

Freedom

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NOTES.

French Workers' Demand for War Aims.

The great strikes in May at munition works in France were ignored by our Press, but they created a great impression on French politicians. The biggest factories in and near Paris were affected—Renaut's, Citroens, and others closing down entirely for a few days. The workers at Bourges and also at Lyons and Marseilles soon joined in, and at one moment it almost seemed as though a general strike might develop. The real cause, as far as we can gather, was growing dissatisfaction with the Government's summary dismissal of all peace overtures; and when the military authorities called up another 30,000 men from the munition shops, the workers demanded a clear statement of war aims from the Government and went on strike. Troops were called out, as usual, and in cavalry charges in Paris four strikers were killed. Senegalese and Annamite troops were used in other districts. Many arrests were made. When a deputation of strikers waited on Clemenceau, his answer was: "Your leaders will be shot, and you will be sent to the front." The idea of working men asking what they are fighting for evidently amused Clemenceau. But within a very few days he had altered his tone. On June 7 a meeting of more than half the Deputies was addressed by members of the General Confederation of Labour, who insisted on the workers and their leaders being consulted in future peace offers, which should not be rejected without discussion. The Cabinet evidently realised that French Trade Unionists would have to be pacified, and the next day Clemenceau's paper, *L'Homme Libre*, said: "We must avoid allowing German militarism to say that we are systematically opposed to peace. Therefore, let Germany speak; we are ready to listen." This is a salutary change, and shows that the workers have all the necessary power to stop the war as soon as they realise the futility of fighting any longer.

The Wilson Bubble.

Before the United States came into the war, we were told by many of President Wilson's admirers that he was the great strong man who, being outside the actual struggle, was able to judge the issue fairly. His great love of Liberty—(did he not write "The New Freedom"?)—his hatred of war, and his undying enmity towards the autocracy of the Old World raised him high above the level of all other rulers, and the peoples of the earth were asked to look up to him as the champion of their rights and liberties. But, knowing that he was the representative of an unscrupulous body of capitalists and politicians, we could never accept the popular estimate of his character. If the capitalists supported him, the people would have to watch him with both eyes open. And so it turned out. From the moment he declared war on Germany he threw overboard all the lovely principles he had carried on his banner previously. Under his rule freedom of speech, pen and press has been suppressed. Dozens of Socialist, Anarchist and Labour papers have been stifled in one way or another; hundreds of men and women are in prison for speaking against America's participation in the war; and religious and other objectors to military service have been sentenced to penal servitude for life for refusing to obey orders. And not a word of protest comes from this political humbug, who calls the Almighty to his aid as frequently as does the Kaiser.

Americans Alarmed.

Some Americans who are in favour of the war are getting alarmed at the way in which Wilson and his supporters are playing ducks and drakes with the Constitution. The Overman Bill recently passed puts into the President's hands such power as is held by no other ruler, and his speeches about "autocracy" in Germany seem very hypocritical now. To show how it appears to some worthy editors in the States, we will give a few quotations from articles written when the Bill was introduced by Senator Overman:—

"The enactment by the Congress of the President's Bill would overthrow 'Government of the people, by the people, for

the people,' and set up in its place government of the President, by the President, for the President."—*Boston Transcript*.

"In the plain language of unvarnished truth the President asks to be made dictator for the period of the war and a year thereafter. The bill he has sent to Congress will bear no other interpretation. It makes him absolute."—*Detroit News*.

"It would create an autocracy never contemplated by the American people as a war measure."—*Evening Telegram*, Portland, Ore.

"President Wilson, already wielding more authority than any ruler on earth, would have Congress by deliberate act strip itself of supervisory authority and make the Executive supreme dictator, virtually responsible to no one."—*Pittsburg Gazette*.

"The bill invites such executive despotism as we have not seen even in Prussia."—*Indianapolis Star*.

Houses for Returning Heroes.

On July 2 a deputation from the Labour Housing Association waited on the President of the Local Government Board to discuss housing construction after the war. They suggested very humbly that the Government should provide money free of interest for that purpose, but the President (Mr. Hayes Fisher) said that could not be done. He agreed in principle, however. The price of money, labour and material after the war would make a house so expensive that "the ordinary working man would not be able to pay the rent for it." So houses are to be built and let at a loss, 75 per cent. of such loss to be paid by the Government, and 25 per cent. by the local authority. Now surely Mr. Fisher has forgotten something. The men who return from the war will not be "ordinary working men." Does he think they have endured all that hell for years without learning some hard lessons? They have been described as "heroes," "Titans," "like giants of olden days." And Mr. Fisher and his deputation speak as though these men are to be housed as "ordinary working men" in "ordinary working-class" hutches! We know that many of them have imbibed ideas or thought out ideas for themselves that will mean a reshaping of their relations with their old masters. They will build houses for themselves, and rent and interest will not enter into their calculations. They know that if the Government or the municipality pay any part of the rent, the workers must first provide the Government and the municipality with money. So they will pay the whole rent in any case.

British Militarism at Work.

When the Defence of the Realm Act was under discussion in the House of Commons, a few vigilant Members protested against the unlimited powers which it gave to the military authorities; but they were told that their fears were unfounded. British officers were such nice gentlemen that they could safely be trusted to use their powers with justice and discretion. But now the people are beginning to find out that even British officers cannot be trusted. Our readers all know the treatment that *FREEDOM* and *Satire* have had to put up with from the so-called "competent military authorities," and how papers have been suppressed and printers raided up and down the country. But as these measures were not considered sufficient to stop men and women from expressing their opinions in print, other and more drastic methods were adopted. Mr. Street, a printer in South London, had the audacity to print the *Tribunal*, the organ of the No-Conscription Fellowship. This displeased the military gents, who had tried vainly to stop that useful little paper. So one morning some nice burly men from Scotland Yard (the home of Law and Order) appeared at Mr. Street's place of business and without any fuss or bother proceeded to smash up his printing presses and wreck his plant, so that it would be impossible for him to print the *Tribunal* or anything else. Mr. Street has the satisfaction of knowing that it was all done legally according to Section 51A of the Defence of the Realm Act passed by our democratic and freedom-loving legislators, and that the order for the destruction of his plant was issued by a British officer and gentleman. But the poor man is hardly likely to believe in the righteousness of a war conducted by these people. Would you?

INTERNATIONAL EXPLOITATION OR MUTUAL AID?

The talk and theorising on reconstruction and the position of Labour after the war goes on merrily. The Labour officials meet and pass resolutions; brave members in the House get up and in their best debating manner plead for the control of foreign diplomacy; Lord Lansdowne adheres to the idea of a League of Nations; and so the man in the street shrugs his shoulders secure in the belief that order and happiness will finally emerge out of the welter of war. But some there are whose wisdom is a little in advance of this conclusion. They remember that, like the poor, the financiers are ever with us. They realise that the last word in nationalism or internationalism will, as long as capitalism lasts, always rest with the gentlemen who regard whole races as mere pawns on the world's chessboard.

Thus a writer in a recent issue of the *Nation*, in a remarkable article headed "Internationalism and Finance," reminds us that humanity may still be at the mercy of syndicated capital even though a League of Nations may result from the war. He explodes the pre-war fallacy that interpenetration of finance in Europe makes for peace. He claims that it may even lead the penetrated nation to favour war as a means of ridding itself of the foreign financial incubus. And so the conclusion is arrived at that interpenetration of capital does not make for peace, because it involves exploitation. Therefore mutual aid will prove the only possible bond for a peaceful internationalism after the war.

Speaking of pre-war finance, he says: "The arrangement by which certain national financial and industrial combinations, especially those engaged in foreign mining, railway building, and banking, competed against each other, with the whole power of the National State behind them, undoubtedly made for war. In Turkey, China, Morocco, Tripoli, and Persia these rivalries for concessions and spheres of influence aggravated the struggle for a balance of power, and indirectly promoted the growth of armaments. The competing national financial groups involved their States in their rivalries, and regarded the flag, in Cecil Rhodes's phrase, as their chief 'asset.' There were, however, amid these sharp national rivalries, several instances of the ability of finance to transcend them. The purely nationalistic phase of capital was passing, and the international combination in loose and transitional forms, had made its appearance." And he deduces that though a League of Nations may become an accomplished fact it may only result in the further consolidation of capital. He foresees a world council dealing out raw materials and other indispensable commodities to a syndicated industry, their transport being undertaken by an international shipping ring. Thus "the purely nationalistic phase of capitalism is over."

But, the writer takes a gloomy view of the ultimate result. The capitalistic groups of the belligerents being embraced in one economic system will make for peace, but balanced against that is the problem of freedom for the masses. So he is forced to believe that such syndicates will continue to regard races as pawns, and each country rich in agricultural or mineral produce will continue to be more mercilessly exploited than in pre-war days. Moreover, such groups, he says, "will be intolerant of political experiments and revolutions which interrupt the mechanical business of getting ore and grain."

"Their power will be a menace alike to the liberty of the worker and to the interest of the consumer. They will act more promptly, more unitedly, and more secretly than the opposing democratic forces. They may contrive to control the telegraphic news agencies and the Press. The German Armaments Industry, not content with the possession of organs at home, has lately bought up several newspapers in Austria. Steel, cotton, and oil are capable of acting on the same model if their interests bring them into world-politics. In the schemes generally accepted for the working of a League of Nations we see nowhere a guarantee of any power popular enough and responsible enough to hold these forces in check. If the League works only through bureaucratic or diplomatic commissions and conferences its dealings with syndicated capital will be secret. What is still worse, they can never be brought under the control of the national representative Parliaments. The arrangements made by the Raw Materials Commission, or the decisions taken as to mining concessions in Russia or China, might be hotly criticised in succession by the Commons, the French Chamber, and the Reichstag. But the British, French, and German Foreign Offices would all disclaim responsibility, and shroud themselves in the excuse of loyalty to colleagues and obedience to the supernational authority. That authority would live in the clouds, and no nation or its representatives could ever bring it to book. We know from experience that hard as it is to control our own diplomacy when it acts alone, it is very much harder to control it when it acts with the Allies." Yet although this indictment is launched against Capitalism, the

writer in summing up comes to the startling conclusion that it might be worth while for democracy to pass through such a state of strangulation. He considers that Capital, despite its shortcomings, may be better adapted to deal with after-war conditions than the inexperienced workers or consumers; thus temporary detention in a capitalist slave compound may be to our advantage, though we note with much interest his final word of warning that "Democracy can solve this problem, but let it beware of giving world-finance too long a start."

But we are forced to ask, why allow it to get a start at all? If it must finally be destroyed, why not give it the happy despatch now, when the world is ripe for change, and humanity, sick with suffering, is ready to receive fresh ideas and try fresh experiments? Or is the dread of revolution so great that any expedient is preferable? It is not the war that will in the end lose humanity its freedom. It is the innate cowardice which makes us stop short of all things revolutionary. It fetters us at every step and limits our vision. We fear to go forward and we dare not look back, and all the time our feet sink more deeply in the mud, and our eyes are blinded with the false brightness of political reform. So much more easy to remain in the mire and continue to hug our delusions. But progress is not made that way. Spontaneous and organised action on the part of all will alone cause us to advance, and if we really heed the warning contained in the threatened league of international capital, then the only course open to us is that of economic organisation, national and international, on the basis of Mutual Aid. Such an organisation can only spring from the conscious effort of all workers, and will prove the only guarantee of a lasting peace.

M.B.H.

RUSSIAN FREEDOM COMMITTEES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "FREEDOM."

Dear Comrade,—The wonderful success of Social Revolution in Russia is undoubtedly but the opening phase of a revolutionary period which will result in transforming the capitalist world into something more consonant with the stage of moral and economic development the race has now reached, and it behoves all of us to be doing our very utmost to support it in Russia and to prepare for its extension here and elsewhere. Revolutionary Socialists always foresaw what is now taking place, that immensely powerful forces wielded by international profiteers and their servants, the various bourgeois governments of the world, would do their utmost to bring about a united effort by military and all other available means to crush out successful social revolution wherever it might first appear.

In view of the campaign carried on by the bourgeois press for this purpose, and the calculated and elaborate falsehoods and misrepresentations contained in their news items, as well as the disgraceful and stupid nature of many of the leaders and other articles they publish about Russia, Japanese and Allied intervention, etc., there is an urgent need for steps to be taken to counteract them. Not only the careless and ignorant average reader, but even some thoughtful workers, are likely to be misled by the constant repetition of foolish lies by the daily paper they happen to read, unless they have an opportunity of hearing what are the actual facts. It is inconceivable that British organized Labour could be tricked by the pretence of "helping Russia" into permitting war against Russian revolutionary peasants and workmen except through dense ignorance of the realities of the case.

I would suggest that Russian Freedom Committees should be formed wherever possible to spread as widely as they can accurate information about the real position in Russia, what is being thought and done amongst the active elements who are remodelling Russian social and political institutions. I should be glad to hear from men and women who could assist in any way either by lecturing, organising lectures, writing to the papers, helping with subscriptions to Russian periodicals, etc. It might be possible to publish regular and accurate information through some existing paper or otherwise.

As the censorship is everywhere making efforts to envelop Russian events in an impenetrable fog, and it is very difficult to obtain periodicals from Russia, if any friends who are able to get Russian daily or weekly papers or reviews or magazines of any kind from any part of the country, or pamphlets or books bearing upon the existing position or discussing immediate plans, would send them on to me after they have read them, I should be glad, as they would be very useful.—Yours fraternally,

FREDERIC CHARLES.

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IRELAND AND LABOUR.

The imposition of conscription by the British Government is the most immediate menace to Irish Labour. On that there is no dissension, and a splendid feeling has been shown in the people's solidarity during the protest strike in April, when a cessation of work, such as no country has known before, took place throughout Ireland; and a splendid opposition will be shown when that blood-measure is imposed. But this is not the main menace to Labour's progressive development in its march towards emancipation.

It is well to remember that the opposition to Conscription is Nationalist in the main, aided by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, and encouraged by a deep hatred of the English Government: hatred fed by an education in the country's persecution since the fatal Union by each successive Government, and bitterness over the playing with Home Rule.

Nationalism and Roman Catholicism run hand in hand in Irish politics, and, generally speaking, the Republicanism of Sinn Féin is supported by the younger generation of priests. The outlook of Labour is at present Nationalist also, and the organised workers are mainly Republican in spirit. All this being so, it is no wonder that there is practically no world working-class consciousness, and the day is far ahead when Irish men and women shall overcome completely their own peculiar enemies who obscure the growth of that consciousness. The Nationalist or Republican patriot in power is as tyrannical in his dealings with revolutionaries as the monarchical governmentalist was over him, so unless the tide turns the workers of Ireland have little to hope for from such. The question is not one of sincerity, for although we naturally find parasites and pretenders among the Republicans, as we do in any sort of movement, in the main sincerity of purpose is a worthy characteristic of these young Irish reformers. The question is rather one of the correctness or incorrectness of their outlook, judged from the view-point of the needs and interests of the world's workers. Judged strictly from that perspective we see how awry is the purely Nationalist arrangement, and how untrustworthy when we see the same backed up by that nation's religious parasites, who will do anything rather than become workers like their fellows, to whose "spiritual" needs they pretend administration.

Ireland is the last ditch of entrenched Catholicism, and the development of the various comparatively forward movements among the young generation is forcing the priesthood to become allied to such in order to safeguard, if possible, their positions of ease and comfort. It would be an evil day for them if they opposed the young movements; it will be an evil day, too, for all such when the Irish workers realise that religion helps to keep them in their degraded mental and physical condition by its preaching of sheep servility and slave morality, of which Roman Catholicism—that arch-enemy of reason—is a great teacher. As it is, the question is most complex, and needs careful and critical handling.

Considering the methods which successive English Governments have adopted in their persecution of the Irish people during the past 700 years, it is not surprising that their anti-English hatred has blinded them to the tyrannies suffered by the workers as a class the world over, and so are far from sinking their national hatred in the class hatred, which combined with an intelligent consciousness of the world's workers' class interests, intelligently utilised, shall bring the social revolution and freedom. The workers in Ireland cannot see that their grievances are the common grievances of all where Capitalism rules the roost, and are not particularly peculiar to themselves. Have there been no evictions, land tyrannies, high taxation, and gross imposition of most servile conditions in other places than Ireland? The Irish people blame England for all their wrongs, unconscious of the fact that the Government there is but the central council of the English capitalist class, and uses and abuses the workers in England, Scotland, and Wales just as it uses and abuses the workers in Ireland. It is all in the exploitation game. Does the Irish worker only want a change of residence for his masters, and does he expect that an Irish Government will use him less roughly and give him his aborted conception of liberty? Does he expect all will be well when his master is an Irishman and not a Englishman? He has not yet realised that a master is the same all the world over, that a worker under capitalism is necessarily a slave.

Psychologically the present outlook of the average Irish worker is quite natural. Few have studied the conditions of the workers in other countries, let alone made any serious attempt to intelligently understand their own; few know the terrible history of the bloodshed, persecution, and poverty which have been the lot of the workers of the world during the various economic developments of the evolving states of society, especially

during the growth and decline of feudalism and the development of capitalism.

The differences of the effects of all governments, particularly capitalistic governments, whether ruling a nation or part of a nation within, or ruling a dependency, protectorate, or colony without, are only of comparative degree, for they can easily be categorised into one order. English capitalism has so abused Ireland that since the year 1851 the number of emigrants was 4,318,000 (of whom 2,243,000 were males, and the vast majority were drawn from the agricultural districts of the country), and the present population is considerably less than that of London. The manhood of Ireland has been bled by the enforcement of the most intolerable conditions; the people have risen against each tyranny, but always have they been callously crushed. Little wonder is it that some of the more wildly imaginative ones really believe that it is the firm intention of the English Government to exterminate the Irish altogether, and that the present over-shadowing gloom of conscription—threatening like Damocles' sword—and unrepealed in the face of tremendous opposition, should lend colour to their views. Everyone with a hatred of society as at present constituted will sympathise with Erin's oppressed people, but the revolutionary propagandist must be prepared for misunderstanding at the hands of those whom he would have see as he sees, and misrepresentation and vilification by the various religious and nationalist elements governing public opinion there.

Shaw in his play, "John Bull's Other Island," makes one of his characters remark that the Irishmen, although they seem to live on one another's sufferings, don't know what sufferings are. Although perhaps slightly unfair, this little bit of Cockney sarcasm hits the mark, for it is true that the average Irishman knows little of the manner in which his fellow-workers in other countries are being treated. Ireland's geographically insular position, England's ruthless suppression of anything tending to aid thoughtful progress there, the superstitious character of many of the people—especially among the agrarian population—and the servility and fear bred and encouraged by the Catholic hierarchy account for Ireland's present degradation. Although one discovers plenty of spirit, it is mainly anti-English or anti-Protestant, and is not the rational spirit of the thinking rebel. There is everywhere a paucity of that consciousness which revolutionists expect to find in a people so active against persecution, and without which solidarity of interest and purpose is impossible. For the rebelliousness in Ireland is, generally speaking, an effect of strained feeling, of outraged and indignant sentiment, rather than the result of intelligent thought and conscious understanding.

Labour is, from the Trade Union standpoint, well organised in Ireland, chiefly through the activities of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, but it is nevertheless true that the great majority of the members lack class consciousness, and have nothing consciously in common with other Trade Unionists in Britain, and their spirit, wherever manifested, is Nationalist, for the whole movement is infiltrated with Sinn Féin, and indeed may be said to be an arm of that troublesome body of anti-English "rebels." Trade Unionism, having served its historical purpose, is collapsing in other countries, and newer movements are arising in its place; but in Ireland it is of comparative new growth and may die hard, even as Catholicism, owing to the natural conservative tendencies of the Irish, coupled with the fact that capitalism is not so fully developed there as elsewhere. The Trade Union movement has grown phenomenally since the great Dublin strike of October, 1913, and in some ways is very encouraging. The propagandist cannot truly judge now as to the value of the apparent zest for anything styled revolutionary, for although the worker will often devour ravenously such literature, I have found personally, that where it is definitely anti-religious, or critical of Irish politics, he will not take it at all, for he likes praise, and resents criticism. A propagandist who happens to have been born in England is thought to be advancing his national prejudices when criticising his fellow-workers in Ireland or their religious faith, despite his protestations. It is clear that there is a stiff uphill fight before the enthusiastic Anarchists and Socialists who are endeavouring to sow their educational seed among the Irish workers, but the fight will go on, as it necessarily must.

C. B. WARWICK.

TO OUR READERS.

Owing to paper shortage, says the Paper Controller, no returns of unsold papers are allowed. It is therefore necessary for our readers to give their newsagent an order for "Freedom" in advance, as he will not get more copies than are definitely ordered. But if there is any difficulty in getting the paper we would advise you to send us a postal order for 2s. 6d. and have it brought to your door every month by the postman. In either case you make sure of getting it regularly.

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LYING LABOUR LEADERS.

The eight Labour Members of the Government on June 23 published a manifesto which is a tissue of lies and misrepresentation from beginning to end. It was issued as a protest against the resolution to break the Party truce which was to be discussed at the next Labour Conference. To begin with, they state that they entered the Government during a time of over-mastering national need, "and Labour has, in that time, exercised an unprecedented influence in the councils of the nation." The bare-faced impudence of that statement is enough to make even a Labour M.P. blush. It suggests that their influence as members of the Government has been used in the interests of the workers, when, as a brutal matter of fact, it has always been used in the interests of the capitalists. The various Conscription measures have always been backed up by these men. All the lies and trickery of the Cabinet have received their silent consent, all the opposition to Conscription coming from those outside the Government. When Labour Conferences voted against compulsory military service, these Labour M.Ps. refused to be bound by the vote and supported the Government. Although the Government again and again broke their pledges about recruiting not a word of protest came from the Labour men, and the workers were betrayed into the hands of their enemies.

In industrial matters it was the same. When strikes took place on the Clyde and in South Wales, as a protest against capitalist profiteering or unjust treatment in the workshops and the mines, these Labour M.Ps. always rushed in to denounce the men, and not until the workers struck, and struck hard, could they exercise any "influence in the councils of the nation." In every case the workers had to fight not only the capitalists but also the Labour members of the Government.

With regard to the conduct of the war it has been the same. This noble band of eight has consistently supported Lloyd George and Northcliffe's policy of the "knock-out blow." Never have they been known to raise their voices in public in favour of peace by negotiation, and when Lloyd George kicked Henderson out of the Cabinet, for supporting the Stockholm Conference, it was George Barnes who undertook the job of acting as doorkeeper at the Cabinet meeting when it was done, and then jumped into Henderson's place. And now that the Bolsheviks have published the secret treaties, exposing the plans of the Allied Governments to carve up the territory of their enemies, these watchdogs of the capitalists still continue to talk of the war to "safeguard the rights of little nationalities," although in the treaties these "rights" have no existence—in fact, have been deliberately trampled on by the great Empire concerned. They were very loud and indignant about the crimes of the Central Powers, but when Japan seized Chinese territory, when England annexed Egypt, and when the Allied forces overran Greece, dissolved its Parliament, seized its navy, and starved its people not a word of protest came from the lips of these humbugs. They had got hold of good jobs and were determined to stick to them. Their "influence in the councils of the nation" has been bad, and now they are attempting to brazen it out to the end.

The scandalous treatment of conscientious objectors, the suppression of meetings, newspapers, and all freedom of speech, and the many prosecutions of printers and others under the Defence of the Realm Act have taken place without the Government being criticised by the Labour men in their ranks. But words are useless when we think of the Government's outrageous conduct in Ireland, and the Labour men's share in it. At our very doors is a flagrant instance of the "rights of little nationalities" being trampled on, and the eight signatories of the manifesto are as much responsible as any other members of the Government. The arrest and deportation of the Sinn Feiners, and the proclamation of Sinn Fein organisations will be remembered by Irishmen for many a long day, even if English men and women forget it.

To speak of the "party truce" is to speak of something that never existed. There are only two parties in every country—the exploiters and the exploited. The war between these two parties is never-ending. When the Labour M.Ps. entered the Government they joined the ranks of the exploiters, but the war between exploiters and exploited still continued as bitter as before. Profiteering has been carried on more shamelessly than ever; and with the close co-operation now existing between the great groups of capitalists the soldiers on their return to industry will find their class enemies as strongly entrenched as were their military enemies at the front. But, as the strength of the exploiters rests entirely on their ability to divide the workers and to play off one section against the other, a united working class could make short work of their exploiters and gain their freedom.

In only one sentence of their manifesto do we agree with the Labour M.Ps. They say: "It is not too much to say that upon the people of this country depends very largely the future freedom of the world." Certainly. It is upon the people, and not upon their rulers, that the freedom of any country depends. If the people would be free they must abolish rulers and all authority which rest only upon the power to exploit a people. With the coming of Anarchism and Free Communism, rulers and authority will vanish like snow before the sun. And in that day the world will wonder however such things were tolerated by so-called intelligent men and women.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

People's Movement in Russia.

Lack of space last month compelled the omission of one or two points of interest in the Russian Land Decree. These clauses leave specially cultivated lands in the hands of those best able to use them and who understand the local peculiarities of soil and climate. Small holders are not interfered with but are left to discover by experience the advantages, if any, attached to other methods of cultivation. When unable through old age or sickness to cultivate the land, they are to be kept in comfort by the community, and others are to take over the cultivation of their land. During the periodical re-allotment steps are taken to ensure that the plot of land shall remain in the same family or their immediate friends, if desired; but if not, there is to be full compensation for unexhausted improvements. And all these arrangements are left absolutely in the hands of local peasant councils and are not jerrymandered by the officials of a centralised State Department.

This is because this decree was not elaborated by lawyers or necessarily ignorant capitalist and landlord politicians after endless wrangling in a bourgeois Parliament, but was the result of a very large number of local congresses held all over the country by those directly engaged in cultivating the land—men and women in daily contact with all the intricate details of the case and thoroughly understanding what they were doing.

In countries still under the curse of capitalism and its twin brother, bourgeois parliamentary government, professional politicians control a huge centralised coercive machine composed of Parliament, law courts, prisons, police and army, together with the subsidised and advertisement supported press, and so long as this machine works (which obviously depends upon the lack of understanding and will amongst the wage earners) it enables them to impose their own wills and plans upon the general community, plans mainly concerned with watching over and protecting in an infinite variety of ways profiteering and master-ship, on which the position and livelihood of themselves, their friends and class are based. But in Russia the revolution has swept away all these conditions; there life itself is taking the lead and is organising along other and finer lines.

Newspaper correspondents have cabled that, according to inquiries made amongst Soviet delegates from various parts of Russia to the All-Russian Soviet Congresses, they find: "It is the people themselves, by means of a complete network of municipalities, provincial soviets, and co-operative societies, who are solving the land and other social and political questions without taking any account of who rules in Petrograd, and only accepting the decrees and orders of the Bolshevik Government when they are suited to local needs. The Russian people are at present engaged in organising the community from below upwards. No central authority exists that is capable of dictating or even of initiating policies. It is entirely the people themselves who are occupied in building up a new order of things on the basis of the dictatorship of peasants and workmen." And these newspaper correspondents, who think it must mean primordial chaos come again, are astonished to find these keenly alert and practical peasants and workmen are seeing visions and dreaming dreams of a life infinitely superior in all senses to anything they

have been acquainted with hitherto and that at long last the visions are coming true.

Freed from the trammels of strong Government and bourgeois law, in all parts an immense amount of energy and thought and discussion is centering around the search for the real essentials of a decent human life and the plans that shall secure these for all. It is interesting in these days to read some of the Russian non-Socialist papers published in the provinces and to see the naive surprise of the writers that life can go on quite well without the customary police and officials, and to note the many curious explanations given by people who never conceived such things possible and are genuinely astonished at the happy results.

I wonder if any of the framers and supporters of the new Emigration Bill to hinder people from going where they choose had in mind the possibility that the most mentally active and capable amongst the younger skilled British workers might emigrate to Russia, where it is possible they would receive a friendly welcome and where at least they would not be producing incomes for profiteers and interest for war loans, but would be using their energies to create wealth that all would enjoy and to assist in building up a grand co-operative commonwealth that will be the envy of the more backward races that up to then will not have succeeded in carrying through their own Social Revolution.

Plot against Anarchists in Switzerland.

The bourgeois State is the same essentially evil thing in all countries; the intrigues of lawmakers, the prejudice and brutality of law administrators, from judges and lawyers to police, spies, and agents provocateur, are all standardized and reappear regularly every time it is a question of defending capitalism and authority.

We are strikingly reminded of this by the case of about a score of comrades, including Luigi Bertoni, editor of *Le Reveil*, and Jeanne Pidoux, arrested in Switzerland in connection with the police "discoveries" of a bomb plot at Zurich.

In Switzerland a burglar or murderer has various legal rights; the preliminary examinations by a judge cannot be prolonged indefinitely without application to a special tribunal, the defence can employ a lawyer and examine the dossier, and publicly refute the evidence if possible. But a law passed in 1853 withdraws all these "guarantees" from political suspects, who are handed over to the uncontrolled tender mercies of the examining judge.

Our comrades were arrested several weeks ago. They are not allowed to see a lawyer or friends (for all the world like Irish Sinn Feiners in English gaols) and the judge Otto Heuser is carrying on the "investigation" in strict secrecy, apart from interviews and hints he gives the bourgeois press for the purpose of prejudicing his victims amongst the general public. Jeanne Pidoux, who has been weakened by a long illness, and is shortly expecting a baby, was arrested in her bed at 3 o'clock in the morning by eight policemen, and against the protest of her doctor was conveyed from Geneva to Zurich, neither her husband nor mother being allowed to see her. Bertoni and a French deserter were arrested during the morning and also taken to Zurich, where on the orders of this judge they are buried in the Bastille and all further information about them ceases. We are unable even to learn what they are charged with.

Some facts bearing on the case are these:—Last November a store of bombs was discovered in Zurich belonging to an Italian, Gino Andrei, acting as spy for the German Government. Various highly placed diplomatic officials seemed involved in the case, which has not yet been tried in Switzerland and is still hidden by a judicial fog. He has been tried by court martial at Rome and sentenced in his absence to death for spying and high treason. Another case of explosives at Lugano was connected with the German Consul there. It seems these Government officials would like to transfer attention from their doings to Anarchists, and so an Anarchist plot has been conveniently discovered at Zurich. Some bombs were found in a private house as soon as our comrades arrived there. Bertoni's rooms were raided and in his absence the police found as easily as usual some compromising document. For the last 20 years Bertoni, "the sower of ideas," has delivered about 100 lectures yearly in various parts of Switzerland, generally staying with comrades. At Zurich he frequently stays with a baker, who has been arrested because one of his workmen was imprisoned. Neither Bertoni nor Jeanne Pidoux seem acquainted with the Italian comrades arrested at Zurich apart from sending to their order Anarchist publications. Jeanne Pidoux is said to have visited Zurich some time or other, but it is not certain that she has ever seen the town.

All that is certain is that all these comrades are well known, intelligent, steady workers, full of a generous faith in the possibility of realizing social justice in our day, and therefore looked

on as people to be prevented from carrying on their propaganda in these dangerous days. But their ideas are marching on and constantly gaining new ground, and after all the only way to prevent the recurrence of these infamies is the complete overthrow of capitalism and the State.

FREE EDUCATION.

Recent events have brought into prominence once more the subject of education. By some kind of practical argument it is assumed that the children, especially those of working-class parents, are not, by reason of their lack of educational attainments, getting out of life all they might do. The effect we admit; the cause we deny.

It is because the produce of the labourer is being kept back from him by fraud that his children do not enjoy all the sweetness and holiness and health of life. Will any Education Act right this? And in reply we shall be told that the more education the children get, the sooner will they demand their right.

In such reply there is a tremendous fallacy; education is being confused with instruction. Instruction can be given under compulsion; *education cannot*.

Let us be quite clear on the matter. Our children may, in schools provided and subsidised by the State, at which attendance is compulsory, be *instructed*, but *educated* they cannot be.

What sort of instruction is it that is given in the ordinary elementary school? The three R's of course—employers must be provided with employees who can read, write, and count—and this pill is covered with a little jam made up of nature study, music, drawing, painting, and the like. The saying of that politician who, after the passing of the Franchise Act, advised, "Let us educate our masters," has not a little insight mingled with its sarcasm. The year 1870 saw the adoption of his advice. And while politicians can dictate what instruction working-folk children must have, they and their friends are safe. There is no fear that the equilibrium of the society in which they believe will be upset.

I would emphasise the difference there is between the words "instruction" and "education." When you instruct a child, you put into him something that is not in him; when you educate him you draw out of him and help him to develop the latent powers that are in him. Education, by the very nature of it, cannot be compulsory. We shall not have "education" until this initial blunder be removed.

And we have got to hammer away with what diligence we possess until a sense of the right meaning of these two words becomes general among the people. We shall not overturn the hideous edifice of "State education" in a day. This particular business calls for courage and fortitude on the part of those who attend to it. We shall have everybody, Tories, Socialists, Liberals, Progressives, against us. Our argument must be, that if Liberty be the greatness we believe it is, its essential rightness is demonstrable by its applicability to every problem, great or small.

In days of old, the teacher was the unit of education. He began to teach—often enough maintaining himself by the work of his hands the while—and the scholars who desired to be taught, gathered to him. There were giants on the earth in those days. Even in these days there are teachers of drawing and painting who have their schools of students, at which attendance is not made compulsory by any Act of Parliament I have ever heard of. And strangely enough those are the very men and women who are most desperately in earnest about making the deeds of man beautiful. Many of them would not agree with this writing, but their example demonstrates the superiority of free, as opposed to compulsory, education.

We have got into a fearful muddle about this word "education"; we have bound it in bands of steel out of which it may not escape. Why should not the workman who delights in the work of his hands, and can do his work properly and well, be regarded as being as well-educated as the man who has a smattering of Latin and Greek and a little knowledge of the differential calculus? Because, forsooth, we have been instructed in the meaning of the word "education" by those who despise good and honest work because it does not pay—does not produce a dividend. And dividends, as every thinker knows, are the visible sign and symbol of slavery!

So we come back to the point from which I started. Nothing can be right so long as this essential wrong is allowed to go on existing. When a man is, in reality, the owner of the produce of his own labour power—when that is his, which he has paid for, with expenditure of energy, skill, and life—then all things else will right themselves. On this is the hope and faith of Anarchism established.

JOHN WAKEMAN.

THINKERS ON GOVERNMENT.

To show that the Anarchists are not alone in the belief that government is the expression of the chief evil in society—the desire to exploit the labour of others—we append quotations from a few of the world's great thinkers:

"Law grinds the poor, and the rich men rule the law."—OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

"Government is, in its essence, always a force working in violation of Justice."—LEO TOLSTOI.

"No person will rule over me with my consent. I will rule over no man."—WM. LLOYD GARRISON.

"Government is the great blackmailer. * * * No good ever came from the law. All reforms have been the offspring of Revolution."—BUCKLE.

"In vain you tell me that artificial government is good, but that I fall out only with the abuse. The thing—the thing itself is the abuse."—EDMUND BURKE.

"In general, the art of government consists in taking as much money as possible from one part of the citizens to give it to another."—VOLTAIRE.

"The trade of governing has always been monopolized by the most ignorant and the most rascally individuals of mankind."—THOMAS PAINE.

"Whatever form it takes — Monarchic, Oligarchic or Democratic—the government of man by man is illegitimate and absurd. * * * As man seeks justice in equity, so society seeks order in Anarchy."—PROUDHON.

"Did the mass of men know the actual selfishness and injustice of their rulers, not a government would stand a year; the world would ferment with Revolution."—THEODORE PARKER.

"I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government, enjoy in the general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under governments. * * * That government is best which governs least."—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

"A man who cannot be acquainted with me, taxes me, ordains that part of my labour shall go to this or that whimsical end; not as I, but as he happens to fancy. Behold the consequences! Of all debts, men are least willing to pay the taxes. What a satire is that on government. * * * Every actual State is corrupt. * * * Good men must not obey the laws too well."—EMERSON.

"Law in its guarantee of the results of pillage, slavery and exploitation, has followed the same phase of development as capital; twin brother and sister, they have advanced hand in hand, sustaining one another with the sufferings of mankind. * * * Judiciary, police, army, public instruction, finance—all serve one God, capital; all have but one object—to facilitate the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist."—PETER KROPOTKIN.

"By no process can coercion be made equitable. The freest form of government is only the least objectionable form. The rule of the many by the few, we call tyranny. The rule of the few by the many (Democracy) is tyranny also, only of a less intense kind."—HERBERT SPENCER.

"There is no government, however restricted in its powers, that may not, by abuse, under pretext of exercise of its constitutional authority, drive its unhappy subjects to desperation."—JOHN RANDOLPH.

Thus we see what a loathsome thing is government to the great man. The Thinkers, Philosophers, Humanitarians, the men to whom we owe the progress of society, have always abhorred government, and their efforts have been to teach men to govern themselves, and not sublet the task of governing to corrupt rascals or even honest men. For honest men sometimes aspire to office, hoping thereby to correct the evils of society. But they very soon discover their mistake. They find honesty a very burdensome thing in office, and is largely outweighed by rascality. So they must either succumb to the temptation of spoils and become rascals themselves or retire in disgust, leaving the whole corrupt business in the hands of those who have made the trade of governing a profitable business, and with whom those who love truth and honesty have nothing in common.

It has always been those who have analyzed and criticised the forms of society that have awakened the people to their errors and spurred them on to better modes of life. Great minds have ever bewailed man's inhumanity to man.

It was the great HEINE who said: "This old society has long since been judged and condemned. Let justice be done. Let this old world be broken to pieces, * * * where innocence has perished, where man is exploited by man. Let the whited sepulchres full of lying and iniquity be utterly destroyed."

And VICTOR HUGO painfully asks: "What kind of society is it which is based upon inequality and injustice to such an extent as this?"

WENDELL PHILIPS, the giant champion of Truth and Freedom in America, speaks thus: "Whenever you have met a dozen

earnest men pledged to a new idea—wherever you have met them, you have met the beginning of a Revolution. * * * Revolution is as natural a growth as an oak—it comes out of the past. * * * Every line in our history, every interest of civilization, bids us rejoice when the tyrant grows pale and the slaves rebellious."

PATRICK HENRY, who roused Virginia to arms against King George, said:—"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"

BRITISH CO-OPERATORS AND RUSSIA.

British Co-operative Societies have a membership of nearly four millions, and about fifteen million British inhabitants draw much of their ordinary supplies from this source, spending nearly one hundred and fifty million pounds sterling per year at co-operative stores. Therefore there may be great results from the following resolution, which was passed unanimously after an interesting discussion by the eight hundred delegates attending the annual congress of the Women's Co-operative Guild at Bradford. These working women form the most active and advanced element in the co-operative movement, and they have been prompt to grasp the immediate possibilities of the Russian situation as pointed out in our Russian notes last month; and their intelligent action forms a striking contrast to the idiotic ravings of the big capitalist and Governmental dailies for armed intervention by Japanese or anybody else on behalf of class robbery and mastership:—

"That this congress recognises that the Russian nation is building up a new industrial system in which the co-operative movement is playing a large part. It therefore calls on our co-operative movement in the interests of international co-operation to take immediate steps to establish trade directly with the Russian people and so prevent foreign capital from re-establishing its power and destroying the ideal now being worked out in Russia of industry controlled by the people for the people. This congress therefore urges the Co-operative Wholesale Society to send a deputation to Russia to establish direct business relations between the co-operative societies and forces of Russia and Great Britain and Ireland."

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