

Freedom

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NOTES.

The "Anarchist Conspiracy."

Lloyd George has a keen sense of humour and he must have smiled broadly when he wrote that sentence about the railway strike being an "Anarchist conspiracy." It recalls his denunciation of the Labour Party as "Bolsheviks" prior to the General Election last December. Unfortunately the railway strike was not an Anarchist conspiracy, but the Government's action in bringing out the troops and their call for the formation of a citizen army was meant to terrify the average man into believing that we were on the verge of a revolution. Lloyd George said that since last February the Government had been preparing a civilian organisation to break strikes, and evidently they considered the railway strike a suitable occasion on which to test its efficiency. Having had a trial run, they found out its weak points and will now set about remedying them in preparation for any event that may happen in the future. Meanwhile we would ask all those who talk about "constitutional" methods to note that the wealthy class in this country will use "force to the uttermost" in defence of their wealth, whether the workers act constitutionally or otherwise. Their motto is: "What we have we hold." To break their chains the workers must break constitutions which are built up on their slavery.

Lloyd George and Labour.

There are certainly grounds for suspicion that many Labour leaders are inclined to look to Lloyd George as a possible Labour Prime Minister when a Labour Government comes into power. It does not matter how many kicks they receive from this tricky Welshman, they are always certain to make excuses for him. During the war mysterious hints were dropped that he was in favour of peace by negotiation, but Clemenceau or Sonnino or some other Allied Premier always opposed it. Just recently we heard through Bullitt, the American journalist, that Lloyd George was in favour of making peace with the Bolsheviks, but the Tories prevented him doing so. And now in the negotiations prior to the railway strike it was the wicked Eric Geddes that stepped in his way when he wanted to make terms with Thomas. He is always the strong man struggling with adversity, who would be such a nice Labour man if he could only get sufficient backing. But we should think that after his actions in the railway strike his place is definitely fixed in the capitalist camp. Even his land policy he throws overboard now for ever. Listen: "Whether it is the acquisition of land or of labour, if the community needs it it must pay a fair price for it." Forgotten is the Land Campaign, the Land Song, and Limehouse! Lloyd George follows the track beaten down by the footsteps of successful politicians, a track along which the Labour Party will follow him sooner or later.

The War in Ireland.

It was evident to everyone that the large army in Ireland, equipped with tanks, aeroplanes, and all modern appliances of war, would not remain idle for long; and no one was surprised to hear of the proclamation of the Sinn Fein organisation as a "dangerous association," whilst the suppression of Sinn Fein papers followed as a matter of course. The most surprising thing was the self-restraint of the Irish people in refusing to be goaded into a revolt which would have ended in the wholesale massacre of many of their youngest and best men and women. The spirit which animates the Irish rebels cannot be suppressed by proclamations, and we think the British Government have found out by this time that some political move on their part is necessary to prevent the waste involved in keeping up the army of occupation in Ireland. Until this question of self-government is settled there seems little hope of Irish workers becoming

Socialistic to any great extent. That, of course, is one reason why it has been kept alive so long. On September 11, an officer, addressing his men on the barrack square at Nenagh, said: "We thought the war was ended, but find it is not. When you go through Tipperary treat the people as in an enemy country." But we think that many of the soldiers have had their eyes opened by the war, and although they may be taken to Ireland it will be more difficult to get them to shoot. The idea that Capitalism is the cause of most of our troubles is slowly but surely gaining ground among the workers, and on that fact we base our hopes of righting the wrongs of Ireland and all other countries.

Bankers' "Lightning Strike."

Railwaymen will be much interested in the following, taken from the *Manchester Guardian* (October 7):

"While the railwaymen were on strike for higher wages than the Government proposed to pay, the financiers of London, quite unostentatiously, were engineering a movement to secure a higher rate of interest upon their loans to the Government. The financiers, of course, did not need to go on strike, but they did the same thing in effect, by withholding money. The consequence was that the Government had yesterday to announce that they will pay one per cent. more on Treasury bills, or, to be literally correct, allow one per cent. to be deducted from the price. . . . The money market has seen that the Government were in need of large sums just now to pay off Exchequer bonds and meet interest requirements, and it has taken advantage of the Government's necessities. . . . The matter has no connection, of course, with the railway strike, but it is remarkable that it should coincide with that movement and force the nation into paying millions per year more in interest before the general public knew anything about it."

This increase in the rate of interest gives the financiers £8,500,000 extra per annum, which will go into the pockets of comparatively few people. It is sheer robbery, but no troops were called out, the bankers were not called "Anarchists," and there was no stipulation that the increase was only to last whilst champagne and motor cars remained 125 per cent. above pre-war level. And, strange to say, all bankers are to be paid the same rate, whether their age is 18 or 80, irrespective of their length of service. Truly, the railwaymen have a lot to learn!

The Lying Press.

One bright incident in the railway strike was the action of the Printers' Unions in checking the lying statements of the Press. We have several times pointed out in these columns the inconsistency of compositors and others employed in printing offices assisting in the publication of lies about Labour struggles, in some of which they have themselves been engaged. The men employed in the *Mail*, *Sketch* and *Express* offices protested against some of the statements in those papers, with the result that the Railwaymen's Unions were allowed to state their case every day by paying for it at advertisement rates. The proprietors howled about the freedom of the Press, but had to give way. But the best joke was a resolution passed by the London Branch of the Institute of Journalists expressing their "warm appreciation of the firm action taken by newspaper publishers to maintain, in the public interest, the traditional liberty of the British Press." What humbugs these fellows are! They know there is no such thing as the liberty of the Press. They have to write to order or out they go. During the war the Press Bureau Censor compelled them to print lies day by day, and every line about the war had to be submitted to the Censor. Since the Press Bureau was abolished these journalists have told us all about it. Yet they dare to prate to us about "the traditional liberty of the British Press." Probably their resolution was published by orders from Northcliffe and Co.

CZECHO-SLOVAK ANARCHISTS AND BOLSHEVISM.

We have received the following statement from our comrades in Prague for publication in *FREEDOM*. Owing to the writer's insufficient acquaintance with the English language, we have had to rewrite it, but we have endeavoured to explain their views as closely as possible in a smaller compass.

Concerning the article in the July issue of *FREEDOM*, under the title "Bolsheviks are Anti-Anarchist," we send to our English comrades these notes for their information as to the stand that we, the Czecho-Slovak Communist Party, have taken upon this question. Last year the Federation of Bohemian Anarchist Communists broke up, and at present our party is the only Anarchist organisation in existence.

We have added to our programme the practical experiences of the Russian and Hungarian revolutions, but our principles have not changed. The Bolsheviks have changed their old Social Democratic Marxian programme by developing in the direction of Anarchism. The principle points of our programme agree entirely with the Bolshevik programme as formulated by N. Bucharin: (1) Abolition of private property and the wage system; (2) autonomous syndicates for wholesale production and consumers' communes; eventual abolition of the money system; (3) subjective valuation of all labour and economic equality; (4) abolition of the parliamentary system, as the expression of the political and economic rule of the non-producers over the producers. We also agree with their revolutionary tactics. We do not bind ourselves to the provisional forms of administration adopted by the Bolsheviks, but are in agreement with their Anarchist principle of changing those forms in accordance with varying geographical, economic, cultural, and revolutionary conditions. Our aim, as Anarchists, is a state of society without compulsory institutions, based on Communism. In the transition period between bourgeois Capitalism and Anarchist Communism, it is necessary, in laying the foundations of the new society, that the proletarian organisations should work by means of Communistic government and Communist education, until internal and external conditions make a government unnecessary. It is impossible to put Anarchism into practice immediately after the revolution if the people do not comprehend even Communism. They will learn from the adoption of Communistic production and consumption in place of capitalist methods.

Owing to the danger of counter-revolution at home and from abroad, there must be a directing and organising institution to guide and save the Revolution and to put Communism into practice. The experience of the Russian and Hungarian Revolutions has taught us this lesson, which we would have learnt for ourselves had we made the Social Revolution. If we have learnt this from the Bolsheviks' experience, we would be reactionary if we did not improve our own programme accordingly.

In tactics also we have not changed our principles, but have broadened it with the system of Soviets and the communes as a means of revolution. The dictatorship of the proletariat was not spoken of previously, but to-day it is the evident necessity of any Social Revolution which makes serious claims to success. We cannot bind ourselves exclusively to the general strike as a means of revolution, owing to the economic results of the war in Central Europe.

The aim of the Russian Revolution is a state of Anarchism, a State without a State. As Lenin says in the article, "The Society of Classes and the State": Is the State a result of the irreconcilableness of the classes? Is it the power which stands over society and alienates itself more and more from it? Then it is plain that freedom for the slave-class is impossible without a forcible revolution and the abolition of the State power." Equally so, N. Bucharin in "The Programme of the Communists" (Bolsheviks): "Having begun with their former for the most part Marxian programme, they found scarcely any of it was able to exist in practice. However, they were not caught by compromise and Social Democratic reformism, but put into practice whatever was considered necessary to achieve the sincerely and seriously intended freedom of the proletariat. And they have freed the Russian workers by Communism which tends to Anarchism."

That does not agree with the statement of the Russian Communist in America, who probably was thinking of the Anarchists in Russia, whose programme and tactics are such that we would reject the name of Anarchist rather than agree with them. The Russian Anarchists are against force without exception, against the force of the provisional dictatorship of the proletariat, and against the transitional use of the directing and organising power of the State. That point of view is plainly

impossible to-day. Economically, the Russian Anarchists are in favour of dividing the land into small communes, by which wholesale production will be reduced to production on a small scale. This, in our view, would be a step backward. Machinery must not enslave the man, as at present; but under a system of small producers the individual would remain a slave of imperfect machines for imperfect products. Wholesale production machines are more productive and more economical in result; their use is not possible in small communes, but only in large syndicates. In short, small production would cripple the economic situation, thereby encouraging the counter-revolution and endangering the whole Communist system. It is true that it will not be possible to establish wholesale production syndicates everywhere immediately after the revolution, and in some places it will be necessary to utilise small production during the transition period; but that is a temporary exception to the economic programme of the post-revolutionary period. It is plain, therefore, that the programme of the Russian Anarchists cannot lead to Anarchism. We can see the good will of it, but it is naïve, and after the world war we would call it reactionary if it were intended seriously.

It is this programme which the Russian Communist in America had in mind when he said that Bolsheviks are absolutely anti-Anarchist.

We do not wish to copy the Russian Revolution, as it would show a lack of initiative and be a sign of our incapacity; but we are glad to add to our programme what we have learned from the war and from the Revolutions, which will help in gaining freedom for the workers. We do not restrict the development of our ideas, we do not bind ourselves even to our programme of to-day, the details of which will certainly be changed in accordance with future experience. But our Anarchist aims and the chief points of our Communistic programme and revolutionary tactics remain unchanged, and we stand firm upon them and are answerable, morally, for them to all the proletariat and with our lives.

ELVE.

COMMUNIST LEAGUE.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

Dear Comrade,—In his reply in July *FREEDOM* to my criticism of the Communist League, Comrade Bloom states that I have not succeeded in throwing off my petty prejudices and jealousies. Ten years ago, as a Social Democrat, I held exactly the same opinions and occupied the same Marxian position that he holds to-day, which proves my contention that "change of name does not necessarily mean change of party principles." Otherwise how comes it that I as a Social Democrat could hold exactly the same position as Comrade Bloom now does as a "Communist"? I still maintain that the constitution and platform of the Communist League, if carried into practice, will not abolish oppression, but may inaugurate a state of affairs involving a despotism far worse even than capitalism. What is my position as a worker under capitalism? I work for an individual capitalist. If I disagree with him upon any point I may tell him to "go to hell," and obtain employment with other employers, the only condition being that I shall produce "surplus value." Upon this condition I may obtain a moderate amount of freedom. What is my position under the "Communism" of the Communist League? The mutual antagonisms between the employers having been abolished and substituted by one interest alone, that of the people, every workshop in the country is worked upon the representative basis, each with a committee, secretary, president or shop steward, elected by a show of hands or by ballot. This implies the rule of the majority, also an unrepresented minority. These workshop committees are linked up with a "Local Workers' Council," thence to a "Central Administrative Body." When I have a disagreement with the works manager, whom the majority have elected, and whom I may have voted against, imagine my telling him to "go to hell" and refusing to work under him any longer. My slavery would be complete. I should be reported to the Works Committee, to the Local Council and to the Administrative Council. The majority, deciding that I was wrong, would give orders that I must submit to their conditions or starve. Whether Comrade Bloom likes it or not, this is undoubtedly the "Servile State." As Proudhon says: "What is Democracy but the substitution of the despotism of the people for the despotism of a bureaucracy."

The truth is that no one can possibly represent anyone else. The most plausible and mealy mouthed orator who stroked and patted the workers on the back would become an administrator. The real progressive, the "grumbler," would be sat on. Wherever there is representation by majority rule there are politics and the vote, which breed lying and chicanery. Rather

than submit to the slavery of the people I would much prefer to sacrifice the "surplus value" as now.

Carl Marx himself tells us that the human mind sought in vain to get to the bottom of the value form, which is very elementary and simple, while the more complex forms were successfully analysed. "Why? Because the body as an organic whole is more easy to study than are the cells of that body." Does not this apply to society? Are we not led astray by studying society as a whole, instead of in its cell form, the individual. If society is looked upon as a whole it may easily happen that no individual is made happier, but if we make each individual happier it follows that the whole of society is made happier.

No, comrade; to obtain freedom one must not work for a "Dictatorship," however temporary. The plea of "temporary" is almost always an expedient piece of bluff for the establishment of the permanent, like the British occupation of Egypt. Once brought into being, a Dictatorship seeks to justify and prolong its existence, and brutalises those who attempt to destroy it.

I disagree entirely with Comrade Bloom that managers, organisers and administrators are necessary. Being divorced from production they become parasites. The producers will have to keep and feed them. This will entail longer hours of labour, consequently exploitation of those who do not approve. To-day, when we are puzzled about some job we do not always run to the foreman, but generally to our workmates to seek advice. We listen to that advice, but do not necessarily follow it. So under Anarchism we should consult our workmates. They would, as now, tender their advice and would not see us go wrong with whatever job we were engaged on. A manager would therefore be superfluous.

I also strongly disagree with Comrade Bloom when he says: "True freedom can only come as a result of economic freedom." That statement contains a certain amount of truth but is false. It synthesises all human conduct and emotion into one element; it entirely neglects the ideological. Knowledge and progress are dependent upon the action and reaction of these two elements, the material and the ideological. Belfort Bax says: "Economic conditions, let them press never so hardly, require the fertilising influence of an idea and an enthusiasm before they can give birth to a great movement, let alone to a new society." The material stands to the mind as bricks and mortar stand to the builder. Iron ore would still be iron ore but for the application of the idea which fashioned it into the machine. Therefore all progress, all science, all art, even Marxism, Anarchism, etc., are the result of the subjective examination and analysis of objective phenomena, which by the aid of conception, association and memory generalised into laws, which we term knowledge. All knowledge is relative; knowledge cannot be absolute. Thought, therefore, by moulding material into useful forms, is the most important of these inseparable elements. Since "Economic Determinism" neglects the "mind field," it also leads to a neglect of the individual and apotheosises society as a whole. This reasoning is vicious. What is society? It is entirely a mental abstraction. It does not live, it does not think, it is not conscious. The only part of society that possesses these attributes is the individual. He or she is the thinker, the conscious being, the initiator of progress. It is the individual that produces everything; the individual, therefore, should be the first consideration; society should be entirely subordinated to his or her interests.

It is because Anarchism relegates society to its correct position, because it treats the individual as the prime factor, the conscious unit, the thinker, the revolutionist, the initiator of progress, and because Communism implies its exact opposite, that I am not a Marxian Socialist, that I am not a member of the Communist League, but an Anarchist.—Yours fraternally,

W. F. HOPKINS.

Suppression of Chinese Anarchist Paper.

The Chinese comrades who run the Anarchist Communist paper, *La Evolucion*, in Chinese and Esperanto, at Shanghai, send us the following (August 10): "Our paper, *La Evolucion*, for the propaganda of Anarchism and Syndicalism, now in its third issue, has been suppressed by the Government. Our correspondence post office box was raided and sealed; correspondence should, therefore, not be sent there. Comrade Pekon has been arrested and sentenced to two years imprisonment. All agents for our paper have been fined heavily, and all our books burnt by the police. The action of the Government is extremely tyrannical, but we intend to go on with renewed energy and bring out our paper secretly. No. 4 of *La Evolucion* is in the press and will soon be on sale. Address all correspondence to Sinpak, 33, Saichuk Street, Fat-Shan, Canton, China."

A RUSSIAN VILLAGE.*

The raft men, probably a million of them, whose life is passed on Russia's winding rivers, the armies of labour that roam from one big job to another, wherever railways, bridges, dams, canals, are to be constructed; the travelling blacksmiths and tailors and shoemakers; the huge mass of peasants—for nine-tenths of Russia's population live in villages—ignorant and easy-going, or stolidly industrious and saving; these are the people on whose laps the future lies. They constitute its mystery, and it is much more important to get at what they feel and think and want than to record the speeches of Lenin and Trotsky, or analyse the mental subtleties that split up the intellectuals.

Are these masses breaking away from the old Communism of the Mir, or are they sticking to it more closely than ever? Are they for the Class War, or are they, like Tolstoy, utterly distrustful of Socialism and believers in a Universal Brotherhood that knows no classes? Have they any confidence in the State, such as British workers appear to have, or are they at bottom rank Individualists and Anarchists? These are the great questions to which one would like to get a satisfactory answer, and it seems, as yet, impossible to get it. However, the number of trained and conscientious observers trying to hammer out an answer is increasing. Ernest Poole is among the latest.

One has confidence in Poole. It must be some ten or fifteen years ago since he first attracted attention in the United States by a remarkable article on the imminence of a "Red Revolution." Since then he has travelled far and dug deeply into social conditions in various countries. His novel, "The Harbour," is to our thinking, a more comprehensive study than was Zola's "Germinal." At any rate, he is an exceptionally close and competent observer, intensely sympathetic and plainly eager to set out truth as he sees it. The work of such a man is always well worth while, and we believe that those who are wise enough to read his latest book, "The Village," will not regret it. They may find in it at least a partial answer to such questions as we have suggested.

Poole wanted to get away from the Petrograd talkers and down among the country workers. He wanted to find out what the War and the Revolution had done for the peasants, and how they felt about them. It was only his second visit to Russia, and one can hardly expect him to have seen far into the heart of things. He could study only one small spot, and it would be ridiculous to pass therefrom judgment on the whole. But the man is a keen and well-trained observer, and he sets before us a series of what seem to be comprehensive and well-established types.

Here we can only snatch an occasional passage or reflection which may furnish food for thought. "This farm is his passion, it is like his child."—"For the peasants are cautious. Mere words won't do."—"Yes, we are living pretty well in spite of the disorders in towns. We have plenty to eat, for we catch our own fish, raise our own chickens, our wheat and rye and vegetables. As for clothes, in almost every hut we have old looms and spinning wheels that we have not used for years—but now all the old grannies are fixing them up. We grew flax in our fields this summer; there are still enough sheep to give us some wool, and so this winter we'll make our own clothes."—"They claim to speak for us when we have never heard of them."—"Before they are fit to own all the land the peasants must learn two great things. First, they must be taught modern farming—how to get the most out of the soil; and second, every one of them must learn to work for the good of all. At present they are as suspicious of each other as grey wolves."—"This was only one example of how the Russian peasants rebelled against the sentimental streak that ran through our school-books in those days. They had been drawn from German models, and the planners did not stop to think what a difference there is between German and Russian children. The Germans are sentimental, the Russians are realists to the core."

From this last remark we ourselves take much comfort. We think that the Russians are the people who will get down to facts and be the first to free themselves from the spells politician eloquence throws over the masses. They are a living people, with roots that run deep into the soil. They have a passion for the natural and a capacity for giving free rein to natural passions. When they have shaken off the grip of the invader, as they soon will shake it off, they will not tolerate for long those State artificialities which are strangling the life of every other European nation. Mr. Poole's charming little volume confirms us in that view.

* "The Village: Russian Impressions," by Ernest Poole. 6s. net. (London, Macmillan and Co.)

Freedom

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THE RAILWAY STRIKE.

The nine days' railway strike just settled was the opening skirmish of the great fight which must take place sooner or later between the forces of Capital and the forces of Labour. It was but an incident in the Class War which is always going on, but with this difference: that its class character was plain for all to see from the moment the strike was declared, and the struggles now looming in the near future will be class struggles pure and simple. Weak-kneed Labour men and a few timid Liberals may try to harmonise the contending interests of Capital and Labour—the Haves and the Have-nots—but nothing can prevent the clash.

We do not believe that J. H. Thomas thought for one moment that his threat of a strike would be accepted—"I left no stone unturned to avert it," he says—but the men in the other camp promptly took up the challenge, and the Railwaymen's Union had to fight whether they wanted to or not. The fact that the other partners in the Triple Alliance had not been consulted proves that Thomas did not expect a strike. That the railwaymen were ready for a tussle was proved by their splendid solidarity. By midday on Saturday, September 27, there were hardly a dozen trains running in the whole country, and with the exception of a few men who went back this solidarity continued to the end, in spite of all the lies to the contrary.

Immediately the strike started the capitalist Press raised a howl. It was a "starvation" strike, it was a pistol at the head of the Government, it was a declaration of war on the community, and Lloyd George capped the lot with his statement that it was an "Anarchist conspiracy." As a simple matter of fact, the railwaymen were merely asking that their wages and standard of living should be maintained at a slightly higher position than before the war. Really, the £3 minimum asked for is lower than the wages of millions of their fellow workers, and in itself was not the cause of the sudden attack by the Government. The latter thought it was a good opportunity to smash one section of the Triple Alliance, so as to make it easier to deal with the others later on. The spontaneous action of the rank and file of other Unions in rallying to their support defeated this plot, and at the end of nine days the Government dropped its cast-iron attitude, granted some of the men's demands, and the strike was over.

On the following Tuesday, speaking in the City of London, Lloyd George stated that the Government had been preparing for a fight since last February, by building up a strike-breaking organisation, which was not to be disbanded now the railway strike was over, but was to be maintained for future emergencies.

"I will tell you a secret about this organisation. In February I came to the conclusion that there were signs that this was coming. I felt it my duty to leave the Peace Conference, because I felt that matters at home might require attention, and my colleagues and I started this organisation, a purely civilian organisation. . . . I congratulate them very much on the success of it. But I want to make it clear that it is not a war organisation, which will pass away the moment you demobilise completely. That is an important fact to bring home."

The class character of the strike was shown by the immediate mobilisation of the motor cars belonging to the upper and middle

class. The wealthy Automobile Association threw all its organisation into the fight against the Unions, and we heard of Lord Tomnoddy and Sir Richard Vere de Vere driving milk lorries to provide food for the poor children who would otherwise be starved by the wicked railwaymen. The *Manchester Guardian* specially noted the class feeling. It said:

"Among other disagreeable things, the dispute has thrown a sudden light on an astonishing prevalence of class hatred among English people of the upper and middle class. Everyone moving among well-to-do Englishmen in the first days of the strike must have been struck by the commonness of expressions of savage glee at the thought of a war of conquest against organised Labour, the longings for a 'fight to a finish,' the talk of 'smashing these fellows once and for all,' and so on, 'these fellows' representing, as a matter of fact, the greatest part of the English nation. A large part of the Press has confirmed this evidence by applying to the organised Labour of England a bitterness of invective not previously used except against a foreign enemy."

Naturally so. The class that is fighting the Bolsheviks with guns and starvation and lies is prepared to use the same weapons at home against organised Labour, whom they regard as Bolsheviks or Anarchists.

The strike has shown how foolish are those people who think they are justified in using direct action for economic purposes, but not for political ones. Mr. Thomas took up this attitude at the Trades Union Congress a few days before the strike. But when he declared what he would term an "economic" strike, the Government promptly made it a "political" strike by saying it was a declaration of war against the State. Poor Mr. Thomas said: "I did not want to defeat the Government"; but he soon found the Government wanted to defeat him. As the strikes of the future are certain to involve larger and larger bodies of men, the Government, which necessarily represents the capitalists and the wealthy class, is bound to take a hand in them, and they will become "political" strikes at once.

The great lesson of the strike for the workers is that no Government will or can tolerate the growth of an organisation of Labour which seriously challenges its power. If the Triple Alliance ever declares a general strike of the whole of its members it will be a fight to a finish with the Capitalist State. If the Triple Alliance wins, not being Anarchist, it must assume the powers of government. This means, therefore, that a general strike involves civil war. The Government recognises that position and is feverishly preparing for it. What is organised Labour doing?

Let there be no mistake about it, the wealthy class will fight tooth and nail to defend their wealth and their privileges. Every weapon—from aeroplanes to poison gas, from prison to scaffold, from starvation to massacre—will be used against the workers whenever they try seriously to throw off their chains. By the ballot-box you are allowed to decide which master shall hold the whip. But when you decide to abolish the master class you will find the ballot-box is of less use than a bow and arrow. Only by Direct Action can the masters be overthrown, and only by Direct Action can we take possession of the land and the means of life for ourselves and our fellow men and women.

THE DEATH OF A PEOPLE.

The truly awful state of the inhabitants of Vienna and what is left of the old Austrian Empire can hardly be realised by the British people, whose food supply during the war was infinitely better than that of any other country except the United States. Starvation and wasting diseases are rapidly wiping out the people of that once-prosperous country, and the article by our Austrian comrade in last month's *FREEDOM* is now supplemented by a pamphlet issued by the Fight the Famine Council (329, High Holborn, W.C. 1). The title, "The Death of a People," truly sums up the tragic situation. It was hoped that the peace terms would be modified when the facts were put before the Paris Council, but they were not; and it seems as though the Allies have deliberately doomed these six millions to a lingering death in order to please their new-found friends on the borders of German-Austria. The Viennese are selling their last few belongings in order to buy food—at ruinous prices; when those are gone the problem of Austria will be solved by death. We do not believe people are really callous in this matter, but they are either ignorant or too much engrossed in their own struggle for existence.

TWIST.

Put it in your Pipe and Smoke it.

Let me begin this article with the statement that secret diplomacy always means dishonest diplomacy. Indeed I incline to the opinion that the essence of diplomacy is dishonesty. When statesmen meet together—at Paris or any other place—to settle the affairs of nations, they are actuated by the desire to get as much as can be got for the particular cliques they represent. It would never do for the peoples to know what is going on. Yet the peoples are in such fashion committed to the expenditure of blood and treasure, because, forsooth, those statesmen claim to be representative of them.

An admirable illustration occurs in the treaty made between Great Britain and France in the year 1909. We had an exhibition at Shepherd's Bush to celebrate the thing. Edward VII. went to Paris, also to celebrate the thing. Yet there were not half a dozen men in this country who knew that that treaty contained clauses by which Great Britain was committed to support France in the event of this latter country going to war with Germany. The text of these clauses has not yet been made public. There are members of the Cabinet who have never had the opportunity to read them over. And in the sequel we are compelled to offer up the lives of one million of our fellow countrymen because of an agreement which none of us has ever seen and about which we know nothing at all.

If I should go to any sane man and offer to make in his name an agreement with some third party, committing him to the full extent of his life and possessions, with the condition that he should never see such agreement or know anything at all about it, he would in all probability kick me into the street. But the marvel remains. What he would never dream of allowing me to do for him in my private capacity, he applauds someone else for doing because this someone else claims to be his representative.

Let us rid ourselves of cant! Whoever Lloyd George may represent, he does not and cannot legally or morally represent me. I put this down in black and white that fools may read it. Neither in Paris nor in the House of Commons does he represent me. There was never a Tory or a Liberal or a Labourite good enough to represent me anywhere! From my observations any of them or all of them cannot even represent themselves. The word "representative" is the standing joke of the English dictionary.

Before I ask the individual reader to apply the little word "me" to himself let me put into court more evidence.

Early in 1917 England, France and Italy—these words stand not for nations but for cliques—had pledged their support to Japan—another clique. (In parenthesis it may be remarked that one of the things to be abolished by the war was secret diplomacy.) Senator Norris of the American Senate has quoted some letters which were going the rounds during this critical period. Summarised, they read to this effect: Letter I., from England to Japan, February 16, 1917: His Britannic Majesty's Government will support the claims of Japan in regard to the disposal of German rights in Shantung if the Japanese Government will do the same for Great Britain in regard to its claims to the German islands south of the Equator. Letter II., Feb. 21, 1917: Japan agrees to this bargain, with some cant about being "happy to note it as fresh proof of the ties that unite the two Allied Powers." Letter III. is from Japan to France and communicates the details of the bargain, hoping the Government of the French Republic "will give assurance that Japan may count upon its full support in this question." Letter IV. is the French reply to Japan: The French Government will support the claims of Japan providing that the Japanese Government will bring China into the war. The consequences of this in China should be the following:

"1. Handing passports to the German diplomatic agents and consuls.

"2. The obligations of all under German jurisdiction to leave Chinese territory.

"3. The internment of German ships in Chinese ports and the ultimate requisition of these ships in order to place them at the disposition of the Allies, following the example of Italy and Portugal. According to the information of the French Government, there are fifteen German ships in Chinese ports, totaling about 40,000 tons.

"4. Requisition of German commercial houses established in China; forfeiting of the right of Germany in the concessions she possesses in certain parts of China."

It is not often we get such an intimate peep into a thieves' kitchen.

There must be in existence scores of other letters, of bargain and agreement, written during the great war by the pseudo-representatives of the peoples concerned which will never see the light

of day. Yet by them are millions of people committed, among them you and I. For my part I repudiate the trickery—what the devil do you propose to do?

Government can only keep going by cunning and trickery. It plays one interest against another interest, one man against another, but it stands consistently and thoroughly and all along for the continuance of its own existence. There are financial and propertied interests to be conserved. And to conserve such interests millions of poor fools dress themselves in funny clothing and proceed to shoot one another dead—at the bidding of Governments.

There are those who would abolish secret diplomacy. It can never be abolished while the *fact of government* remains with us. I argue, we argue, not for a change of government—Labour or Socialist—nor for the "dictatorship of the proletariat"—whatever this may mean—but for the complete overthrow and suppression of the fact of government. That is, for ourselves. If other people wish to be governed, why they must please themselves; but they must not apply their government to us. If this means the end of law and order, then law and order must go into the limbo of forgotten things along with government.

This language is plain enough, I hope. We are prepared to take the dangers and difficulties we may have to face, but with this gravest danger of all, government, we will make no compromise. The greatest of human kind refused to be a ruler and governor; such refusal is the real quality of greatness.

What has government done for us since the fatal year of 1914? It has not protected our homes nor defended our lives. It has not given us food to eat nor clothing to wear—these things we provided for ourselves. It has not given us Liberty nor has it recognised human dignity. But it has made insidious agreements with other governments; it has filched what small liberty we did enjoy; it has made of us a nation of slaves and hirelings. Before 1914 it demanded from us millions upon millions of pounds to secure us against invasion. But we have not been and are not secured against invasion. It dictated that millions of men and women should fight for the preservation of an empire the most colossal and ridiculous the world has ever seen. It has secured monopoly for rich men and starvation for poor men. Not mere rhetoric, these statements, but profoundly true.

The call is to true men and leal men! No other Government, whatever the particular adjective attached to it, could have done other than the Government of 1914-19 has done. This, properly understood, is the damnation of all government.

JOHN WAKEMAN.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

SPAIN.

On September 5 the Catalanian Rasputin, Bravo Portillo, was shot. That bandit has sent many workers to prison, and has had many killed. Sabater was one of his victims. The Government hurried to announce that he was not in official employment, but as Barcelona was under martial law, and Portillo was the right hand man of the Captain General, Sr. Milans del Bosch, who deserves the same fate, Bravo Portillo was an official, and a high one. Several days after, the writer Antonio Amador was arrested, accused by a mouchard of Portillo; and although the judge in the case is a relative of Portillo (a thing against the law), Amador was liberated two days later, and the accusing mouchard tried as the author of the assassination. No one knows who killed Portillo, but it may well happen to be his own mouchards, for when they knew too much Portillo had them killed by other mouchards.

The truth is that the employers, in agreement with Portillo and the Captain General, tried to establish a regime of slavery, and after having imprisoned over 10,000 workers, they declared a lock-out. In alarm, the Press of Madrid sent special representatives to Barcelona, and they unanimously declared that it was not the Syndicalists who killed the employers. For ourselves we have no doubt that nearly all the employers and workers assassinated have been killed by the gang led by Bravo Portillo.

The Government sent as civil governor of Barcelona Sr. Amado, director of the *Correspondencia Militar*, a man with no credit, either military or civil, but who wished to do something, and ordered one of his friends, Francisco Mira, to speak with the arrested leaders and find out the best way to arrive at peace. Sr. Mira went to the prison with the Argentine poet, Valentin de Pedro, and arranged with Pestafia, Buenacasa, Castella, and others, the basis of a provisional arrangement, which consisted in freeing the prisoners, legalising the workers' Unions, acceptance of the 8-hour working day by all the employers, etc. The Governor denied having sent anyone to the imprisoned Syndicalist leaders to arrange a peace. He also denied having had an interview with the Republican Deputy, Marcelino Domingo;

but the latter proved him to be a liar, asserting that the Governor had asked him for two interviews, one with Castrovido, director of *El Pais*, and another with Morote in the latter's home. (Morote was sent last March by Romanones to arrange with the imprisoned workers, which caused the fall of the Ministry.) In short, a great Syndicalist triumph, and when we speak of Spanish Syndicalists we may as well call them Anarchists.

In Valencia, Syndicalism has developed so much in the past year or so that the bourgeoisie and the authorities united, and with the aid of the Catholic Syndicates tried to kill it. The Syndicalists were publishing daily *Solidaridad Obrera*, and the Governor wanted to suspend it; but the typographers went on strike, and not one of the bourgeois papers was published. The workers employed in the cultivation of rice have agreed to declare a general strike if all the arrested workers are not liberated, without forgetting the prisoners of the Cullera movement.

We have received the first number of *Espartaco*. The first page, and part of the second, are dedicated to the Catalan battles, and it gives photographs of Sabater, assassinated by the gang of Portillo; Luis Fernandez, one of his assassins; and Manuel Villalonga, condemned to death for having killed, in self-defence, one of the Somaten (a kind of provincial soldier).

SWITZERLAND.

Times are very hard, prices having risen more rapidly than wages, despite all the efforts of the Unions. The Swiss bourgeoisie is showing itself remorseless toward rebels, and the prisoners of Orbe, their numbers increased, still await their trials. The shootings at Bâle and Zurich led to a congress of Union leaders and Social Democrats. Held at Olten, it talked profusely and accomplished nothing. As *Le Réveil* notes, it carefully side-stepped all really important issues; was compromising and opportunist from first to last. It is perfectly immaterial, therefore, whether ten, ten hundred, or ten thousand delegates were present. While its own Government was revelling in Direct Action, the congress discussed "Violence"—kindergartingly.

This issue of *Le Réveil* contains a strong letter by Malatesta on the much-debated question of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Writing with hesitation as to what is actually going on in Russia—a hesitation common at the moment to all of us—Malatesta, nevertheless, considers that in Russia there is now "dictatorship by a party, or rather by the chiefs of a party; and it is properly called a dictatorship, for it issues decrees, imposes legal penalties, charges its agents to execute them, and has, above all, its armed forces. These serve to-day to defend the Revolution, among other things, from its external enemies, but to-morrow they will be used to impose on the workers the will of the dictators, to stop the Revolution, to consolidate the new interests now in process of formation, and to defend, as against the masses, a new privileged class." He recalls the history of the French Revolution, and fears that Lenin, like Robespierre, is paving the way for another Napoleon. Meanwhile, in criticising we may fall into the error of condemning measures that had to be taken, by reason of circumstances peculiar to Russia. Moreover, our criticism will not influence events. The important thing is that we should attend to our own revolutionary work at home, wherever we may be living.

Extracts from current Swiss Trade Union and Syndicalist organs, as reprinted in *Le Réveil*, present us with a melancholy picture. The German working man often orates about "world-shaking events," but apparently they cannot shake him, for an inch or a moment, out of his old-time rut. His faith in the moss-covered tactics of the past is still serene.

TO OUR READERS.

We regret the lateness of our appearance this month, but will put it down as one of the minor casualties of the railway strike, which interfered with our lines of communication.

NOTE TO EDITORS.

Our Austrian comrade, Pierre Ramus, who is now publishing *Erkenntnis und Befreiung*, asks editors to send him exchange copies of their publications. His address books were destroyed or taken away in the house-searchings during the war. Address all communications to Pierre Ramus, Schiessstattegraben 237, Klosterneuburg, bei Wien, German-Austria.

A RE-UNION AND DANCE

Will be held in

The Empress Hall, 128, Cambridge Rd., Mile End, London, E.
On SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18.

Doors open 6-0 p.m. Dancing 7-0 p.m. to midnight.
Admission by ticket, obtainable from "FREEDOM" Office and comrades, or 47, Crowndale Road, N.W.1. Proceeds in aid of the funds of the Anarchist Propaganda Group, formed at the London Anarchist Conference, Easter, 1919.

PROPAGANDA GROUP'S REPORT.

Attention is called to our latest publication entitled "Anarchist Communism (In Plain English)," by our comrade, L. A. Motler. It is just the sort of propaganda booklet to place in the hands of "the lower orders," as some of the workers are described by the "élite of society"—the non-producers. Terms to groups and newsagents are 1s. 6d. per quire, and they are obtainable at 47, Crowndale Road, London, N.W.1, our publishing office, or FREEDOM Office.

Our dance, advertised in this issue of FREEDOM, bids fair to be successful, judging from the number of applications for tickets, and we hope all comrades will rally to our support. Any comrades who have second-hand books, etc., and would care to give them to the group for sale at our literature stall at the dance would greatly help by handing same to Comrade Motler, who will be in charge. I would also notify comrades of another dance to be held at Crown Hall (if obtainable) in November. Details of this later.

Comrades who have articles suitable for pamphlets, and who find financial difficulties an obstacle to publication, are invited to send their MS. to us, when we should be pleased to consider it and to arrange for its publication. We urge all to remember that our group exists for this purpose, and, aided by the financial, literary and moral support and co-operation of comrades, the functions of this body can be carried out successfully.

Will any comrade who has a copy of "Ancient Society," by Lewis Morgan, and which is in good condition, care to exchange same for a volume (in new condition) of Berkman's "Prison Memoirs," as the exchange is desired by the Secretary of this group?

We require volunteers to sell literature and FREEDOM at meetings held in London. Will any willing comrades please write me?

We are reprinting "The New Anarchism" from August FREEDOM. These will be supplied to groups for free distribution at a small charge per hundred, all proceeds to aid in printing a new paper, *Labour's Voice*. We owe no debts, and do not intend incurring any; therefore, all financial help will enable us to give the British public Anarchist Communism in steady doses. Address communications to me at 47, Crowndale Road, London.

THE SECRETARY.

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(September 1—October 4).

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