at the religious people, but the past few months have taught me to admire the sincerity of these people, although my opinions on religion are as firm as ever—in fact, firmer. Still, I can admire the sincerity of these people and the spirit in which they have stood by their faith. . . . I expect to be back in prison before your next number is published, as I was court-martialled last Wednesday (17th), and expect to go about the end of next week."

The question as to how far one should go in resisting service of all kinds is largely a question of physical and moral strength. It requires the fortitude of a North American Indian to face the tortures suffered by some conscientious objectors, and it is not to be expected that all can show equal fortitude. But that must not be allowed to detract from the value of their fight against Conscription.

After considerable official relations, Nathaniel Hawthorne thus pays his respects to the *genus politicum*: "I want nothing to do with them . . . their hearts wither away and die out of their bodies. Their consciences are turned to indiarubber, or to something as black as that, which will stretch as much."

Politicians are a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of them, are at least one step removed from honest men. I say this with greater freedom being a politician myself.—Abraham Lincoln.

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EVOLUTION OF THE LABOUR PARTY

The recent memorandum on reorganisation issued by the Labour Party shows the natural evolution which all political parties must take if they would obtain power in the Government of the country. The Labour Party was first formed in 1900 (as the Labour Representation Committee), the Socialists being the driving force which compelled the Trade Union Congress to act. As a result of their activities, the Socialist bodies have up to the present always had a larger share of representation on the Executive of the Labour Party than their membership warranted, and, consequently, their influence has been considerable in the decisions of the party. For some years the Miners' Federation declined to affiliate with the party, but as the result of persistent agitation amongst the members, they eventually voted in favour of affiliation, and at the General Election of 1906 most of the miners' candidates ran under the auspices of the party, a few remaining firm to the Liberal and Radical organisations which had previously supported them. The coming of the miners' representatives had a great effect on the "dilution of the Labour Party," as their block vote could always be used against the Socialists whenever they tried to go faster than desired by the majority—"that damned compact majority," as Ibsen said.

The counting of noses (or voters) is, and must be, the main work of a political organisation, and the Labour Party is no exception. New voters must be found somehow or other, and all sorts of methods have been adopted to seduce them from the ranks of the older political bodies. Should the Law Lords give a decision against the interests of Trade Unionists, as in the Taff Vale case, "Join the Labour Party!" is the cry. Does the war go wrong—"Join the Labour Party!" As food prices increased or industrial conscription menaced the workers, always they were told that a larger party in Parliament would prevent these evils. But the action of the Labour Members in Parliament, and especially of those in the Government, has shown that nothing can be expected from them. Although in the Government their influence is very small. Had they been anything more than "office boys" they would have resented Lloyd George's treatment of Henderson, but it was actually a Labour man, George Barnes, who delivered the Cabinet's insulting message to his colleague, and took his job when Henderson was forced to resign. The Labour Party undoubtedly resented this shabby treatment of their colleague, but were not in a position to prevent it, as was shown by the action of another Labour Member, Roberts, of Norwich, who, as a result of taking office in the Government, had to seek re-election. The local Labour Party repudiated him and refused to support him, but their Liberal and Tory enemies came to his assistance, and he was returned without a fight.

These lessons have not been lost on the Labour politicians who have tasted the sweets of office during the war, but who know that they stand little chance of keeping their jobs when the war is over, unless they have many more voters at their back at election time. So now "reorganisation" is their motto, and their nets are to be flung wider and outside of the Trade Union movement, so as to catch more political fish. They refused to use the word "Socialist" when originally formed, and now they intend

to wipe out the direct representation of Socialist bodies, as even that is found to scare away possible voters. The new women voters are to be catered for, and practically anyone (even non-Unionists) may join the local organisations. A new programme has been put forward, to which any Radical would agree, and which, as one writer puts it, "omits the older theoretical and doctrinaire assertions which strew the path of Labour and Socialist Parties in the past." In other words, having used the Socialist ladder to get into office, they now kick it away as of no further use to them—in fact, harmful to their future welfare. Having done this, they are now in a position to claim the support of the middle class, and even the propertied class, as they have removed any fear of being looked upon as "expropriators" or "dreamers." Like Kerensky, they have "trampled on their dreams," and now come out as "practical politicians."

Now we would like to point out that there is nothing abnormal about this evolution of the Labour Party. It is the necessary evolution of every political party. Many Socialists who remember the early days of the movement are bitterly disappointed to find the work of their lifetime wasted, but if they will study the history of other parties they will find the same evolution has been at work. The Radicals, whose title signified that they went to the root of things, are now perched on the branches of the very tree whose roots they were originally pledged to destroy. The Irish Party, originally built up to expropriate the Irish landlords, is now looked to as the hope of English capitalism, and will probably in the near future form the majority party in the Government of Ireland, and as such collect from the Irish peasant farmers those rents which they originally pledged themselves to abolish. Now the Labour Party in its turn is prepared to work with the capitalists in plans of "reconstruction" which, even if they give higher wages to the workers, will bind them more firmly to the wage system which the founders of the Labour Party set out to sweep away. However revolutionary a political party may be at its birth, it is inevitable that as it increases in size it will shed its revolutionary principles.

As we have now seen that every organisation built on Governmental lines, with officials who control the finance and work of the organisation, must degenerate in the course of time, it follows that the organisation of the future must be built on entirely opposite lines—that is, without officials and without official funds. It may seem an outrageous dream to think of anything on a large scale being done on such lines, but we hold that the co-operation of small groups holding similar views will be more effective in keeping firm to their principles on voluntary lines than if bossed from above by a body which is bound to become autocratic. Those who believe in the old methods ask us how we will manage large factories and large industries on those lines. We reply that those large profit-making concerns have been built up on the mental degradation of the individuals employed there. The organisation of the future must, and will, consider how each and every individual can live his or her life in their own way without encroaching on the freedom of others to do the same. That is Anarchism in a nutshell. This life will not be possible with officials, and, therefore, we repeat that the free and voluntary society must be built up from the bottom entirely without officials, and on the basis of equality. "No master, high or low!"

Experts on the War.

"The war is won."—General Smuts, September 21.

"The war has only begun."—Lord Northcliffe, at Kansas City, October 25.

"The submarine menace is defeated."—Dr. Addison and others four weeks ago.

Admiralty return of British merchant shipping losses for week ending September 30, 13 vessels; October 7, 16 vessels; October 14, 18 vessels; October 21, 25 vessels (highest number for past three months).

"Fighting is still said to be possible in the Isonzo region for several weeks yet, but . . . it is difficult to believe that the Austro-Germans can do more than make a big demonstration."—*Manchester Guardian*, October 24.

Five days later (October 29) the *Guardian* announced that the Austro-Germans had captured 100,000 Italians and 700 guns, and said: "Italy has suffered a disaster."

Funny people, these experts. Nothing, however, will prevent them saying similar foolish things again, to be similarly disproved. They know their readers' gullibility is unlimited.

SAVING THE WORLD FOR DEMOCRACY

The above phrase was manufactured in the United States as signifying the war aims of the American people, but many happenings of recent date in that country prove that democracy does not mean freedom. In fact, the war has been made an excuse for attacking Trade Unionism on the ground that it hinders production and thereby affects the prosecution of the war.

Last July a strike took place in the copper mines at Bisbee, Arizona, and, as the mine-owners found it difficult to break the strike, they enlisted all the little property-holders and professional men and armed them, and formed a Vigilant Association to protect "law and order." Early in the morning of July 12 the "Vigilants," well armed, went from street to street in Bisbee and collected 1,200 of the strikers, forced them into a train, and ran them out into the desert many miles away from their homes, and left them there without food or shelter. In defending their action, the Capitalists said they were I.W.W. members and therefore presumably without any rights. As the mineowners control the Government of the State of Arizona they could do as they pleased. The Federation of Labour sent officials to investigate affairs, but when they arrived by train they were met by the "Vigilants" and told to clear out at once. We read: "Bisbee is now patrolled by armed men in the pay of the copper mines companies. American citizens are denied access to the city except after a rigorous and unlawful investigation by officers in the employment of these companies." Investigations made by the Federation of Labour show that only a small number of those deported were members of the I.W.W., and that hundreds had subscribed to the "Liberty Loan" to fight Germany and "make the world safe for democracy"!

At the copper mines in Butte, Montana, fifteen thousand miners went on strike in June to compel the mineowners to instal safety devices in the mines. Just previously 200 men were burnt to death in the Speculator mine, and the miners immediately struck and are still out. On August 1, Frank Little, of the I.W.W., who had been prominent in the strike, was taken from his bed by six masked and armed men (he was a cripple!), taken out of Butte in a motor-car, and hung from a railway bridge. Why? To "make the world safe for democracy"—and also perhaps to make the world safe for mineowners' dividends. In August, 1914, when the war started, copper was 12 cents per pound; it is now 30 cents. In the same period the value of men's lives has steadily decreased until now the world reaps of thousands killed daily on the battlefields of Europe, and takes very little more notice than of the result of a prize fight.

NEWS FROM NEAR AND FAR.

We learn from our comrade, Hilario Gallo, of Dowlais, that the defeat of the recent rebellion in Spain was mainly due to the foolishness of one of the revolutionists. He writes that the workers' demand for higher wages or a reduction in the prices of food was ignored by the Government, so they decided to take action. The General Committee had everything arranged for a revolt to break out on August 13, and had stored ammunition for that purpose, but one member who knew the secret got drunk a few days before the arranged date, and, standing on the steps of a house in a main street of Madrid, blurted out the fact to passers-by. The news spread like wildfire, and the Capitalists determined to seize the ammunition at once. They arrested the General Committee, among whom was Virginia Gonzalez, known as "the Angel of Spanish Democracy," a woman whose life has been devoted to the cause of the workers. Although foiled for the time being, the workers will rise in greater strength next time and with more success.

The *Libertaire* Group of Paris continues to be persecuted. Six of the comrades were again put on trial recently and received varying sentences, the printer being fined three thousand francs. The charge arose out of their having published, as a leaflet, their organ, *Libertaire*, after it had been suppressed as a newspaper. The leaflet contained appeals to women and a demand for peace, amongst other matter generally described by the prosecution as "alarmist reports."

News from Australia is delayed in arrival, but we gather that one of the Ministerial big guns has been speaking of the possible revival of Conscription proposals, failing a great Allied victory in

the near future. Industrial unrest continues, in common with the European unrest that is accumulating with the food shortage and the continuance of the war for no definite aim.

Coming nearer home, it is amusing to learn of the prattlings of the Bishop of Exeter, one of the Cecils, anent the hotbed of revolution at Dartmoor. It is interesting to note, with regard to our own C.O.'s, that William Jackson and Harry Brewer are both at Dartmoor, having been transferred there from Wakefield Prison for propaganda. Norman Bannister is also at Dartmoor, having accepted the scheme, as also C. B. Warwick. We understand, however, that the latter has thrown the scheme over, and is now awaiting arrest. Alec Shearer is in Plymouth Prison, having been sent there for some collision with a bullying warder. Seaton, Brooks, Toft, and Williams are in Walton Jail. Herbert Holt is serving time in Strangeways, and both Alfred Corum and Willie Ruderman are in Winchester Jail.

COMMUNAL COLONIES.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

DEAR COMRADE,

I would like to enter the arena in defence of Communal Colonies, not so much because I believe in any of the existing proposals for such Colonies, but because I am a firm believer in the principle underlying such attempts. Having an ideal, one should endeavour to live as near to it as possible. I have been provoked into writing by the article in the October issue of FREEDOM, signed "L.A.M." I do not think I have ever read (outside the *Daily Express*) in one article so many illogical, inconsistent and cheaply satirical remarks; also the patronage in the many references to the "people" is worthy of a Labour leader. Passing by such curiously antiquated phrases as "selfishly happy" (as if there were any other form of happiness) one comes to the gratuitous information that certain Colonies are not Anarchism, and that most farmers are not Anarchists. When and where has anyone attempted to demonstrate the inferred opposite to these two statements, excepting that all departures from conventional and orthodox practices and ideas are Anarchistic? The fatuousness of the remark that "most successful farmers are not Anarchists," must be obvious to any reasoning animal. I am inclined to agree with "L.A.M." when he ridicules the suggestion to limit these Colonies to teetotalers, vegetarians, non-smokers, etc., etc. (although his flippant description of them as general nuisances jars, and is in bad taste); but he must know, from his own personal experience, that a certain amount of mutual agreeability is essential to any co-operative effort, and under present conditions this justifies some sort of selection, or refusal to work with certain individuals. If there is any implied superiority over the mass of the people in this attitude, stained glass-window angel, carefully-creased-sports-coat-long-haired-lily-fingered-intellectual missionary (?) how much more so is there in the attitude of "L.A.M." when he says, "We want to save the people," etc., "We want to teach them," etc., etc. Here is the Labour leader again, disinterestedly leading the people into the promised land, from the highest and most altruistic of motives. "We must take the people precisely as they are on that day of days" (the day of revolution). I think if "L.A.M." is not careful he'll find the people ahead of him when that day arrives, they are getting fed up with leaders of any sort. "The people have been used to having things done for them"! Indeed, since when? They've got used to being bossed and robbed, but they do all the essential work themselves.

It seems to me that a colonist with practical experience of growing the food, upon the production of which all our lives depend, will have more valuable information to place before the people on the "day of days" than any revolutionary printer or postman whose respective lives have been spent in printing and circulating rubbish. Why should we spend the major part of the day at very often useless and uninteresting work, making profits for a master, when there is a possibility of doing work which is both productive and interesting, and at the same time living under much more congenial conditions? I can see nothing anti-propaganda in this, and this is the most serious criticism which these Colonies have to meet.

Again, the Colonies need not be merely agricultural, or agricultural at all, and should never be far from industrial centres. Properly organised on a sufficiently large scale practically all the necessities of life could be produced by such Colonies and exchanged one with the other. This may seem extravagant to "L.A.M.," but he mustn't put his own limitations down as the lack of sense in other people. This is the sort of organisation which will help more than anything in the reconstruction which must follow a revolution. The readiness and ability of the

Russian peasantry to seize and *work* the land will determine the fate of the Russian revolution. So will it be in all revolutions. A colony does not prohibit the propaganda work necessary to get to the point of revolution, but encourages it. They can still have their papers and leaflets, and their writings will carry more conviction because of the very position they occupy. "L.A.M.'s" position is analogous with that of the man who, loudly protesting his anti-militarism, joins the Army.—Yours fraternally, M.C.C.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

DEAR COMRADE,

I was rather disappointed to read "L.A.M.'s" satirical remarks in his article, "Wanted a Vision," in the October FREEDOM. Since my first letter on "Anarchist Colonies" I have fully expected a reasonable discussion, but instead of that he has always treated it with sarcasm of which his last letter is a typical example.

It is certainly easier for him to wilfully misconstrue my point of view than to take notice of the real intention of the colonists, which is first to gather together those people who really believe in the immediate realisation of Anarchism. Therefore, I cannot understand "L.A.M.'s" opposition to the Colony scheme simply because it is on a small scale. I will, therefore, repeat once again that we are not thinking of, or intending, the Colony to be a place like "L.A.M." imagines. That is evident from Miss Hope's pamphlet and my previous letters. Neither myself, nor do I think the others, have any idea that we are doing what no one else can do. We have no pretension of being or becoming "stained glass angels"; we want simply to know what can be done by mere human efforts. Our ideal is not to impose any conditional method of living, but to form some free associations having similar affinities, because experiences taught those who have already lived the communal life that affinity of ideas and taste is essential for its harmonious working. That is, after all, a natural law which is actually in practice, but individuals to-day base their affinities almost purely on material advantages to be gained by such affinities. I am not attracted by a man because he is a worker, but because he is a lover of freedom.

The economic war is absolutely the same as the other: so long as there will be some men willing to go into factories, so long will exploitation be possible. Therefore, to abolish it we must be C.O.'s to economic war. It is no use speaking anti-militarism and going to the front. If those who are against the war would do their utmost, there would be no war to-day. The situation must be clear between those who want to act and those who want to preach only. Therefore the people who share the Anarchist principles have to be self-supporting as much as possible. Now, if we choose to go on the land, it is because we realise that we shall assure ourselves of a living from our productivity (that is the bread-and-butter side of colonism); but if we increase in numbers it would be inconsequent to think that we shall all work in the country. It is all according to the trades of the members of each Colony. Anyhow, in Anarchist life a great number of trades will disappear: no more munition factories, etc.; also individual needs becoming more natural, more workers would be attracted to the land. In short, this shows that our start is the beginning of what "L.A.M." wishes. But I wonder if he will disagree with us because we do not want to wait until the "day of days" arrives.

To conclude, I should like to remind "L.A.M." that all this discussion has been opened by his article, "Towards Revolution," in which he referred to the Russian Revolution. Well, we can still learn by watching the Russian people, which was one best prepared for a revolution. I truly wish them to gain their freedom, but I still believe that will depend on their degree of evolution.—Yours fraternally,

MAURICE.

OUR APPEAL.

The following sums have been received from September 29 to October 29 in answer to our appeal on behalf of FREEDOM and SATIRE: B. Koffman, 1s.; M. Greenberg, 1s.; M. Cohen, 1s.; M. Lee, 1s.; S. Badansky, 1s.; M. Newdall, 1s.; B. Gordon, 2s.; L. Taylor, 6d.; "H. E.", 4d.; R. Barofsky, 6d.; "A. U.", 4d.; Zimmerman, 2d.; G. Robertson, 1s. 9d.; "J. R.", 1s.; Gateshead Sympathisers (per G.W.T.), 10s.; E. Almond, 2s. 6d.; T. Foxall, 2s. 6d.; H. Hume, 1s.; W. Cunningham, 1s.; G. Taylor, 1s.; E. Carr, 1s.; P. Mitchell, 1s.; C. Lipman, 1s. 6d.; G. Frost, 1s.; I. Revillas, 6d.

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I. Revillas, 6d.

A QUAKER ON ANARCHY.

The October *Ploughshare* has an interesting article on "Anarchy, Liberty and Authority," by T. Constantinides. He says: "What then is the course for the would-be Anarchist to pursue pending his evolution to perfection? Cherishing the right of self-government himself, he cannot impose government on others. . . . Personally, he must abandon the means of coercion and seek to influence by conviction. He must place his whole-hearted faith in his powers of persuasion, strongly backed by force of moral example. Added to this he must learn to develop an efficient will and ability to minister to the vital needs of those around him in such a manner that they cannot help but feel their dependence upon him, and, consequently, his indispensability. Last, but not least, he must possess an unfailing supply of good humour. Only then can he safely forego the use of physical violence, as a means of self-preservation." And, further: "He must claim as his progressive safeguard a sacred right of consent over his words and deeds and a consequent right of refusal to obey the commands of others who may forcibly seek to impose responsibilities upon him to which he cannot conscientiously consent."

We congratulate Mr. Constantinides on having given a fairly lucid resumé of Anarchy, but it is unfortunately marred by some mis-statements, no doubt due to failing to grasp the economic influence on individual liberty. It is manifestly impossible for Anarchy to exist in truth within a Capitalist society. Hence our critic's mistaken assertion that a man's right to refuse obedience to orders "is a very different thing from the dogmatic duty of refusing to obey all orders." And also his contention that the would-be Anarchist should set himself up as an indispensable philanthropist, ministering to the vital needs of those around him. Mr. Constantinides says: "Self-government is the keynote of Anarchy, and anything short of perfection in one self, as compared with those around one, condemns one's right to complete self-government." We retort: "Anything short of perfection in our rulers condemns their right to govern us." As there are no perfect men, this means that we deny the right of anyone to govern us.

NOTICES.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP.—Rooms, 10, Windsor Street (off New City Road). Meetings will be held every Sunday evening during the winter at 7 p.m.

- Nov. 4.—J. H. McLure: "The Materialistic Conception of History."
 " 11.—J. Ogilvie: "The Workers' Political Gods."
 " 18.—P. Fitzpatrick: "Industrial Socialism."
 " 28.—Miss F. Cohen: "Constructive Destruction."

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