

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Industrial Collapse.

The sudden and enormous increase in the number of unemployed proves once again that there can be no security for the workers under the capitalist system. Our great cities now provide the weekly spectacle of thousands of able-bodied men and women standing in long queues outside the Labour Exchanges waiting for the paltry sum which the Government doles out to them to keep the wolf from the door. Many of them fought in the trenches, many more made the munitions and war material which helped the Allies to win the war, and incidentally enabled the British Empire to annex many hundreds of thousands of square miles of new territory. Yet to-day these men and women, members of this mighty and far-flung Empire, are in a worse plight than the natives of Central Africa. The most disheartening feature of this business is that very few of them realise the root cause of the present situation. Some of them say it is due to the state of the foreign exchanges, some say that it is due to over-production (!), and others put it down to the influx of goods produced abroad. Not one in a thousand of them traces it to the fact that their forefathers were driven off the land centuries ago, and that since then the workers have had to depend for their livelihood on the demands of foreign markets. If China or India ceases to buy cotton goods from us, Lancashire men and women are thrown on the streets to starve; if the United States builds its own ships workers on the Clyde are discharged; and the same thing happens in many other trades which rely on orders from foreign markets. And the only remedy is for the workers to get back from the landlords the land from which they have been driven, and which could provide food sufficient for all if properly cultivated. Let them no longer listen to the chatter of politicians but insist on free access to Mother Earth, the source of all wealth, and thereby become a race of really free men and women.

The White Guards in Ireland.

The "Black and Tans" now terrorising the Irish people are in one important respect similar to the White Guards which have been used to crush the Communist movement in Hungary and other countries in Europe—they are all ex-officers. No member of the rank and file of the Army can join this so-called Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary. It is purely a class weapon which, when it has served its purpose in Ireland, can be used against the workers here whenever they should try to throw off the rule of their exploiters. The pay of this force is high—21s. per day, with separation and lodging allowance if married, and one month's leave on full pay every twelve months. The methods used by this force are also similar to those of the White Guards in Europe. We read of their prisoners in Ireland being shot dead whilst "trying to escape." The same excuse was given for the shooting of Karl Liebknecht in Berlin, although in Hungary they never troubled about excuses, but simply took a man out of his house and shot him. It almost seems as though there is an understanding amongst the Governments to dispense with the ordinary procedure of farcical trials in dealing with their internal enemies, and to substitute the White Terror of assassination instead. The recruiting advertisements for the "Black and Tans" say that "the pay is high because of the qualifications." As the necessary qualifications for their work in Ireland are presumably only to be found in ex-officers, it is quite obvious to us that the force is to be used not only against the Sinn Fein movement but also against the Irish Labour movement. The Irish people will be gratified to know that the Labour Party here is launching a great campaign to protest against the present reign of "frightfulness" in Ireland. Lloyd George and Carson will worry!

Naval Armaments.

The discussion in the Press regarding the naval rivalry between Great Britain, the United States, and Japan is a caustic commentary on the talk about the war that was to end war. It is as certain as fate that unless British capitalists and American capitalists can find some basis of agreement as to their respective "spheres of influence"—or, rather, spheres of exploitation—nothing except a Social Revolution can prevent a war between the two countries. We are under no illusions about the matter. The League of Nations is simply a screen behind which the great capitalists and financiers are planning their schemes of world exploitation, British capitalists having the dominating voice. All these representatives of Big Business are supremely confident that they can rely on the workers to answer to the call again when they are wanted to protect their masters' interests, and they calmly sit down with maps in front of them and haggle about an oil well here or a gold mine there without troubling about the wishes of the inhabitants of the country. American capitalists until quite recently were concerned principally with the exploitation of their own country, but now they are beginning to look further afield and whisper amongst themselves that the time is coming when they will be able to challenge Great Britain's sea-mastery, and British capitalists will discuss amongst themselves whether it will be better to accept the challenge or to share the plunder. The workers on the "bread-line" in American cities or in the unemployed queues in the cities of Great Britain seem totally ignorant of the workings of these world-movements. They have confidence in their leaders, who are usually too much occupied with trade union affairs to find time for foreign affairs. But the alternative for all of us is plain—world-revolution or world-war. Which shall it be?

State Worship is Demon Worship.

Dean Inge—the "gloomy Dean"—recently delivered a lecture on "The Modern Apotheosis of State and Nation," in which he quoted approvingly Lord Acton's verdict that the theory of nationalism was absurd and criminal. But he was quite Anarchistic when referring to the State. "There was nothing particularly sacred about the State, which, so far as it was identified with the Government, might be the least respectable of all the social organisations to which we belonged. To worship the State was to worship a demon who had not even the redeeming quality of being intelligent." The reverend gentleman forgot to mention that the Church to which he belongs is one of the strongest pillars of the State, which in return supports the Church. Both of them rely on authority—blind and unreasoning. And it is the special task of Anarchism to destroy the superstition which looks to Church and State to deliver the world from evil. In reality this superstition is the main fount and origin of most of the evils from which the world is suffering to-day.

Japan Bans "Dangerous Thoughts."

After trials and appeals which have lasted over a year, says the Tokyo correspondent of the Central News, Professor Morite, of the Imperial University, has at last commenced his term of three months' imprisonment for disseminating "dangerous thoughts." The dangerous thoughts were contained in a magazine article which he wrote on "The Social Thought of Kropotkin." He was warmly supported by brother professors, who claimed that his article was only a scientific study of Kropotkin's ideas; but the Courts stated that such ideas could not be disseminated under the guise of scientific inquiry. The Japanese Government, by this trial, have given a big advertisement to Anarchism, which probably accounts for the constant orders for literature which we received last year from the land of the Rising Sun. "Dangerous thoughts" will creep in, in spite of prosecutions.

OBJECTIONS TO ANARCHISM.

By GEORGE BARRETT.

[The author of these articles, George Barrett, died in January, 1917, at the early age of 32. For some years he had been a strenuous propagandist in all parts of the country, never sparing himself if there was work to be done or meetings to be addressed. As editor of the *Anarchist* (Glasgow, May, 1912, to January, 1913) he proved himself as convincing a writer as he was a speaker. His two pamphlets, "The Last War" and "The Anarchist Revolution," are well known to all for their clearness of thought and simplicity of language. He was thus well qualified to deal with the objections usually raised to Anarchism; and these articles, written a few months before his death, are a worthy monument to a brilliant propagandist and a well-beloved comrade.]

INTRODUCTION.

A few years of rough and tumble of propaganda in the Anarchist movement leaves a strange impression of crowds on the speaker's mind. His answers to questions and opposition form much the most satisfactory part of his work after he has sufficient experience to be able to deal with them adequately, and it is just from them he gets to understand his crowd. One of the strangest things that experience at such work reveals is the similarity of the crowd's mind (if one may use such an expression) wherever it may be found.

Let the speaker choose his pitch in the middle of London, or let him go to the strange mining villages north of the Forth, and in both cases he will get the same questions in almost the same words. If he is able to understand his crowd, he will find it suffering from the same difficulties, and making the same weary and half-hearted struggle to break the bonds of the old superstitions that still bind it. It is passing strange that amid the theatres, the picture galleries, and museums of London—so suggestive of the fulness and richness of life; among the great engineering works and structures of Manchester and the Clyde, which speak so eloquently of the power man has of producing wealth; in the midst of the fruitful valleys of England, or among the vast Scotch mountains—it matters not where—there is the same lack of vision, the same sad, kind-hearted men willing to hear the new gospel, but alas! the same despair. This hopelessness on the faces of men who are all-powerful is the most exasperating and the most tragic thing in all human existence. "Your strength lies no nearer and no further off than your own limbs. The world grows rich by your strength, no more surely than you grow poor by the same power. It were easier for you to make yourselves great than to make others so while you bring misery on yourselves." Such is the message of the revolutionist, and the mute answer might be expressed in the tragic words of Goethe:—

"Hush! Leave us where we are, resigned,
Wake not ambitious longings in the mind,
Born of the night, akin with night alone,
Scarce to ourselves, and to none others known."

But I write so far of crowds, and crowds after all do not count. He who speaks merely to his crowd will become an orator, a success, and probably a Member of Parliament; but he who sees in each face confronting him a potential individual will have an experience as dear to him as it is painful. He will never grow to the size of an M.P. He will not set out to teach the ignorant people, for they will teach him. Above all, he will not sacrifice his pleasure for the movement, for in it he will find all the meaning of his life, and with the unshakeable confidence of the great Titan he will say: "I know but this, that it must come." But I fear I grow too sensible, and must apologise to my reader for thus wasting his time.

The questions which I have set myself to answer are not arranged to give an exhibition of skill in dealing with them. Everyone of them is an old friend. They have turned up persistently and cheerfully in all sorts of halls, and at any street corner. Be they crushed with the greatest severity, they, boldly and serenely, come tumbling up to the platform on the very next occasion, until one comes to know them, and to love them for their very stupidity—for there is no denying that some of them are stupid in the extreme.

It is strange indeed to wonder how some of these questions have been born; who originated them, and why they have become so widespread.

Thus, for example, No. 2 (which implies that the House of Commons can be used to obtain our ends because it has been successfully used by the capitalists to obtain theirs) is a

question as common as any, and is, as its nature implies, usually put by a Parliamentary Socialist. Now, is it not a strange problem whence this question can have come, and why it should be so persistent? It is surely certain that the man who originated it must have had intelligence enough to see that the thing is absurd on the face of it. I am perfectly sure that the men who generally ask it would be quite capable of thinking out the answer to it if they devoted two minutes to the attempt. Yet that question has been created by someone, and either re-created or repeated endlessly throughout the whole country. It forms a good example of the blindness with which people fight for their political party. This party blindness and deafness (a pity it were not dumbness also) is one of the greatest difficulties to be overcome. Against it our weapons are useless. Let our arguments be of the boldest or most subtle type, they can make no headway against him whose faith is in his party.

This is indeed a subject fit for the introduction to not merely a little pamphlet, but to the whole world's literature, for it is difficult to realise how many books are sealed, how many libraries are closed to that great crowd who remain loyal to their party, and consequently regardless of the truth. If it is necessary to take an example we may always find one near at hand. The Socialist politicians are as good as any. For years their energies have been expended in advocating State control and guardianship in all things. To-day we have Old-Age Pensions, Insurance Acts, and Mr. Lloyd George's plans for "Socialisation," as he terms it, *i.e.*, Government control of the munition works, and some prospect of compulsory military service; but though these things work towards the universal State, the average party Socialist quarrels with them all—and why?

They are not perfect from his point of view, it may be admitted; but who can deny that they are steps in the direction he has been advocating? Why then does he not hail them with delight? They have not been introduced by his party.

For such men the arguments in this little book are not written. They lie under a heavy curse, which no wit of mine can lessen. Their lives in their own small way are like that of Ibsen's Emperor Julian, and with him, on the eve of battle, they cry with their petty voices: "I must call upon something without and above me. . . . I will sacrifice to this god and to that. I will sacrifice to many. One or the other must surely hear me."

Our advanced men have ceased to pray and sacrifice to the gods in the hour of need, but still at every little difficulty they feel the necessity of some power outside themselves. Almost every objection given here is prompted by this modern form of superstition, and almost every answer may be put in the words of the philosopher Maximus, who tries in vain to stimulate self-reliance in his friend Julian: "To what gods, oh fool? Where are they . . . and what are they? . . . I believe in you."

No. 1.

What will you do with the man who will not work?

First of all, let us notice that this question belongs to a class to which many others belong. All social theories must obviously be based on the assumption that men are social: that is, that they will live and work together naturally, because by so doing they can individually better enjoy their lives. Therefore all such difficulties, which are really based on the supposition that men are not social, can be raised not against Anarchism alone, but against any system of society that one chooses to suggest.

Questions 11, 12, 13 and 15 belong to this class, which are merely based on supposition. My opponents will realise how futile they are if I use a similar kind of argument against their system of government. Suppose, I argue, that having sent your representatives into the House of Commons they will not sit down and legislate, but that they will just play the fool, or, perhaps, vote themselves comfortable incomes, instead of looking after your welfare. It will be answered to this that they are sent there to legislate, and that in all human probability they will do so. Quite so; but we may still say "Yes, but suppose they don't?" and whatever arguments are brought forward in favour of government they can always, by simply *supposing*, be rendered quite useless, since those who oppose us would never be able to actually guarantee that our governors would govern. Such an argument would be absurd,

it is quite true; for though it may happen that occasionally legislators will sit down and vote themselves incomes instead of attending to the affairs of the nation, yet we could not use this as a logical argument against the government system.

Similarly, when we are putting forward our ideas of free co-operation or Anarchism, it is not good enough to argue, "Yes, but suppose your co-operators will not co-operate?" for that is what questions of this class amount to.

It is because we claim to be able to show that it is wrong in principle that we, as Anarchists, are against government. In the same way, then, those who oppose Anarchism ought not to do so by simply supposing that a man will do this, or won't do that, but they ought to set themselves to show that Anarchism is in principle opposed to the welfare of mankind.

The second interesting point to notice about the question is that it is generally asked by a Socialist. Behind the question there is obviously the implication that he who asks it has in his mind some way of forcing men to work. Now the most obvious of all those who will not work is the man who is on strike, and if you have a method of dealing with the man who will not work it simply means that you are going to organise a system of society where the government will be so all-powerful that the rebel and the striker will be completely crushed out. You will have a government class dictating to a working class the conditions under which it must labour, which is exactly what both Anarchists and Socialists are supposed to be struggling against to-day.

In a free society the man who will not work, if he should exist at all, is at least brought on equal terms with the man who will. He is not placed in a position of privilege so that he need not work, but on the contrary that argument which is so often used against Anarchism comes very neatly into play here in its favour. It is often urged that it is necessary to organise in order to live. Quite so, and for this reason the struggle for life compels us to organise, and there is no need for any further compulsion on the part of the government. Since to organise in society is really to work in society, it is the law of life which constantly tends to make men work, whilst it is the artificial laws of privilege which put men in such a position that they need not work. Anarchism would do away with these artificial laws, and thus it is the only system which constantly tends to eliminate the man who will not work.

We might perhaps here quote John Stuart Mill's answer to this objection:—

"The objection ordinarily made to a system of community of property and equal distribution of produce—that each person would be incessantly occupied in evading his share of the work—is, I think, in general, considerably overstated. . . . Neither in a rude nor in a civilized society has the *supposed difficulty* been experienced. In no community has idleness ever been a cause of failure."

—J. S. Mill, "Political Economy," Vol. I., p. 251.

No. 2.

The House of Commons and the Law have been used by the present dominant class to gain their ends; why cannot they be used by us to gain ours?

This question is based upon an extraordinary misunderstanding. It seems to be taken for granted that Capitalism and the workers' movement both have the same end in view. If this were so, they might perhaps use the same means; but as the capitalist is out to perfect his system of exploitation and government, whilst the worker is out for emancipation and liberty, naturally the same means cannot be employed for both purposes. This surely answers the question sufficiently so far as it is a definite question. In so far, however, as it contains the vague suggestion that government is the agent of reform, progress, and revolution, it touches the very point upon which Anarchists differ from all political parties. It is worth while, then, to examine the suggestion a little more closely.

It is thought by the enthusiastic politicians that once they can capture government, then from their position of power they would be able very quickly to mould society into the desired shape. Pass ideal laws, they think, and the ideal society would be the result. How simple, is it not? We should thus get the Revolution on the terms promised us by the wonderful Blatchford—"without bloodshed, and without losing a day's work." But, alas! the short cut to the Golden Age is an illusion. In the first place, any form of society shaped by law is not ideal. In the second place, law cannot shape society; indeed, rather the reverse is true. It is this second point which is all-important. Those who understand the forces behind progress will see the law limping along in the rear, and never succeeding in keeping up with the progress made by the people; always, in fact, resisting any advance,

always trying to start reaction, but in the long run always having to give way and allow more and more liberty. Even the champions of government recognise this when they want to make a drastic change, and then they throw aside the pretence of the law and turn to revolutionary methods. The present ruling class, who are supposed to be a living proof that the Government can do anything, are in themselves quite candid in the admission that it can do very little. Whoever will study their rise to power will find that to get there they preach in theory, and establish in fact, the principle of resistance to the law. Indeed, curious as it may seem, it is a fact that immediately after the Revolution it was declared seditious to preach against resistance to law, just as to-day it is seditious to speak in favour of it.

To sum up, then, if there was any logic in the question, which there is not, we might restate it thus: "Since the present dominant class were unable to gain their ends by use of the House of Commons and the Law, why should we hope to gain ours by them?"

(To be continued next month.)

NEWS FROM SPAIN.

The Confederal Committee has issued an appeal which begins: "At this moment, brothers, we are suffering not a repression but a St. Bartholomew. Within two days, from November 30 to December 1, they have deported to Fernando Po 136 of our best comrades, just arrested. Furthermore, the police, in plain clothes, assassinate us in the streets, in the workshops, at the bars, wherever they find us. Militants dare not walk abroad, for they and the lawyers who defend them are assassinated." Details are given of the shooting of Francisco Layret, who acted for the defence in the prosecution of the National Confederation of Labour. *Espana Nueva* gives particulars of attacks conducted by the Catholic Syndicate, in which three were killed and others badly wounded. A general strike has been declared throughout Aragon, the demand being that the Syndicates be allowed to reopen and that comrades under arrest be set free. The Socialists are bitterly censured for their indifference to all this, and are reported as losing ground rapidly.

Paginas Libres gives the place of honour to an article on Communism by Malatesta, in which he maintains that Communism is an ideal capable of being realised under Anarchism only; that "without liberty, without Anarchy, Communism can be conceived of only as that of the Roman Catholic convent, the despotic and paternal rule of the Jesuits of Paraguay or some Asiatic tyranny, but not at all as that Communism of self-understanding and cultivated people." It must be based on free agreement. Malatesta reminds his readers that the formula of Communism—"To each according to his needs and from each according to his capacity"—presupposes two things, "abundance and love"; that forced labour is never productive, since it sets men against one another and creates a conflict of interests between workers and directors, while love does not come with laws or the intervention of the gendarme. If Communism is not to be a return to old-time slavery, it must arise spontaneously among groups drawn together by identity of interests. The lion in the path, which bars the way to this natural development, is Government.

Dr. Pedro Vallina, the editor of *Paginas Libres*, who is well known to London comrades, was arrested in Seville on December 4, whilst attending to patients in his surgery. On the 10th he was deported to an unknown destination. He is accused of instigating the general strike which was declared as a protest against the deportation of workers from Barcelona, but his real crime is that of editing *Paginas Libres*. The gang that shot Ferrer wish to stop freedom of thought and press in Spain at any cost.

WANTED—£100!

There has been a great falling off this month in the amount received. Undoubtedly the economic crisis, with the consequent unemployment, has much to do with it, several comrades having written to say that it is impossible to collect anything just now. However, it cannot be helped; but as we have incurred some heavy debts we hope our readers will do their utmost to help us to pay them. The following amounts have been received to January 8:—

Previously acknowledged: £29 5s. 9d. W. S. Van V. 6s., E. Wright 1s., Collected by R. Peddie 6s., Anon. 5s., J. S. 3s. 6d., E. R. 10s., T. S. 10s. 2d., Gateshead Sympathisers (per G. W. Tindale) £3 3s., A. Smith (Ayr) 2s. 6d., J. N. Norton 2s. 6d., J. S. R. (Bristol) 2s. 6d., A. Hazeland 10s., R. Moore 15s., P. E. Martin 1s., W. M. 6d., H. C. S. 6d., J. L. 1s., E. C. Round 1s. 6d., C. E. Miller 2s., H. Freedman 5s. 6d., J. Freedman 2s. 6d., Mrs. Ballard £1, D. M. Ballard 10s. Total £37 7s. 5d.

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The Wolf at the Door.

At last this country is beginning to feel the full effects of the war which, beginning in August, 1914, has continued to the present day. The stories of misery and starvation in Europe have been read by the people of this country in a detached manner, as though it was something which did not interest them. "Poor devils," they have said, "it's the law of war that those who are defeated must suffer. Thank goodness, we were victorious; we shall escape all that." People who spoke like that forgot that nations are interdependent, and that if your trade customers are suffering misery and starvation, the ill-effects are bound to be felt by yourselves at home. This lesson is now about to be driven home mercilessly to the workers of Great Britain. By various artificial measures the Government has staved off the evil day; but it can do so no longer, and this year will be the most disastrous that this country has seen since the reaction after the Napoleonic wars. One and a half million are now out of work, but this number will probably be doubled or trebled when the full force of the trade depression is felt.

Even now few seem to grasp the facts of the situation. For some generations this country has supported itself by supplying the markets of the world, and now the bottom has dropped out of those markets. Europe is bankrupt and unable to buy one-tenth of the goods she bought before the war, with the inevitable result that the workers here find themselves thrown on the streets with nothing but a paltry dole from the Government to keep them from starving. They will now find how useless are all their trade unions. When jobs are plentiful, they can bargain with the employers as to wages and hours of labour; but all their trade unions are absolutely unable to provide jobs for their members when there are no customers. Their masters own the land, the mills, the mines, the factories, and all the raw materials; and the workers also hand over to them the goods that they produce. They are given a portion in the shape of wages, and there the matter finishes.

Was there ever in the world's history a more helpless and dependent class than the wage-slaves of modern civilisation? Yet one marvels that men and women of such great capability in their crafts should be so witless as to allow the system to continue. Think of the monster ships they build, the engines they drive, the machines they shape, and the thousand and one masterpieces of brain and hand which they construct. Think of their work in mine, field, and factory; think of their skill in games and even in war. And then think with shame of these same men and women with so little wit that they cannot imagine, yet alone construct, a new system of society where all shall share equally in the work and equally in the wealth it produces. A society where it would be a thing undreamed of that one rich man should hoard the food and wealth produced by many, while the many should be lining the streets waiting for the dole which the rich man should hand them from the food and wealth they have produced. In "A Dream of John Ball" William Morris depicts John Ball's difficulty in understanding the tale of England under the capitalist system foretold by the minstrel. John Ball says:

"Yea surely, brother, if ever it cometh about that men shall be able to make things, and not men, work for their superfluities, and that the length of travel from one place to another be made of no account, and all the world be a market for all the world, then all shall live in health and wealth; and envy and grudging shall perish. For then shall we have conquered the earth, and it shall be enough." And the minstrel replies: "In those latter days a man who hath nought save

his own body (and such men shall be far the most of men) must needs pawn his labour for leave to labour. Can such a man be wealthy? Hast thou not called him a thrall?"

Well might Morris imagine the incredulity of a man of the Middle Ages, when all goods were made by hand, on being told that in the days when machinery produced a thousandfold, and science performed its miracles, men and women would starve to death, and able-bodied men rattle boxes at street-corners for coins to buy food. We ourselves find it almost incredible that millions of men and women will suffer the pangs of hunger whilst warehouses are stacked with food; or that they will subsist on the doles of the wealthy while the idle acres of England cry aloud for workers to till them and make them fruitful. Like John Ball we refuse to believe that these things can be. We have faith and hope that the men and women of England will no longer hear their children cry in vain for food in a land that can provide food, clothing, and shelter for all; that they will no longer feed the parasites and starve themselves; and that they will no longer listen to the glib-tongued leaders and politicians who tell them that these things have always been and must always be.

And we hope and believe that these men and women will decide that these things shall cease here and now, and that a new society shall arise which shall take as its motto: "No master, high or low."

BOLSHEVISM'S FAILURE.

In my opinion, the Bolsheviks are failing disastrously, as they were bound to fail. Their principles and tactics are, as Lenin himself confesses, those of the Jacobins, who sterilised the French Revolution and left, as their sole legacy, Napoleon, militarism and conscription. I am most anxious that the great Anarchist movement should not link itself to such failures, or follow such blind leaders of the blind into the ditch. As I see it, we should rise superior to the mere herding instinct, and should understand that to abandon principles for the sake of gaining, as we suppose, a temporary advantage is despicable.

Anarchism is intrinsically great; not by reason of the personal qualities of its adherents, but because its basic principle, individual liberty, is true to life, essential to all development and vital to the well-being of our race. Its condemnation of the State, as the negation of individual liberty, is a correct and righteous condemnation; and if Anarchism confined itself merely to the exposure of that cold-blooded monster, its service would be beyond all price. But Anarchism goes much farther. It shows that Man has reached the point at which he may, if he chooses, be master of his environment; and, teaching the necessity of equal opportunity, it spreads before the world a political economy which is at once all-inclusive and so simple that a child can understand it. "Get the riders off your backs! Free your hands from the shackles of dependence on masters, that you may co-operate for the satisfaction of your own wants!" That is its message: a very simple one. The really great is always simple.

In all good faith, and like any honest enquirer, I apply these tests to the Bolshevik movement. I ask myself if it is helping that poor beast of burden, the Russian worker, to unhorse his rider. I find that, on the contrary, this dictatorship has itself climbed on his back, and is riding him most cruelly. I ask myself if it has helped to feed him, and I find that, quite needlessly as I believe, it is reducing him to starvation. I know that this is naturally a most gentle beast, and I ask myself if the dictatorship is bringing him that peace for which he so hungered that he turned his back on the accursed war and hurried to his proper habitat, his peasant farm. I find that he is being conscripted as remorselessly as ever; and I believe that there is now opening up before him an endless vista of military adventures in which once again, and perhaps more recklessly than ever, he will be used as food for powder.

Lenin sits in the Kremlin, a demi-god, worshipped from afar by millions, of all nationalities, who dream that in him they have found, at last, their Saviour. This is quite natural, for the masses in every country are suffering horribly from the dying convulsions of a system which has had its day. Naturally, in their profound ignorance of realities, they turn to him who boldly announces he will slay the dragon. Naturally, in their long-inherited and priest-cultivated credulity, they dream of a Redeemer. But also quite naturally—for Lenin is a Robespierre and those who have suffered at his hands are many—he sits in the Kremlin, guarded by soldiers and inaccessible. That is the testimony of H. G. Wells, and Wells is essentially an apologist for Lenin.

Trotsky is also a great figure. In last month's **FREEDOM** I quoted Bertrand Russell's pen-picture of Trotsky at the Opera House—the picture of the Man on Horseback, posing as Napoleon would have posed. Here again it is to be remembered that Russell, a Communist, is also an apologist. Both he and Wells have to admit a long succession of most damning facts; but both alike, supremely unconscious of

the Anarchist doctrine that "Liberty is not the Daughter but the Mother of Order," profess to believe that the Dictatorship, bad as it may be, is the best Government the country can have, and is alone saving it from chaos. To that I, as an Anarchist, cannot subscribe and I consider that the facts are all against this theory.

It is true that the Allies, following a policy that has seemed to me inexpressibly cruel, blockaded Russia and lent material assistance to the various military adventurers who attempted to drive the Bolshevik Government from power. Thereby they forced the Bolsheviks themselves to take up the sword, and, with almost incredible stupidity, enabled them to stand forth as defenders of the International Revolution. But that is only one part of the truth. The other part is that the first Revolution, that of March, 1917, though it dethroned the Czar, established freedom of speech and assembly, did away with the police and spy system, swept the old officialdom aside, gave many of the peasants immediate access to the land, and wrought other desirable and extraordinary changes within a few short months—was almost bloodless. The other part of the truth is that the Allies, fully occupied with the Great War, showed little or no inclination to interfere, and did so only after Lenin and his followers had proclaimed a holy crusade, to be waged with fire and sword against capitalism in general and the capitalist countries of all the world.

Undoubtedly they thought the times were ripe. Undoubtedly they thought that the proletariat everywhere would rally to their standard, and that by forming a strong centralised Government, of the Marxian pattern, they would be able to put the thing through. Undoubtedly they regarded the end as justifying the formation of another autocracy, a new dictatorship which should imprison or execute, as traitors to the People's Cause, all who ventured to differ from them. I do not question their sincerity. On the contrary, I look on them as fanatics and pedants.

Unfortunately fanatics and pedants have been, from all time, the greatest blunderers on record. To them, with their everlasting worship of emotion and disdain of facts and logic, we owe those militant religions which, from century to century, have drowned the world in blood. And between Torquemada, imposing Christianity with the stake, the thumbscrew, or the rack, and those who would impose their religion, Communism, by means of Lenin's gaols and Trotsky's armies, I myself cannot distinguish. I feel sure that in this age it cannot be done that way. I consider the remedy worse than the disease; and, abhorring Imperialism, Militarism and Monopoly, and all the slave-engendering compulsions of our capitalistic system, I personally have made up my mind that mankind cannot be emancipated by copying those compulsions.

Russia is starving. In the past, by squeezing the peasants, she was able to export annually one-fifth of the grain she raised. In 1919, when the harvest was a good one, her agricultural production is estimated by Michael Farbman as 45 per cent. less than it was in pre-war days; 33 per cent. of the land under cultivation when the war broke out is now lying idle. It is customary to blame the blockade, the slaughter of the workers, the numbers of horses requisitioned for military purposes, and so forth. In all that there is much truth, but not the whole truth. There is omitted the great fact that under the conscription of labour the city workmen are producing little that the peasant can use; that the peasant naturally will not give away his crops; that he is being levied on for supplies by the armed forces of the dictatorship, and that he is now cultivating only so much land as satisfies his own immediate wants.

In reality, as regards the all-important land question, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat has produced just two results. The first is this: It has given an enormous impetus to peasant proprietorship. That was the policy of Stolypin, a noted reactionary, who worked so hard to fortify the Czar's regime that the revolutionists thought it necessary to kill him. The second is that it is now beginning to give away to foreign capitalists huge slices of Russian territory which, according to Anarchist ideas, should be at the free disposition of those workers who develop them, and certainly are not the property of the Dictators. One such grant it has made already to a handful of United States capitalists. The grant in question exceeds in area the two huge States of California and Texas; and this enormous territory, teeming with wealth untellable, falls into the hands of as greedy a gang of money-makers as even America can show.

This article is already far too long, but it is impossible to cover so huge a subject exhaustively and briefly. What I say, in conclusion, is that the disinherited in this or any other country will not help to win their freedom by growing hysterical over the Third International, or by sending delegations to Moscow for the Government to entertain at the expense of its own starving proletariat. Let the Russian worker fight his own battle, on the spot; and let us fight ours wherever we may be, facing the foe at our own door, and not wasting our strength in the cheering on of armies battling thousands of miles away, in places we never heard of and for ends we do not comprehend. What I think and fear is that the Dictatorship in Russia will be able to maintain itself only by plunging into new wars; and in this, as I believe, it will be playing directly into the hands of the common enemy and strengthening those military Governments which to-day hold all mankind in bondage.

W. C. O.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

The Anarchist Congress has issued a manifesto which, after a forcible summary of the evil heritage left us by the War, declares itself the enemy of all authority, of the possession by the few of all wealth and the means of creating wealth, and of the State and all its institutions. It views with indignation the attacks made on Russia by the bourgeoisie, under the influence of fear of the Revolution and greed for Russia's rich resources; but simultaneously it declares that, as the consequence of its anti-authoritarian, anti-State and federalist convictions, it is "against all Dictatorship, from whatever quarter it may emanate, and even if it calls itself the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The Anarchists stand for a truly autonomous workers' movement, having its development on the economic plane, and looking to the suppression of man's exploitation by man." In the matter of the attitude of Anarchists toward Syndicalist organisations, the manifesto recognises the possibility of their accomplishing a great work for the emancipation of the proletariat, "provided it is inspired by an ideal of social transformation diametrically opposed to authoritarian and centralist systems." In the Syndicates the Anarchists will occupy themselves solely with the endeavour to make the federalist idea prevail and arouse the spirit of revolt. Having learned by experience the dangers to which workingman officialdom gives rise, they pledge themselves to remain in the ranks, among the workers.

Le Libertaire, enlarged to four pages, announces that henceforth it will devote much space to the International Anarchist movement, and invites comrades of all nationalities to send communications to Obrado, care of *Le Libertaire*, 69 Boulevard de Belleville, Paris. We call attention below to a similar work initiated by *Un*, to which *L'Ordre Naturel* is also now devoting itself. As it seems to us, this marks a development which should be full of promise. Anarchists are essentially international, and welcome comrades of every creed and race. Hitherto, however, there has been little systematic effort to establish that closely knit solidarity for which the times evidently call.

Sebastian Faure is showing great activity both with the pen and in the holding of conferences—a most effective method of propaganda which we in England should pursue more vigorously. Our latest number of *Le Libertaire* gives prominence to a long article by Faure which is headed "Action; again Action; always Action." It begins: "Dead calm. Yet the situation is grave, so grave that it is difficult to imagine one more so." The first two words seem to express adequately the situation in France as it stands at the moment. After a brief spell of feverish activity along the line of strikes, which collapsed pitifully, there has come a period of depressed stagnation, broken only by the energy to which the Anarchists evidently have roused themselves.

In *Germinal*, as elsewhere, one reads terrifying accounts of the general stoppage of work and bitter editorials on the wrecking tactics of speculators, among whom the peasantry now must be included.

In our October number we called attention to the effort *Un*, of Paris, was making to bring into direct communication with one another those who hold Individualist opinions and favour free, as opposed to authoritarian, co-operation. We have now received the first number of *L'Ordre Naturel* (Natural Order), a fortnightly devoted to this subject under the direction of Marcel Sauvage (69 Faubourg St-Martin, Paris; 25c. per copy). The salutatory article is excellent and declares itself irreconcilably hostile to the centralised, coercive State which makes itself master of our property, our persons, and our consciences; which is the upholder of all special privileges, and by its constant and incoherent meddling makes living dear, sterilises production, and paralyses distribution. The article points out that the man of to-day seems to regard himself only as a producer, and in that character sees himself in conflict with all the world, which he accuses of under-estimating the value of his work. Let him reflect that he is also a consumer, and that this rôle establishes a true community of interest between himself and his fellow-consumers throughout the world. M. Sauvage writes powerfully under the ironical title: "Be my brother or I kill you!" Himself one of the earliest champions of the Russian Revolution, he will make no truce with dictatorships, "of the proletariat" or otherwise. From the foreign correspondence quoted we gather that the effort to establish communication is already bearing fruit.

Switzerland.

The hotel industry, which contributes so largely to this country's revenues, suffered most severely by the war, and loud was the outcry that Switzerland then raised. To-day all that is changed, and Swiss traders must be doing well. But the workers are not doing well. During the war, when labour was scarce, the workers' Syndicates were able to wrench various concessions from the employing class, among which was an agreement, to hold good till the end of this year, that watchmakers should work 48 hours a

week. To-day, according to Swiss papers, many watchmakers are unemployed, and most of them are glad to get work on almost any terms. *La Revue Syndicale* pours out laments on the indifference displayed by the workers and the loss of the spirit that burned so fiercely in bygone days, when to be a Syndicalist was full of danger. Anarchist papers retort grimly that there is nothing astonishing in this, for in the old days Syndicalism represented an ideal, whereas for years past it has been compromising and accommodating itself, thanks to the leaders in whose hands it concentrated power. To-day the employers are not at all frightened by the Syndicates, and the workers no longer believe in their ability to bring the masters to terms.

Here, as in France, we note repeated Anarchist conferences. With us these most necessary, because educating, reunions have almost ceased to exist. The Third International is evidently a great bone of contention, and *Le Reveil* leaves none of its readers in doubt as to the attitude we, in its opinion, should adopt. In a concise but comprehensive article Bertoni points out the folly of those who argue that because the bourgeois press attacks Bolshevism we should rally to its defence. He remarks that Bolshevik literature is devoting itself specially to exposing the alleged errors of Anarchism and demonstrating the necessity of, as he puts it, "a providential Authority, baptised, in defiance of all common sense, the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat.'" Up to the present, he says, we have seen in Russia only Capitalism taken over by the State, and, side by side with this, an actual extension of private property, as represented by the peasants. It is not, in his judgment, the war or the blockade that is responsible for the latter, but the fact that the peasants themselves are opposed to Communism; "probably because the only Communism permitted is State Communism." If all attacks on Russia and all her internal troubles were to cease to-morrow, we should find the State monopolising industry, commerce, and banking, and a new and most numerous bourgeoisie seated firmly in the saddle. As Kropotkin and Bakunin pointed out repeatedly, a Dictatorship may be fully adequate to the negative task of maintaining itself in power and utterly impotent for the positive task of creating a new economy.

Italy.

For three months past the reaction has been in full swing. Finding that the Socialists remained inactive after the raids on *Umanità Nova* and the arrest of its editors, the Government threw into prison the directors of the Italian Syndicalist Union. There followed the burning of the offices of *Il Lavoratore* and of the Labour Exchange, at Trieste, in which some of its defenders were killed. In Rome the offices of *Avanti* were sacked and burned. Wholesale arrests and shootings have been the order of the day. The officials of the Socialist Party, the General Confederation of Labour, the 156 leaders who boasted of their adherence to the Third International, have done nothing. *Avanti* itself, the official organ of the Italian Socialist Party, made no protest against the imprisonment of Malatesta.

ROBERT MINOR CHANGES HIS MIND.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE—You have called my attention to a seven-page article, by Robert Minor, which appeared in the *Liberator* of October last, and several American correspondents have written me about it. The article in question is headed modestly, "I Change my Mind a Little." The little change is from alleged Anarchism to State Socialism of the extremest type.

Having visited Russia, Mr. Minor, as is now the fashion, proceeded to write voluminously about it and went out on a lecture tour. He indicted Bolshevism most harshly, and in six paragraphs, far too long for reproduction here, he states the pith of his indictment. Now he recants. Why? Because, if you please, he has been reading Engels's "Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State," and Lenin's "The State and Revolution"! May I suggest that he should have read those books before he wrote and talked so much; and may I also suggest that the Russian lessons, now forgotten so easily, cannot have been well digested? Perhaps, however, I am prejudiced. For some years I was kept busy countering the narratives of enterprising reporters who dashed into Mexico, asked their interpreters to explain the Revolution, and dashed back again to tell the American people all about it.

Although I cannot reproduce in its entirety Mr. Minor's former indictment, I beg space for Section 4, which runs as follows:—

"That a course of compromise, which began as early as the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, had led inevitably to the eradication of the original form of locally or industrially autonomous Soviets, and to the crystallising of a police bureaucracy, to military conscription, to the extinction of press freedom, to the repression of parties more revolutionary than the Bolsheviks, and into alliances with the bourgeoisie of their own country and foreign countries."

But, I ask myself in bewilderment: Is not that exactly what has

taken place, and is still taking place to-day? Who now dares deny that the Soviets—the workers working for themselves—have been suppressed? Who dare deny that there is now in Russia an enormous and most tyrannical police bureaucracy; that there is military, and also industrial, conscription on the most extensive scale; that only Bolshevik papers may be published and Bolshevik propaganda made; that revolutionists who do not agree with Lenin have been imprisoned and executed by hundreds, and probably by thousands; that at this moment the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is seeking greedily an economic alliance with Great Britain, which it has hitherto denounced as the corner-stone of Capitalism? And Mr. Minor to-day approves of this! Why? Because, according to his own assertion, he has read two very ordinary books.

It is true—Friedrich Engels, a rich manufacturer, with sociological tastes or ambitions, invented a new theory of the State. He said it arose from the necessity of keeping class struggles in check, and I suggest that he was led to this brilliant invention by his desire to bolster up his class-struggle interpretation of history. All other writers—and they have been both numerous and learned—have agreed that the State had its origin in invasion of the weak by the strong, which is a far simpler and, to me, more satisfying reason for the beast's existence. I notice, for example, that when William the Conqueror invaded England he imposed on its unfortunate inhabitants the Norman laws, taken direct from the codes of Imperial Rome, under which I myself unfortunately still have to live. I notice that England conquered India, and, to Mr. Minor's great indignation, imposed her laws. I notice that the Germans acted in the same way to the people of Alsace-Lorraine when they took that territory from the French, and that the French are acting similarly toward the Germans now that they have got it back again. Personally also I have no desire to go to Russia just at present, for I am certain that Lenin would impose his law on me, with consequences most disagreeable to myself.

Yet, on this fragile basis Mr. Minor bases his worship of Lenin and recants his former withering anathemas. Nay, more; he would have us believe that Lenin is at heart an Anarchist, driven to dictatorship by grim necessity. Fudge! Lenin is, and always has been, a State Socialist of the hardest type. As such he believes in centralised government, and as such, quite logically, he climbed to the dictatorship sword in hand, and imposed his own government by a *coup d'état*. He started as a military dictator; and, having once set foot upon that fatal path, he has been forced to follow it. But now he recoils before the abysses coming painfully to view, and seeks alliances with the very Powers he still finds it politic to curse. Having declared all Russia the property of his own Government, he is now granting concessions right and left, precisely as did Porfirio Diaz in Mexico. For example, Harry Chandler, son-in-law of the late Harrison Grey Ois, and a handful of Los Angeles millionaires, some of whom I know personally, have now been presented with a territory far larger than the two huge States of California and Texas, and thought to be far richer.

Enough. But still I cannot help wondering why Mr. Robert Minor made that "little change." I can only presume it was because he does not understand Lenin, does not understand that State Socialism leads inevitably to military dictatorship, and does not understand that Anarchism, which works for equal opportunities for all and the conduct of life's affairs by mutual consent, is of necessity State Socialism's undying foe. Therein Lenin is the clearer-sighted man, as Robespierre was.—Fraternally, WM. C. OWEN.

"Umanità Nova" and "Manchester Guardian."

On November 1 last the *Manchester Guardian* published a report of an interview which their Rome correspondent had with Giolitti, the Italian Prime Minister. After discussing the general situation in Italy, the interviewer said: "And what of the arrest of Malatesta?" To which Giolitti replied: "Malatesta has been seized by legal authority under ordinary law. So little are the working classes affected by his arrest that no protest has been made. Our Socialists know too well that Anarchism is the worst enemy of labour organisation."

As soon as this statement came to their notice the editors of *Umanità Nova* (the Italian Anarchist daily) sent a letter to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, in which they referred to Giolitti's remark as an "impudent affirmation," and said:—"We hasten to send to you several issues of our paper containing lists of the political and economic organisations of Italy which expressed their fierce protest against the arbitrary arrest of our chief editor and of other representatives of the revolutionary movement, and their decided determination to raise an energetic agitation for the release of all political prisoners."

In reply, the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote: "We are extremely obliged for your courteous letter of December 4, but we are sorry to be unable to publish it." So the readers of that paper are still of the opinion that Malatesta has no friends in Italy, and the editors of *Umanità Nova* have received a shock to their faith in the fairness of editors of English Liberal papers. But we know that this misplaced trust in English "fair play" which exists abroad will still continue. It has withstood far harder blows than this incident.

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