

Freedom

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NOTES.

The French Railway Strike.

There is a great deal of nervousness in the ranks of capitalism regarding the probable spread of the railway strike in France, and not without reason. The French workers have no illusions about the war, and with a casualty list of 1,800,000 killed and 2,000,000 disabled feeling is very bitter against the rulers who have brought the country to its present state. Prices of the necessities of life have risen to nearly three times the pre-war level, whilst wages have only doubled in a few exceptional cases. In these circumstances discontent is widespread and a spark only is required to bring about an explosion which would be felt outside the borders of France. March has a revolutionary reputation in Europe, this month being the 49th anniversary of the Paris Commune. Although we do not expect a revolution every time there is a railway strike, Millerand is going the right way to provoke one. Calling railwaymen to the colours and arresting their leaders is likely to add fuel to the flames, and men who have faced the German guns for over four years are not likely to be deterred from striking by the sight of a few machine guns in the streets and at railway stations. Should a revolutionary situation arise in France we may be sure that British capitalists would come to the assistance of the French Government. In that case what would the workers here do to help the French workers? If they are prepared to join hands with them in such an eventuality their decision must be prompt and effective. Half measures would be worse than useless—everything must be thrown into the struggle against the common enemy of the workers—International Capitalism.

The Allies and Russia.

In spite of the shrieks of the British and French Jingo Press, the Supreme Council has at last decided on a truce with Soviet Russia, but in the memorandum on the subject they have left a loophole for renewing the war when they consider conditions more favourable. British capitalism has forced its views on the Supreme Council. General Smuts bore witness to the "overwhelming political preponderance of the British Empire" at the Peace Conference, and as British capitalists wish to consolidate their gains in Mesopotamia and the Caucasus, they have called a halt to intervention in Russia—for the time being, at any rate. Having ruined Germany, one of their best customers, they are ready to take advantage of the splendid opening for trade in Russia. France thinks that "*perfidie Albion*" is going to leave her in the lurch, and opposes the truce with Russia, but Britain has a strangle-hold on France, and can cripple her even more than she is crippled now. France has no ships and is dependent on Great Britain, who, as the *Matin* frankly says, can suspend exports of coal to France, refuse to allow British ships to carry French foodstuffs, and prevent ships built in the British Isles from being transferred to France. In fact, by prolonging the war so as to give a "knock-out blow" to Germany, British statesmen also bled France to such an extent as to prevent her taking Germany's predominant position in Europe. The Germans can regain all the Rhine provinces to-morrow if England withdraws her support from France. Oh, these dear Allies! When rogues fall out, Bolsheviks come by their own.

Winston Churchill.

It seems remarkable that after the failure of his policy in Russia this man should still continue to hold office. The ghastly failure of his Gallipoli expedition should have been sufficient cause for any self-respecting people to hound him from office forever, but after an interval which allowed his connection with that

tragedy to be forgotten, he appears at the War Office and calmly proceeds with his policy of intervention in Russia, which cost this country much in blood and treasure and brought starvation and civil war to half of Europe. And now that that policy has been abandoned, he still clings to office and throws jibes and sneers at his Labour opponents and says they are not fit to govern. How are we to account for this? Only by the fact that he is a member of one of those select families who consider it their privilege to constitute the ruling class in this country. The Greys, Russells, Cecils and Churchills for many generations have had representatives in almost every Government which has held office. In spite of the self-government of which the Britisher boasts, these families manage to keep their privileges and force themselves to the front when place and plunder are going. Even now a member of the Cecil family is flirting with the Labour Party, and will probably be found in the Cabinet if, and when, a Labour Government is formed. Winston Churchill is trying to rally all the forces of privilege to fight the great battle with the workers, which he knows is inevitable, but if he finds his side is losing, he will "rat" to the other side as did his ancestor, the Duke of Marlborough, when he deserted King James to fight under the banner of William. And we feel sure that many in the Labour Party would welcome him with open arms if they could thereby gain the reins and sweets of office.

On the Irish Front.

The British Government are at their wit's end to find means of combating the guerilla warfare in Ireland. Although soldiers and police flood the country the rebels manage to bring off many daring raids, some of them in broad daylight, which shows that the sympathies of the people are on their side. We read of police barracks being attacked by bodies of armed men a hundred strong, who use explosives to shatter the walls, and who cut the telegraph and telephone wires to prevent reinforcements being called for. The Government retaliate by arresting and deporting all those who are prominent in the Sinn Fein movement, but acts of rebellion increase instead of decrease. In Dublin there have been so many attacks on detectives that they are throwing up their jobs in dozens. One outstanding feature is the wonderful secrecy of the organisation which carries on this guerilla war. Although very large rewards have been offered by the Government for information about the persons guilty of the murders no one has come forward. Considering how often previous Irish rebellions have been broken by the aid of spies, their absence up to now is all the more noticeable. Perhaps they still remember the fate of Carey.

The Cost of Living.

What a mad world we live in! All agreed that, apart from profiteering, the present high prices of food and clothing are caused by scarcity, owing to half of Europe being disorganised unable to produce anything like the amount of pre-war days. Yet we find that the area devoted to the production of wheat in this country has decreased by 400,000 acres in the past twelve months, the greater portion of it being utilised for the production of barley for brewing purposes. We are not teetotalers, but we must say that only lunatics would brew beer when the bread cupboard is empty. The truth, of course, is that farmers do not produce wheat because people are hungry, but because they wish to make profits, or even perhaps because it is the only way in which they can get sufficient money to pay the landlords who hold them by the throat. This incident throws a flood of light on the insane "system" under which we live and should be sufficient reason for any sensible person to decide on changing it for a more rational one at all costs. As a matter of fact, however, in all the talk about the cost of living the land question is almost entirely ignored. But a nation that has allowed the land, which is the source of all life, to be stolen from them will have to learn that until they take it back their food will be at the mercy of the robber..

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN MEXICO

By LINN A. E. GALE.

(Editor of "Gale's Journal," Mexico City.)

American capitalism is busily engaged in assiduously cultivating sentiment in the United States in favour of armed intervention in Mexico, and this is serving to call attention to the status of Mexican labour.

It is a truism to say that the purposes of American capitalism are the same as those of the capitalists who seek to gobble up other "backward countries." Wall Street has precisely the same intentions toward Mexico that British capitalism has toward India, Ireland and Egypt. The only difference is that British capitalism is already entrenched in England's subject territory, while so far Mexico has succeeded in retaining sufficient nationalism to keep her from being swallowed up entirely.

American capital dominates the country, of course, while British and French capital also have large holdings here. Germany comes in for a small share and Spain for a still smaller. Commercially, Mexico is already largely under the control of these alien financial interests, chiefly the American, but politically she is still more or less independent. The National Government, under Carranza, is pugnaciously hostile toward the designs of Yankee capitalism.

The increased ardour of the demand for intervention or annexation arises mainly from the effort of the Carranza Government to impose very reasonable taxes on the oil wells in the country. *But beneath and beyond the trouble over the oil tax is the fear that another revolution might take place in Mexico some of these days and result in Soviets, or at least in something akin to them.* This fear is not without foundation. The Mexican masses hate American capitalism—and all other capitalism for that matter—with an intense hatred. They are still immature and their minds have no conception of scientific Socialism, but they are potentially Bolsheviks. There is no getting away from that. A nervy leader or leaders at the right time might establish a proletarian dictatorship here in which very soon all capital, foreign or local, would be confiscated and Communised. The possibility of this is what makes American moneyed men pale and grow dizzy. They have billions invested in Mexico, and they are coining millions in profits every year. They pay niggardly wages, work their employees long hours, and are utterly unconcerned about loss of life and injuries in their mines and oil wells. If Mexico were to turn about economically, it would be a staggering blow to American capitalism. Such a coup would not only impoverish hundreds of millionaires, but it would kill their prospects of draining the still untapped springs of wealth that cover the country.

This haunting spectre of Bolshevism that is giving the oil and mining magnates cold creeps is the real cause of the recent agitation for intervention. The oil tax in itself is incidental. If they thought the oil tax would not develop into more radical measures, they would pay it without a murmur, for almost any tax would be only a drop in the bucket in comparison with their enormous profits. But the fact is that they are afraid that Carranza may nationalise their properties after they have acquiesced in the tax, or that an even more Radical administration may succeed him and do so.

So far as Carranza is concerned, they are probably mistaken. Nobody knows exactly what he would have done if it had not been for this Damocles' sword of intervention that has been hanging over his head from the day he became President. It is said by some in Government circles that land, minerals and industries would have been taken over by the Government and a sort of State Socialism initiated if Carranza had been free to do what he wanted to. This is denied by others, who claim that his only quarrel with the American capitalists is because he wants to cut down their profits and enable a Mexican capitalist class to be developed.

Whichever view we may take, it is certain that Carranza in the last couple of years has had little intention of doing anything very revolutionary. If he really did want to on the start, he soon saw how impossible it would be, for the least step in that direction would have meant war instantly. To-day he is simply standing his ground stubbornly on the petroleum tax proposition. It is apparent that he will defend energetically the position he has taken, but there is no likelihood that he intends to go much further towards the Left. Moreover, his term of office expires in July, 1920, and if extreme Radical measures were contemplated they would undoubtedly be left to the new President. However, the social revolution in Mexico is by no means an unlikely event in the near future. The masses have never owned

property, with a few exceptions, and have therefore no illusions as to the value of the capitalist system or its divine origin. There are practically no skilled labourers in the country, hence the common desire to get a better job or become a manager or superintendent, which is so prevalent in the United States, is non-existent here. There is no petty bourgeois class to speak of. The line is drawn sharply between the capitalists, almost all of whom are foreigners, and the toilers, all of whom are Mexicans. The former live in luxury almost unparalleled in any other country, and the latter in wretchedness and squalor besides which working conditions in most foreign lands seem nearly ideal. In the mines near Mexico City, natives are slaving 10 and 12 hours a day, and even longer, for the starvation pittance of 80 centavos a day—equivalent to 1s. 8d. English money.

The Mexican worker knows that he will always be a worker, and in the long years of suffering there has been ground into his good-natured, improvident soul a deep and lasting hatred of capitalism and capitalists. Obviously such a race, composed nearly unanimously of destitute and oppressed labourers, is the stuff that Socialism can be made of.

In the last few months in particular Radical sentiment has been gaining tremendously throughout the country. It is still inchoate, spasmodic, Utopian and disorganised, but it is here. A significant feature is that, so far as I know, not a Labour Union in the country—not even the most reactionary Craft Union—professes anything but admiration for Soviet Russia. Even the faithful lieutenant of Samuel Gompers in Mexico declares himself a Socialist and expresses perfect friendship for the I.W.W., reserving the loophole that Mexico is not economically ready for Socialism and that the workers should organise in Craft Unions for the present. Any Mexican labourer who can read and write—and many who can't—will tell you that he is a Socialist or a Bolshevik, although he may have scant conception of how to bring about the desired consummation.

This is a striking point in view of the fact that as yet a majority of the American working class declares itself against Socialism. It is a potent sign of the times when we reflect that every daily newspaper in Mexico, and most of the weeklies, are controlled to some extent by American capital, and are constantly publishing the most ghastly stories about atrocities in Soviet Russia. That the Mexican workers should believe Russia to be malignant, and have faith in her in spite of this campaign of lies, indicates that the germ of class-consciousness is alive and active even in these supposedly ignorant peons. Another curious feature of the movement is that throughout Mexico are to be found hundreds of unions calling themselves "syndicates." Most of them have translations of writings of Syndicalists, and many of them circulate Anarchist books extensively. Kropotkin and Bakunin are favourites with many of them, vying with Marx and Engels. It is often disappointing to find "Syndicalists" like these that are reading decidedly revolutionary literature and even publishing and circulating it, yet organising wretchedly and unable to get decent wages for their members; but this is the situation in scores of cases. It simply shows the Latin-American character—a rebel temperament that chafes at tyranny, denounces it and advocates its overthrow, yet is too languid and unsystematic to organise effectively even to wring minor concessions from the bosses. There is the big trouble with the Mexican labour movement—lack of system, perseverance, and executive ability. Labour orators will get up and make fiery speeches that could not have been surpassed by the fiercest Russian revolutionist in the days of the Czar. Yet these same leaders, after striking a few days for relief from intolerable working conditions, will be bamboozled easily into accepting useless compromise or even into returning to work without getting anything. Once in a while a class-conscious movement arises that develops real power. These occasions are becoming more frequent, fortunately. But as a rule the initiative comes from foreign agitators—generally Americans—who inject some of their own vim and ginger into the usually docile and obedient slaves of the country. For some time yet the Mexican movement will need these alien elements to furnish it with backbone and stamina. But little by little the movement is getting stronger, and it becomes plainer that the day of an overturning is not far away. Nationalism as a means to an end is being stimulated in Mexico by many Radical agitators and Labour organisers. They frequently do not hesitate to appeal to the narrow patriotic feelings of the Mexican people by reminding them that their exploiters are all foreigners and that Socialism would mean "Mexico for the Mexicans." This may not be either Marxian or even very ethical, but undoubtedly it has the desired result many times. When a class-conscious appeal fails to stir the worker, the nationalistic one will generally do the work.

In a word, there is a nation-wide Labour movement in Mexico that is as yet without leadership and without much organisation.

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THE TRICKERY OF POLITICIANS.

For sheer brazen humbug we do not think anyone can equal the modern politician. Politics stink in the nostrils of every honest man or woman. Insincere, cynical and unashamed, their lies are spread over the columns of the daily papers and their grimaces are printed in the pictures of those wretched rags. The politician is a scurvey knave at the best of times, but the war gave him an opportunity, which he took with both hands. Who does not remember the wonderful speeches which he and his tribe made at the outbreak of the war, speeches in which they dwelt on the virtues of self-sacrifice for one's country, speeches for which they were paid fat cheques by the Government. Then came the dishonest Derby scheme, when married men were deluded into "attesting" in the belief that only single men would be called up, but to find they had all been caught in the same trap. The Labour politician, however, excelled himself when conscription was introduced. Vowing he would fight the damnable thing to the death, he collapsed like a wet rag when the test came. As dishonest as him also were the trade union officials, whose opposition to conscription was bought off by the Government's promise of exemption for nine-tenths of them. Few of these officials ever found their way into the trenches, except when they went out on a first-class pleasure trip, paid for by the Government, to keep up the spirits of their members whom they had betrayed.

With war contracts every week involving many millions, out of which fortunes were to be made, it can easily be understood that those who gave them out shared in the plunder. They all played the same game. When some contract scandal more outrageous than usual was discussed in the House of Commons there was a conspiracy of silence about the contractor's name and his connection with prominent Ministers. Why? Because if names were to be dragged in few members in the House would escape the searchlight of exposure. At all costs exposure must be avoided. The people who have so much faith in their rulers must not be allowed to see the rottenness and corruption behind the screen.

Now the war is over the same insincerity and trickery are to be found amongst politicians of all parties. How often during the war the workers were assured that the old order of toil and exploitation was to be swept away and a new world "fit for heroes" rise in its place. What have the politicians done to redeem their promises? Nothing. They have no wish to do away with exploitation, because they share in the plunder. Their job is to keep the people contented. At one time they did it by telling them of the wonderful world beyond the skies. Now that very few believe in that world they are kept quiet by the fine promises of the new heaven on earth that is to be built—to-morrow! And to-morrow never comes.

With the coming of the Labour Party before the war, many workers who were disgusted with the old capitalist parties began to think that at last here was a party which would make things move more quickly. But the thinking worker no longer pins his faith to the Labour Party. It was foolish to think they could escape contamination in such a sink of corruption as Parliament. Flattered and petted and overwhelmed with the social influence of the wealthy class, they succumbed, and to-day they play the political game as trickily as any. Whilst seemingly opposed to capitalism their schemes of reform will but help to support it.

Not one item in the whole of their program need cause the wealthy classes any alarm. The party as a whole has one idea in common—to get into office. No longer is it a worker's party. Liberal M.P.s and would-be M.P.s are joining rapidly, and soon its original "red" hue will be toned down to a delicate rose pink that will delight the hearts of society dames. Then its entry to power will be assured, and the final betrayal of the workers be achieved. This is the natural and logical evolution of every political party, which must compromise to conquer.

But whilst the Labour Party are dreaming their pleasant dreams of reclining on the Government benches of the House of Commons, there is a rumbling in the air of a coming storm. Even astute British statesmen cannot prevent this country feeling the effects of a war-shattered Europe. England has always depended on foreign trade to feed her workers, and now that the whole economic system of Europe is in a state of chaos trade will be dislocated to such an extent that hunger and unemployment may stalk through the great cities of this country before next winter. Then will the deluded workers remember the new world they were promised, and before they start building it for themselves they will probably decide to sweep away all traces of the old order, and its political institutions will certainly be the first to go.

FORGERY AS A WAR WEAPON.

Recently the Press, both here and in America, printed stories to the effect that the Bolsheviks had been forging English Treasury notes to depreciate the value of English credit abroad and also to finance their schemes of propaganda, some papers hinting that the Communists in this country had been supplied with these forged notes. Whether it is true or not we cannot say, but certain it is that the Bolsheviks were not the first to use forged notes as a means of fighting an enemy. The English Government used them largely during their campaign against the French Revolution, as is proved by a case which was tried before Lord Kenyon in the Court of King's Bench in London on November 18, 1795. The plaintiff, named Strongitharm, brought an action against a man named Lukyn, for payment of a bill of exchange for £50. Lukyn's defence was that the money was payment for forging French assignats (notes or bills issued by the Revolutionary Government of France), and as such forgery was illegal, the plaintiff had no legal claim to the money.

The plaintiff, in reply, called Mr. Caslon, a typefounder, as a witness. We will quote now from a report of the case, which was published in "The Crimes of Cabinets; or, a Review of their Plans and Aggressions for the Annihilation of the Liberties of France, and the Dismemberment of her Territories," by Lewis Goldsmith (Dublin, 1801):

"Mr. Caslon said he was employed as the middle person between the plaintiff and the defendant: Lukyn gave him a copy of a French assignat, which was produced in court, and that assignat, he said, he delivered to the plaintiff, to direct him in making his plates. The plaintiff at first refused to do it; but Lukyn said they were for the expedition, and for the Duke of York's army, and that it was with the knowledge and approbation of the Secretary of State; that the plaintiff was perfectly safe in doing it, and that if he still entertained doubts he might call on the Secretaries of State; this, he said, was confirmed by Colonel Smith, agent to the Duke of York's army!!! The witness believed the plates were very well done. Lukyn had immense numbers of these forged assignats printed off, and went abroad with them. On cross-examination, he said the plaintiff certainly refused to make these plates, till he was told the Government of this country thought it was a good measure.

"Lord Kenyon said, if the plaintiff had forged these plates for the purpose of fraud, he was of opinion that it ought not to have been made the foundation of an action. But Mr. Caslon swore the contrary. If the plaintiff, in obedience to the higher powers, had made these plates for the Duke of York's army, that circumstance altered the case. There were certain laws, not to be transgressed by one nation, even at war with another, as abstaining from poisoned arms, quarters in war, etc. But his lordship said he did not know that this was contrary to the law of nations.

"The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff."

If the Bolsheviks really have forged English notes, they have simply been playing a very old trick on their enemies.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. BENSON.—We received your letter and cash, but no address on letter. Please send at once.

Still, that movement is pregnant with revolution, and time and circumstances will sooner or later crystallise it and completely smash the very shaky edifice of capitalism that stands here.

A significant step in that direction recently has been the organisation of the Communist Party of Mexico, which is proceeding mainly along Syndicalist lines and repudiates political action except as a means of education and agitation. It is co-operating closely with the newly-formed Mexican administration of the I.W.W., and industrial unions are now flourishing in various parts of the Republic.

Mexico is a harvest meadow for Bolshevism. The seed has been sown and is now being cultivated. The great need is intelligent cultivation, and that need is being supplied rapidly enough to insure results before long.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT PARIS.

J. M. Keynes was the official representative of the British Treasury at the Paris Peace Conference up to June 7, 1919, and sat also on the Supreme Economic Council as deputy for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the date named he resigned, heart-sick and utterly disgusted. Then he sat down and wrote a book, "The Economic Consequences of the War,"* which probably has created more serious stir than any published during the last five years. From Lloyd George downwards men high in the councils of the Allies must hate that book, must yearn to suppress it, must pray it be ignored. Luckily that has proved impossible. When men in Keynes' position speak straight out they get a hearing.

This man has been behind the scenes, and he was equipped to understand. He shows us Germany as she was, the central pillar of the whole European system; the best customer of Russia, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Austria-Hungary; the second best customer of Great Britain, Sweden and Denmark; the third best customer of France; the largest source of supply to Russia, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Roumania and Bulgaria; the second largest source of supply to Great Britain, Belgium and France. Then, step by step, he shows us what the downfall of that central pillar really means; the wholesale ruin it—of necessity—has wrought; the true situation as it stands to-day, aggravated incalculably by the insane policies our so-called statesmen, out of sheer ignorance, have pursued. For, as distinguished from Great Britain and the United States, Europe was of one piece; from the economic standpoint her varied nationalities all rowed in the same boat, and the storm that carried away her main mast has thrown her on her beam ends, and left her lying helpless amid the breakers.

This is the summing up: "The war has ended with everyone owing everyone else immense sums of money. Germany owes a large sum to the Allies; the Allies owe a large sum to Great Britain, and Great Britain owes a large sum to the United States. The holders of war loan in every country are owed a large sum by the State, and the State in its turn is owed a large sum by these and other tax-payers." Mr. Keynes then voices his conviction that "we shall never be able to move again unless we can free our limbs from these paper shackles," and that "a general bonfire" of these obligations is to-day an imperative necessity.

We regret profoundly that lack of space prevents us from giving this book the extended notice it deserves, and that we cannot publish to all the world its irrefutable facts and logical conclusions. Were this possible Militarism would become instantly a thing abhorred, our politicians would find themselves social outcasts, and the people generally, instead of grumbling aimlessly, would see the abyss now opening before them. Even now they do not understand that—to use Mr. Keynes' simple phrase—a whole "age came to an end in August, 1914."

Until that understanding is attained we shall have continuously increasing riots but no genuine revolution; a steady lowering of standards and intensified starvation; "the whole white race marching," in the words of a noted banker, "towards universal ruin."

*"The Economic Consequences of the Peace," By J. M. Keynes. Macmillan & Co.

"So long as the Royal Air Force remembers that it is a Royal Force . . . it would have but little mercy on a Bolshevik mob, if once let loose on them with bomb and machine gun . . . the R.A.F. pilots and observers have had much excellent practice during the German retreat in operating against mobs on roads and in streets."—*The Aeroplane*.

The writer is referring to British strikers, some of whom may have helped to build aeroplanes.

ANARCHISM AND BOLSHEVISM.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR SIR,—Will you permit me, as one of the correspondents, to compliment Mr. Fred Tyler on his audacity in asking the readers of FREEDOM to consider the possibilities of the strongest Marxist Society in the country? As appears by his letter, all the readers of FREEDOM are not obsessed by the ideal of Liberty, and I would ask, on behalf of such, if Mr. Tyler can guarantee that, should Britain become Marxist, all who join the movement now will be ensured a privileged post, or will they be pushed on one side by men who are now serving "capitalist" ends. This should not be overlooked.

Mr. Tyler's letter strengthens views which I have had for some time; it contains nothing but abstractions and the invitation (implied) to join the B.S.P. Now I hold that abstractions are always used to cover Power impulses, and that all the horrors of to-day are due to Life as Power, and will continue so long as Life is lived as Will-to-Power.

In a kaleidoscope, though the picture may alter at each turn, it is still only the result of the same bits of glass, and similarly though the abstractions may alter with each change of plan, it is still the same old Power impulses which make up the Life under it, and the "Russian Soviet System" is merely one of the abstractions.

One of the "vital points" of Liberty to me is the kind of people one would live among, and one cannot too soon set about getting them, but apparently Mr. Tyler does not consider this worth mentioning.

I agree with Bakunin that Man is passing through the stage of "Slavery to Abstractions" (soulless abstractions, the vampires of history ever nourished on human blood—God and the State), leaving behind Life as Power, what Nietzsche calls Will-to-Power and Bakunin calls Bestiality—into a life where the instincts and environment become more harmonious, which I call Liberty.

Running through all the imperceptible gradations from one extreme to the other is the primal instinct of Seeking Security for what one "stands for" in one's own idiosyncrasy, intensified, in jungle life, in the strongest to the lust for Power.

Under the Power organisations found under Abstractions, Security is put in obedience to regulations made and enforced by the strongest, and the Abstractionist's outlook is entirely bounded by the plan. This Power plan is entirely concerned with the acquisition of Power and the use and protection of it among men, who are looked upon as still in the jungle stage and amenable only to jungle methods. Only men who look at Life from this point of view can get and keep authority. The men in official authority under the abstraction of the "Russian Soviet System" secured it by force of arms, and still hold it by those means. All Power men are ready to adopt this method if the less bloody method of Majority of Votes failed them. In return for giving this partial security the "elected of the people" help themselves to a full opportunity of inordinately gratifying their instincts, and their first consideration is to keep themselves in security and power.

Now I here propound an original view. It is that all rulers are solely concerned with jungle life, and that were jungle life abolished their occupation would be gone, and so no plan which allows Liberty impulses to grow or be gratified will ever be made by Power leaders, and it follows that all plans made by them are known to be inimical to Liberty from their very source.

Liberty will come without a previously made plan; each unit as he becomes more helpful and attractive to all (the Liberty impulse) will spontaneously find and fill or serve a need in the organisation of Liberty; therefore, the only way to reach the ideal of Liberty is by the teaching and living example of the Liberty impulse, which can begin now and anywhere.

I told this recently to a lecturer of the Workers' Educational Association. He retorted that Liberty was itself an abstraction. I replied that Abstractions which cover Power system are incomplete, cannot be put into Life, are not intended to be, and give no impulse in that direction, while the Liberty ideal is quite the opposite. The deluded are muddled by the quantity of words, and getting hold of a bit of the abstraction build up an ideal of their own by filling up blanks and their ignorance of necessary concomitants. Should any of them then try to get their Power leader to help them to put it into Life he will put them off by further evasions or bribery.

I have read Pataud's and Pouget's "How we brought about the Revolution," and it bears out the views I have expressed.—Yours truly,

Leeds.

SIDNEY COOPER.

"The State may roll in splendour, while I starve in the gutter."—MAX STIRNER.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

FRANCE.

"Labour in Revolt" is the heading of a powerful leading article in *Germinale* (Amiens), which begins thus: "Two facts dominate everywhere the existing situation—the constant increase of the cost of living and the numerous working men's strikes for higher wages." It says truly that the net result will be further decline of production and still higher prices. All recent advices from France emphasise this note and regard it as proved that strikes for additional wages, however successful, cannot meet the present crisis. The franc falls and commodities rise all along the line. If Labour organisations really wish to grapple with the problem, let them transform themselves into associations for production and distribution.

No one has expressed this better than our old comrade, Sebastian Faure, who, once more at liberty, has been speaking to large crowds and analysing the present position with pitiless exactness. The professions with which the war began and the realities in which it has ended—1,800,000 Frenchmen killed, 2,000,000 crippled; the public debt increased six-fold; the franc falling constantly, and taxes, together with the cost of all the prime necessities of life, rising proportionately; Government impotent even to check for a moment the descending avalanche; crying Ministerial scandals such as that of Loucheur, who is said to have made more than a thousand million francs out of the war; in short, political, industrial, financial, intellectual and moral smash—Faure handles the subject, in all its immensity, like a master. *Le Libérateur* properly devotes pages to this powerful exposition. One sees the entire system falling of its own corruption, the day of mere reform expiring, that of revolution painting the entire horizon. The French Anarchist Press is depicting all this admirably, and drawing the logical conclusion. As with us, its bitterest struggle is against the reactionary tendencies of the workers' leaders.

The case of Barbé, released from three and a half years' imprisonment only to be rearrested at the prison's doors, shows vividly the moral abyss to which Militarism has brought us. Barbé fought bravely at the commencement of the war. Then his conscience revolted, and he exhibited the far higher courage of listening to and following it. He deserted and, registering under a false name, waged implacably his own war against war. Of course, his arrest was, as he himself knew well, only a matter of time, and Militarism is still pursuing him. At his latest trial witness after witness testified that he was a man of blameless life, of much culture, essentially a thinker. He himself declared frankly that he had come to the conclusion that he had no right either to kill others or permit them to take his life. In a brief but most eloquent speech he took consistently the highest moral ground. "Gentlemen," he said to the court-martial, "you represent the past, with all its institutions and conceptions. You have become crystallised in the thought of a bygone age, which denies the necessity of change because change would be fatal to your class interests. We, on the other hand, are of the great party of the future which, seeing Nature in perpetual transformation, believes in social evolution." He openly blamed himself for having fought at all, and expressed the hope that he might be pardoned for "those moments of cowardice." A Conscientious Objector *par excellence*; a Protestant who had taken seriously the name of the time-honoured maxim that "he alone deserves the name of a Seeker after Truth who dares to follow his conscience wherever it may lead him." Whether Barbé's judgment in this particular case was right or wrong is obviously immaterial. The point is that he was true to himself.

"This, above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou can'st not then be false to any man."

SWITZERLAND.

Here as everywhere, under the iron pressure of events, one sees the evolution of revolutionary thought working at high pressure. *La Nouvelle Internationale* attacks *Le Reveil* as being in favour of "liberty for all; for the class that oppresses us." In a most spirited reply, *Le Reveil* explains that it is working to put an end to all robbery and domination; that it has no idea of overthrowing one form of dictatorship in order to set up another. It comments stingingly on Bolshevik literature which, it says, expresses the situation so clearly as to leave no room for doubt. "There absolute submission, iron discipline, etc., are still and always, before all else, demanded of all the workers. Outside of that, no safety!" There is also keen criticism of a manifesto put out by the "Jeunesse Internationale Communiste," which denounces vehemently collaboration with "the employers of the

bourgeois State." Yet they believe in politics, and the Swiss Syndicalist Union courts co-operation with employers! To make acts agree with words is the true art of Revolution.

ITALY.

Our comrade Malatesta, who returned to Italy recently, was welcomed with open arms by all his old comrades, and wherever he spoke great crowds assembled and applauded vigorously. The Anarchist movement has been much strengthened by his fierce attacks on the policy which brought Italy into the war and the disastrous results of that policy. It was hardly to be expected that Malatesta would escape the attentions of the authorities. During a speaking tour in Tuscany he was arrested at a small town between Pisa and Leghorn. As soon as the workers of these two cities heard the news they declared a general strike, which forced the Governor to order his release. Malatesta is now editor of the new Anarchist daily, *Umanita Nova*, published at Milan (address, Via Goldoni 3). The Press reports "uprisings" amongst the workers, who in some places seized factories and worked them for a time under their own organisations; and at Pieve di Soligo they seized the municipal buildings and proclaimed a Soviet. Events are moving rapidly in Italy.

LIBERTY FROM CHAOS.

At the present moment modern civilisation is approaching the crisis of the ages. Capitalism is about to make the last desperate effort to secure itself as a mode of society. Based upon the extremity of mankind, fostered through the ages by the ignorant acquiescence of the masses, it has during five years of warfare released social forces that threaten to engulf it. The ruling classes of Britain, France and Russia had hoped in the rout of the German-Austrian forces to establish a commercial prestige in the world that would occupy their peoples at home and make a gradual return to normal conditions possible. In a few years the fevered industry of the masses would re-establish Allied finance, and the economic and social fabric would thus remain intact. The Central Empires, on the other hand, had based their hopes upon obtaining a military preponderance, thus enabling them to dictate a peace favourable to a fierce commercial rivalry.

These were the schemes of the rulers, but like the best-laid plans, they wandered in strange paths. Instead of reaping golden harvests, the Governments of the world are faced by ruin. Their dreams of international trade are flouted by the hard realities of the moment, and the exchange values jump with such a merry abandon that "big business" declares there is nothing doing. The vexations of capitalism are intensified by the shadow of the "Red peril," which rises like the angel of destiny.

French financiers had hoped much from Koltchak—the control of Siberian wealth that would place their credit secure in the world—while the bondholders of Britain looked to Denikin to safeguard the oil of Baku and Persia. While commercial France has succumbed, Britain struggles fiercely against the progress of American trade. Europe is doomed first to misery, starvation and bankruptcy; then will come revolution. The problems of capitalism are destined to destroy it. The normal functions of the existing order place on the backs of the people a burden of taxation which must reduce their subsistence to an unbearable pittance, from which they will revolt.

This "vicious circle" is like an iron cage in which humanity struggles; beyond it no saving principle can be found except expropriation of private wealth. Thus the product of the war is a revolutionary situation.

Count Osake, a Japanese statesman, has declared that European civilisation is in its death throes, and nothing but economic ruin lies before it. He cannot perceive the coming of the dawn. He does not grasp the fundamental principle of Anarchism, the natural trend of evolution, the place of social revolution in social and historical advancement, and the principle in social evolution so brilliantly demonstrated by Peter Kropotkin, "institutions are created by man to meet needs, and as time and change render them of no further use they are discarded, but in their place spring new ideas, new methods, and new institutions."

The "civilisation" doomed is the capitalist order, and with it must go static society, because the new order is the dawn of liberty. Human society, in anguish and pain, gives birth to the materialisation of the virtues within it, taking man forward by revolutionary haste to the social use and possession of the gifts of Nature.

FRED TYLER

ROCKER AND KATER ARRESTED.

Our comrades, Rudolf Rocker (late editor of the *Workers' Friend*) and Fritz Kater (manager of *Der Syndikalist*), were arrested in Berlin on February 4 by order of Noske, the "Social Democratic" War Minister. On the 10th copies of the "preventive detention" orders were served on them, giving the following reasons for their arrest:

"Rocker, who is without nationality, is the chief agitator of the Syndicalist movement in Germany. This movement, which controls workers' unions, seeks, by incessant strike agitation, its sole weapon, to drive the German miners to strike, a step which, especially now, would endanger seriously the safety of the realm. (Signed) The Supreme Commander, Noske."

Similar reasons were given in the case of Kater, of whom it was said that he has for years been the leader of the Syndicalist movement, "at whose head he still stands."

In Kater's order he is informed of his right of appeal and of choosing a counsel, but this is crossed out in Rocker's order. As one without nationality, the intention seems to be to treat him as an outcast, although he was interned in England for four years and returned to Germany as an exchanged prisoner of war. On February 9 both comrades, in spite of their protests, were photographed, measured, and had their finger-prints taken.

This happened in the German Republic, under the rule of a "Social Democratic" Supreme Commander and a "Social Democratic" Chief of Police. Comment would spoil the effect.—(*Der Syndikalist*, Berlin.)

[As we go to press we hear by telegram from Berlin that our two comrades have been released.]

COMRADESHIP—NOT LEADERSHIP.

"The working class does not need leadership so much as it needs comradeship. The world has really had enough of leaders. The hero and the leader, even the teacher and the prophet, will in time go the way of the king, the baron, the capitalist, and the priest. In the last analysis, it is the friend and companion that the people need; it is the co-operation and fellowship of all people working together for the exaltation of the common life. It is not out of place to quote Browning here:

'Man is not Man as yet.
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly forth,
While only here and there a star dispels
The darkness, here and there a towering mind
O'er looks its prostrate fellows; when the host
Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-bloom powers—then, not till then,
I say, begins man's general infancy.'

"All this is pertinent and urgent; for the chief menace to the Socialist movement in America in the near future is the sort of man I quoted a moment ago—the politician waiting to move whichever way the people move. The moment the movement becomes clearly inevitable, the moment it begins to conquer something of political power, that moment the politicians will come, and the priests and the grafters, and all the losing parasites of menaced parties and institutions. And why? Not because they are interested in the emancipation of the working class, or in the procuring of a free and decent society, but just because they are interested in place and position for themselves, and would exploit the Socialist movement to that end."

—GEORGE D. HERRON.

PAMPHLET FUND.

This fund is now closed, but we hope comrades will continue to collect subscriptions and send them to the FREEDOM Guarantee Fund. Our expenses are rising month by month, and the price of paper is increasing steadily, and with a rise in the postal charges probable in the near future, we can only continue publication with the assistance of our friends, who can help us and the Anarchist movement by increasing the sales of FREEDOM and the books and pamphlets advertised on the back page. The following sums have been received for the Pamphlet Fund since last month's issue:

Brought forward, £43 0s. 5d.; Shoes, 7s. 6d.; H. Friedman, 4s.; J. Friedman, 2s.; W. Smith, 7s. 6d.; E.M., 2s.; A. Organ, 2s.; S. Cooper, 4s.; H. Gallo, 4s.; S. Gallo, 1s. Total, 44 14s. 5d.

A WARRIOR'S COMPLAINT.

The *Daily Express* (Dublin) prints the following story from a newspaper of December, 1818:

It is said in an English paper that just before the breaking up of the British Headquarters at Cambray an Irish soldier, a private of the 43rd Regiment, was sentenced to death for shooting a French peasant and robbing him. When the man was on the scaffold he said in a loud voice "Bad luck to the Duke of Wellington, he is no Irishman's friend, any way. I have killed scores of Frenchmen by his orders, but when I kill one in my own act he has tucked me up for it."

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"ECONOMICS OF LIBERTY."

The price of this book is 3s.; not 2s. 3d. as stated in last month's FREEDOM. The error was due to not taking into account the fall in the exchange rates with U.S.A., which raises the English price of books nearly 50 per cent.

"GOD AND THE STATE."

We have received a few copies of the American edition of Bakunin's "God and the State," which we can supply at the following prices: Cloth, 4s.; paper, 2s. 6d.; postage 3d. extra on each copy. No discount can be allowed on these prices.

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