

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Irish Peace Treaty.

After 121 years of ceaseless struggle since the Act of Union, the Irish people have again forced their English rulers to allow them to form a Government of their own. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission," says the English Church service, and the Irish have good cause to remember it. The flood of praise showered on Lloyd George as the peacemaker cannot hide the fact that, as Prime Minister, he was directly responsible for the atrocities committed by the notorious "Black and Tans." A few months ago he was boasting that the English forces in Ireland had got "murder by the throat." To-day he shakes hands with the "murderers." The Treaty is not a free and voluntary settlement on the part of the English Government, but has been forced on them by the Irish Republican Army and the necessity of more friendly relations with the United States. Its permanence will be tested when trade agreements are discussed. English trade jealousy ruined many Irish industries in the past, and it will try hard to raise barriers against Irish competition in the future. In spite of this Treaty, it will be many a long day before Irishmen will feel any confidence in English Governments. They know too well the history of their own country. In 1783, "to set aside all doubts," an Act of Parliament declared that the right of Ireland to be governed solely by the King and the Parliament of Ireland was now established and should never again be questioned. Seventeen years later the Act of Union swept away the Irish Parliament and once again fastened chains on the Irish people. Now that the age-long question of Home Rule has been settled, we hope Irish workers will devote more attention to economic questions. The changing of the flag on Dublin Castle will not change the relationship between Irish employers and their employees, nor add a rod of land to a peasant's meagre holding. The Treaty is a victory for revolutionary action as opposed to constitutional action, and its lesson will not be lost on other oppressed nationalities in this far-flung Empire.

Thomas v. the "Communist."

The libel action which J. H. Thomas, the railway men's official, brought against the *Communist*, for charging him with treachery during the miner's strike, should certainly open the eyes of the railway men. This man is paid £1,000 a year to render faithful service to his members, whose interests are the interests of the workers everywhere—to fight their exploiters and to abolish wage-slavery. Yet we find that Thomas is a member of the Privy Council, the inner ring of the ruling and exploiting class of this country; and on his own admission he had "discussed with his Majesty industrial matters on many occasions." The old book says "No man can serve two masters," and in the case of a strike it is impossible for Thomas to serve the men faithfully without hurting his friends on the Privy Council. He said that if Labour agitation became revolutionary and subversive to the Constitution, he would take steps to defeat it. In plain language, if the railway men and other workers combined to get rid of wage-slavery and monopoly, on which the Constitution is based, he would stand by the Constitution and help to defeat the workers. His attitude to the men who pay him may be summed up in a sentence: "I will try to induce your masters to lighten your chains, but will never help you to break them." That is the attitude of all Labour leaders who become Privy Councillors—perhaps it is the reason why they are put on the Council. The workers will always be defeated whilst they depend for guidance on such men, whose hearts are with the enemy. The jury awarded Mr. Thomas £2,000 damages for his services in defence of the Constitution and wage-slavery. We are certain he earned them.

The Washington Conference.

The so-called "Disarmament" Conference is still sitting—behind closed doors. One day a statement is issued to the effect that Japan has agreed to a 5—5—3 naval ratio, and the next day we are told that Japan insists on a 10—10—7 ratio. What these figures mean no one really seems to know, but some people are getting awfully excited about them. Then Briand appears on the scene with his German bogey, and says he agrees to naval disarmament in principle—they all agree on principle—but if Britain wants battleships to catch shrimps, France must have submarines to study deep-sea flora. Then China takes the floor. She complains that during the war Japan took advantage of her weakness and grabbed some of her territory, and now she wants the other Powers to make Japan disgorge. The Powers then retire to discuss the matter privately with Japan, and after a short interval they return and tell China that it was very rude of Japan to steal her territory, that Japan agrees—in principle—to return the stolen portions, but that as China is still weak and needing protection the four great Powers—America, Japan, Great Britain, and France—have decided to form a "consortium" under which China will keep her territory—in principle—but the Powers will take her raw material and run her railways and banks. As soon as she is convalescent she will be allowed to manage her own post offices. Then an official statement is issued to the Press saying that, although half the Chinese Delegation has resigned, the negotiations with China "are proceeding satisfactorily," but it does not say to whom they are satisfactory. It is reported that a Chinese delegate has since stuck a notice (in Chinese) on the wall of the Conference room: "Beware of Pickpockets!"

Defending the Almighty.

On December 9, at the Central Criminal Court, J. W. Gott was sentenced to nine months' hard labour for blasphemy. He was tried earlier in the week, but the jury disagreed, and a new trial was ordered, with the above result. To us these blasphemy trials seem supremely ridiculous. The one under notice, reduced to simple language, was an effort on behalf of the law to protect the Almighty from the attacks of Mr. Gott. To the latter, of course, the Almighty is only an imaginary character, but to the Christians he is very real. As to them he is an all-wise and all-powerful being, and yet has not sent any lightning or fire or brimstone to Mr. Gott, it is evident that he has decided to let him alone, an example the Christians should follow—unless they consider themselves wiser than the All-wise. Looking at it from the Christian point of view, we would say that atheists are one of the minor worries of life inflicted by the Almighty on sinners during their journey through this vale of tears to that happy place where the Gotts cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Why not try to convert Gott? Get the prison chaplain to work overtime on him during his nine months' detention. What a glorious victory it would be if he saw the error of his ways and became a Christian. Then there would be a monster gathering at the Albert Hall to welcome him from prison, and when, robed in sackcloth and ashes, he solemnly burnt one of his vile "Rib Ticklers," the assembled Christians would shake the roof with their joyous shouts of "*Gott mit uns!*"

"We've been Ploughing."

"I am, indeed, happy in some way to have contributed by my speech in Belfast to this great achievement."—*King George, on the Irish Peace Treaty.*

A FABLE.—A Fly sitting on the back of an Ox which had been working in the fields was met, as they entered the farmyard, by another Fly, who said: "Hullo, what have you been doing all day?" "Oh," said the Fly on the Ox, "we've been ploughing."

ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM.

By WM. C. OWEN.

(Continued from last month.)

All intelligent and courageous action along one line of the great struggle for human rights helps thought and action along other lines, and the contest that is certain to come over the land question cannot but clear the field in other directions. It will be seen, for example, that freedom of production will not suffice without freedom of distribution—which is only the final process of production—and the road will be made plain for a consideration of the money and other monopolies that reign supreme in that great department of human activity, thanks to the special privileges that Government confers upon them.

It will be seen also that it is ridiculous for us to talk about free and equal citizens when one child is permitted to be born into the world heir to millions and entitled by law to levy tribute for the rest of his life on thousands who will never have a chance. It is inevitable, therefore, that the unnatural law of inheritance—whereby the dead bind the living—must wither before the light of criticism, and this even the late President Roosevelt understood and urged repeatedly.

With the increasing appreciation of the value of the individual life will come an increasingly drastic criticism of all those schools of thought that bid the oppressed be contented with their lot, and find it in their hearts to visit the workers of the slums, or the prisoners in the modern hells we call “penitentiaries,” and exhort them to thank God for his mercies. The religion of submission will receive its death-blow. It is a craven, skulking thing, utterly incompatible with the dignity of man or with the energy and courage which Nature demands of those who desire to rise.

There will come also a drastic criticism of that vast army of lawyers and chronic office-holders who, by their unfortunate training and the necessities of their profession, can see only what the legal code demands, and are insuperably blind to the higher code of life.

What, then, is our actual position? We stand for the realities of life, as opposed to the fine phrases on which the people starve; for the omnipotent laws of life, as opposed to the views we have inherited from a barbaric past, dominated by the fantastic theories of priests and kings, under which the few have reigned supreme and the masses have been mud, trampled remorselessly under foot. From those dark ages we are only just beginning to emerge—but we are emerging.

The task is gigantic, but it is inevitable. If mankind is ever to be master of itself, scientific thought—which deals with realities and bases its conclusions on ascertained facts—must take the place of guess and superstition. To bring the conduct of human life into accord with the ascertained facts of life is, at bottom, the great struggle that is going on in society, and in this great struggle we Anarchists—we say it confidently—stand in the very front rank.

We are not engaged in any such petty business as that of building up a political party, which would have its little hour of popularity and power, and then stand, a stumbling block, needing removal. Our work is to drive home to the intellects and consciences of the people at large, regardless of classes, the conception of a nobler, richer, and infinitely happier life, possible under conditions of freedom, economic and political, and possible under them alone. What we are doing is to point out the gateway through which the people must pass *first*, before they can hope to establish that free co-operation in which each stands on his own feet, the equal partner of all with whom he desires to unite his life and efforts.

Since the first publication of this pamphlet Civilisation has made a violent effort to shed the antiquated skin that fitted well enough perhaps its earlier and smaller growth. The dam that held for centuries has given way, and we have had The War—probably the greatest social dislocation yet recorded and the herald of profoundly revolutionary readjustments yet to come. For the moment it has thrown us back into barbarism. For the moment it has afflicted us with Militarism and scourged us with all the tyrannies that military philosophy and tactics approve of and enforce. Necessarily Militarism believes in itself and in that physical violence which is its speciality. Necessarily it sympathises with all those barbarisms of which it is the still-surviving representative, and distrusts those larger views that come with riper growth. How could it be otherwise? By the essence of its being Militarism does not argue; it commands. Its business is not to yield but to conquer, and to keep, at any cost, its conquests. Always, by the fundamental tenets of its creed, it will invade; drive the weaker to the wall; enforce submission. He who talks to it of human

rights, on the full recognition of which social peace depends, speaks a language it does not and cannot understand. To Militarism he is a dreamer; and, in the words of the great German soldier, Von Moltke, it does not even regard his dream as beautiful.

At present we are being swept by a very tidal-wave of War. Every Government is a vast military machine, armed with all the resources of modern science. Every Government is invading ruthlessly the liberties of its own “subjects” and stripping them of elemental rights. Resolved on keeping, at any cost, its existing conquests, every Government treats as an outcast and criminal him who questions its autocracy. Obsessed perpetually by fear, which is the real root of military philosophy, every Government is guarding itself against popular attack; and with Governments, as with all living creatures, there is nothing so unscrupulous as fear. When Government punishes the man who dares to express honestly his honest thought, does it pause to consider that it is killing that spirit of enquiry which is the life of progress, and crushing out of existence the courageous few who are the backbone of the nation? Not at all. Like an arrant coward, it thinks only of its own safety. When, by an elaborate system of registration, passports, inspection of private correspondence, and incessant police espionage, it checks all the comings and goings of individual life, does it give a thought to personal liberty or suffer a single pang at the reflection that it is sinking its country to the level of France under Louis XIV. or Russia under the Romanoffs—with consequences historically notorious? Not a bit of it. The machine thinks only of itself; of how it may increase and fortify its power.

Just as the Court sets the fashions that rule “Society,” so the influence of the governmental machine permeates all our economic life. The political helplessness of the individual citizen finds its exact counterpart in the economic helplessness of the masses, reduced to helplessness by the privileges Government confers upon the ruling class, and exploited by that ruling class in exact proportion to their helplessness. Throughout the economic domain “Woe to the Conquered” is the order of the day; and to this barbaric military maxim, which poisons our entire industrial system and brutalises our whole philosophy of life, we owe it that Plutocracy is gathering into its clutches all the resources of this planet and imposing on the workers everywhere what I myself believe to be the heaviest yoke they have, as yet, been forced to bear. It is many years since De Tocqueville, in his great work “Democracy,” described the then budding plutocracy as “the worst rulers this world has ever had,” to which he added, “but their reign will be short.” Probably no truer words were ever written.

Anarchists believe all this is doomed; but they believe also that its dying struggles, even now visible, will be very hard. They regard Militarism as a straitjacket in which modern Industrialism, now struggling violently for expansion, cannot fetch its breath. And everything that smacks of Governmentalism smacks also of Militarism, they being Siamese twins, vultures out of the same egg. The type now advancing to the centre of the stage, and destined to occupy it exclusively, is, as they see it, the industrial type; a type that will give all men equal opportunities, as of human right, and not tolerate the invasion of that right; a type, therefore, that will enable men to regulate their own affairs by mutual agreement and free them from their present slavery to the militant employing class; a type that will release incalculably enormous reservoirs of energy now lying stagnant and, by eliminating as painlessly as possible the drones, secure the honey to the working bees. That such is the natural trend of the evolution now in process they do not doubt; but its pace will be determined by the vigour with which we shake off the servile spirit now paralysing us, and by the intelligence with which we get down to the facts that really count. At bottom it is a question of freedom or slavery; of self-mastery or being mastered.

Science, as we see it, is revolutionising our industrial system and will not rest until she has made it the obedient servant of the human race. As part of that great task she has now taken Militarism in hand, and there, within a few short years, her work already nears completion. Already the death-knell of the standing army and the battle fleet is ringing, for War can no longer be regarded as the toy of monarchs but as the national and racial suicide it has become. We are very confident that the race will not submit to this, and we understand that in ridding the world of this barbarous anachronism Science is clearing the road for a co-operation that, purged of

the militaristic poison of compulsion, will be nobly free. Our faith is in Science, in knowledge, in the infinite possibilities of the human brain, in that indomitable vital force we have hitherto abused so greatly because only now are we beginning to glimpse the splendour of the uses to which it may be brought.

How, then, could we, seeing this so clearly, falter in our allegiance to Freedom, or fail to understand that, this once conquered, all other things will come? For, how can Science discover except through free experiment? How can the mind of Man expand when it is laced in the straitjacket of authority and is forbidden independence? This question answers itself, and the verdict passed by history leaves no room for doubt. Only with the winning from Militarism and Ecclesiasticism of some measure of freedom did Science come to life; and if the world were to pass again into a similar thralldom, that life would fall once more into a stupor from which it could be shaken only by some social upheaval far greater and more bloody than the French Revolution ever began to be. It is not the champions of Freedom who are responsible for violent Revolutions, but those who, in their ignorant insanity, believe they can serve Humanity by putting it in irons and further happiness by fettering Mankind. We may be passing even now into such a thralldom, for Democracy, trained from time immemorial to servility, has not yet learned the worth of Freedom, and Plutocracy would only too gladly render all thought and knowledge subservient to its own profit-making schemes.

In these pages I have not tried to express my own opinions but to record what I have learned from a long study of a literature that, in quantity, is not inconsiderable, and, in quality, is of the highest rank. I have endeavoured to show how simple are the economics of Anarchism, which demand equality of opportunity for all; and I remind the reader that simplicity is always the mark of strength. I have sought to convey something, at least, of the spirit of Anarchism, which, keenly alive to the native worth and dignity of Man, abhors slavery in all its forms and regards the welfare of the Individual—physical, mental, and spiritual—as above all price. Eltzbacher, in his noted study of the seven great Anarchist writers he selects as typical—Tolstoy, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Proudhon, Stirner, Godwin, and Tucker—calls special attention to the fact that, although on innumerable points they differ widely, as against the crippling authoritarianism of all governing machines they stand a solid phalanx. The whole body of Herbert Spencer's teaching, once so influential in this country, moves firmly toward that goal. His test of Civilisation was the extent to which voluntary co-operation has occupied the position previously monopolised by the compelling State, which he regarded as essentially a military institution. Habitually we circulate, as one of our most convincing documents, his treatise on "Man versus the State," and in his "Data of Ethics" he has given us a picture of the future which is Anarchism of the purest type.

Perhaps I may be allowed, in concluding this branch of my subject, to make a reflection of my own; viz., that the mother-principle of Anarchism—fidelity to one's own individual judgment—is also the backbone of the Christian creed. In its doctrine of the Holy Ghost, the spiritual comforter, the inner guide, the Church originally taught that, above all else, to one's own individual conscience one must be true, and that by that compass one must steer his course. Indeed, the Church went much farther, for it denounced, as the crime beyond all pardon, falsity to one's own conviction, which it described as the sin against the Holy Ghost. The lines in which Shakespeare has immortalised the selfsame opinion I need hardly quote.

(To be continued.)

To Comrades in the United States.

A group of comrades in the United States (not connected with any Anarchist movement, since there is no English-speaking movement in the country) would like to start a publication or issue Anarchist pamphlets, so that in time more people could be attracted to the spread of Anarchist ideas. Those who have manuscripts they would like to have printed are kindly asked to send them to L. K., care of Freedom Press, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.1. Manuscripts not used will be returned.

Objections to Anarchism.

By GEORGE BARRETT.

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THE REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION.

Foreign exchanges have been coming in scantily, which means either that increased cost of publication has forced suspension or that the papers have been suppressed. Nevertheless from those received we could fill our columns with details of the innumerable skirmishes that attend the development of the social war. Here, however, we prefer to review the revolutionary movement in those larger aspects which Labour will be compelled henceforth to study. Its conflict is no longer with individual exploiters, but with international groups working hand in hand with governments, themselves grouped internationally. Since the conclusion of the War, State Capitalism has burst into luxurious bloom.

The all-essential fact about every revolutionary movement is that it releases human forces previously suppressed. In proportion as those forces multiply and increase their strength the revolutionary movement is a success. Conversely, the all-essential fact about reaction is that it endeavours to chain down and bottle up once more the released forces. In proportion as it accomplishes this the reaction is a success. This being understood, it becomes comparatively easy to measure the repressive forces of the modern State, called into vigorous action by the revolutionary forces the War released.

Our exchanges teem with appeals on behalf of imprisoned revolutionists, and with protests against threatened extraditions. The imprisonment of Armand, in France; the death sentence passed on Sacco and Vanzetti, in the United States; the execution of Léon Noir, in Russia—these and others simply stand out more conspicuously in the long lists of victims exhibited to-day by all the leading countries. The ever-lengthening lists testify, on the one hand, to the power of the reaction, and, on the other hand, to the present powerlessness of the revolutionary movement to protect its own. With the best will in the world only a few of the wounded can hope to get attention.

Closely akin to this are the appeals that come from Paris, Berlin, Geneva, and other cities, on behalf of political refugees, driven in huge swarms out of their native countries. In this the Bolsheviks are apparently as great offenders as other rulers, but everywhere those whose boldness has attracted the attention of the authorities have been compelled to flee. Their flight is justified, for the alternative is death or rotting uselessly in gaols already packed to suffocation. Here, again, the situation has become impossible.

Add to these the vast armies of unemployed now swamping the cities and wandering hither and thither in a vain search for work. These also are victims of the great reaction which has followed the War; of the chaos into which State Capitalism, sacrificing all human interests to the ambitions of its governing machines, has thrown the productive and distributive activities of all the civilised world. We are witnessing an industrial *débâcle* unparalleled in history, and we stand helpless before it. The revolutionary movement cannot remedy these conditions. Socialism, Trade Unionism, and the other would-be reforming forces cannot begin to cope with it. On the other hand, the reaction, represented by State Capitalism's governing machines, has been strong enough everywhere to awe the suffering masses into submission.

This is the position the workers now have to face, and it is very different from pre-War days. In all probability we shall experience hunger-maddened riots in many cities, for two striking instances have occurred quite recently. The partial sacking of Vienna by a starving mob was a most serious affair, but the mob was suppressed, and the State Capitalist press smothered the incident with a conspiracy of silence. Still more recently the news flashed out that a hundred thousand rioters were ravaging Chicago, and that the police had suffered heavily. Again the machinery of repression proved all-powerful, and again it was able to enforce a conspiracy of silence.

Ireland's revolt against the British State machine, whether compromised or not, is a revolutionary event even more important than was the successful secession of the North American colonies a century and a half ago. It shakes the entire fabric of a world-wide Empire, and echoes loudly everywhere—above all in India and in Egypt. In the former the State Capitalist machine, after vacillating long between Amritsar massacres and diplomacy's soft arts, has fallen back on stern measures of repression, six hundred arrests being reported in the papers. As for Egypt, the governing Raj, after endless promises of independence, has taken its stand on Lord Allenby's official pronouncement that "Egypt is, it is necessary to repeat, a part of the Empire's communications—not the Canal, nor Cairo, nor Alexandria, nor any specified points of Egyptian territory, but the whole territory of Egypt." Whereupon Adly Pasha, whose Ministry has now resigned, wrote properly: "This constitutes occupation pure and simple, destroys every idea of independence, and suppresses even internal sovereignty."

We have endeavoured to sketch briefly the revolutionary situation as, in part, it appears to us. The stage has been set anew. The conflict has broadened enormously, but it has also become more simplified. On the one side stand the revolutionary forces released by War, the great upheaver. On the other side stand State Capitalism's governing machines, determined to bottle up those forces. This is the subject our exchanges, in common with the capitalist press, are now discussing; and between Socialist organs, which necessarily stand for Government, and Anarchist organs, which will have none of it, there is war to the knife.

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POLICED OR FREE?

There is no fun in looking down the muzzle of a revolver and emptying your pockets at the order of the man who holds it. Life may be gay enough for the big toad in the puddle, but it is a sorry affair for the innumerable toadlets who have to snip around the edges to get their living. Between the master who inherits an assured income and the slave who inherits only the obligation to furnish him with that income there is a gulf no fudge about equality of political rights can span.

The class that lives luxuriously by charging others for the privilege of being allowed to work is a class of highwaymen, and monopoly of natural resources is the weapon that enables them to do the trick. More and more rapidly to-day the big toads of landlordism, international finance, and politics, Siamese triplets, are occupying all the puddle, and the toadlets, elbowed out of it, are finding life impossible. More and more clearly the Spirit of the Age declares that merit, and not the sheer accident of birth, should be the sole title to reward.

Such facts cannot be talked away. In themselves they constitute a programme which is drastic, far-reaching, but extremely simple. It demands the immediate performance of a major operation—the removal of the cancer of special privilege from which Civilisation is expiring. Man, individual Man, must be given a fair chance. From equal access to the wealth of this planet, which is his natural home, he must be no longer barred. From the great heritage slowly accumulated by the continuous toil of generations uncountable no son of man henceforth should be excluded.

This is the claim. By its very nature it does not admit of compromise. Either mankind, individually and in the mass, is to become master of itself, or it is to remain, as now, the slave of the privileged few. Either Labour—productive and socially valuable—is to get all it produces, or it is to receive, as now, only so much as it can force Monopoly to yield. Either the Man of the People is to be redeemed from helplessness, or he is to continue, as now, the abject plaything of circumstances he has no longer power to control.

In such a struggle there is no middle ground. Sooner or later it must be one thing or the other, and the more quickly we reach a definite decision the better it will be for all concerned. Because the patient is dying. Because to millions of men and women life to-day has become no longer worth the living. Because the present conflict between human rights and the special privileges claimed by invasive castes is torturing mankind beyond endurance, sapping the vitality out of it, and deluging the world with blood.

The simple programme stated above is not the work of dreamers but of realists, who look Life straight in the eyes and see things as they are. They understand, for example, that, short of absolute independence, there can be no peace with Ireland, because deep-seated in the consciousness of every Irishman is the conviction that England is the universal tribute-levy, and that in proportion as she rules she also exploits. Thousands of the natives of India, to-day highly educated and well read in history and philosophy, have the same conviction; and for this reason, if India is to be kept in subjection, force, more and more military force, must do it. The same applies to Egypt, to whom promises of national independence have proved indeed worthless scraps of paper; the same applies everywhere. The War, itself an outburst of energies clamouring for expression, has released other vast masses of energy which to-day are struggling furiously to assert themselves, battling for opportunity, determined to be free. Until the floodgates are thrown wide open; until these tumultuous torrents are given free exit

to the great sea of equal liberty for all, they will rage and destroy. Until the first principle of brotherhood—a square deal for every one—is put into operation there cannot be, there should not be, any possibility of social peace.

The instincts of the masses are always healthy, and the trouble is always with the passions of the ruling class. They stand by their privileges. They will not yield one inch of the vantage-ground possession of which enables them to govern. Their one determination is to keep the social structure, in all its real essentials, exactly as it is. For this they seek to police the world so thoroughly that rebellion dare not show its head. The League of Nations is such an attempt. The combination of the four great military Powers, now in session at Washington and masquerading as a "Disarmament Conference," is a similar attempt, on a larger and more ambitious scale. But the leopard does not change his spots. It is not to the tigers that we can look for any clearing of the jungle, and those whose trade is governing will throw down the reins only when an awakened humanity compels it.

To hasten that awakening is the task of the revolutionary movement. It is the task to which every Anarchist should bend himself. For it is the one thing to-day essential, and the one thing worth doing at all and every cost.

ANARCHISTS AND SYNDICALISM.

The question of Syndicalism will be one of the difficult questions to solve at the forthcoming International Anarchist Congress.

One would think that our well-meaning Anarcho-Syndicalists would have learned a lesson from what has happened in the past with most of those who left the Anarchist movement and joined the Syndicalists, in the hope of soon bringing about the Social Revolution and thus ushering in an Anarchist society. In France some of our ablest comrades became officials in the Syndicates, and thus ended all their revolutionary plans. In some instances they became the deadly enemies of Anarchism. And the War gave Syndicalism in France its deathblow. Before 1914 it was dreaded by Capitalism as a great anti-militarist force, but during the War the Syndicalists proved just as patriotic as the jingoes.

A similarly dangerous situation is now developing in Germany, where many of our active Anarchist comrades have joined the Syndicalist movement.

Our comrades oppose the Red Trade Union International because it is a party organisation, but they fail to realise that the basis of their own Revolutionary Trade Union International will make theirs a party organisation also. Of course, they do not aim at such an International, the same claim is even made by the Communists; but both, if they materialise, will be party Internationals.

The Communists deny that they aim at a Communist Marxian programme for the Red Trade Union branch of the Third International, but this year's Congresses of both Internationals prove this. If the R.T.U.I. had refused to co-operate with the Third International, they would most likely have been disbanded as "counter-revolutionaries."

The International Syndicalist Conference of December, 1920, adopted six points in which Governments are opposed equally with Capitalism, and their programme is "a free Communist Society," where the producers alone shall regulate production and distribution. From this standpoint an agitation has now begun for the Unions to map out plans as to the part they ought to play in a revolution. It is argued that the Unions are formed only of producers, and therefore have the right to act as a preparatory organ of the revolution. But this may simply be helping to build up a pre-revolutionary power that will take control of the revolution and prevent it going further to the left than is mapped out in the programme. Apart from this danger, we hold that only a Labour movement strong enough to make a revolution should plan out the part it would take in it. And as revolutions cannot be made to order, it would be better not to make plans in advance.

It is even doubtful if we can always support organisations born of a revolution. Our Anarchist comrades of the Mabat Federation in Russia, at their conference in September, 1920, decided against working in the Soviets, which are now but tools in the hands of the Government; and they urged all

Anarchists to carry on an underground agitation amongst the factory workers.

We thus see that not only is it inadvisable to support the building up of a pre-revolutionary organisation, but that even one born of the revolution may become a weapon of oppression in the hands of a "revolutionary" Government.

In Great Britain on several occasions a revolution was expected to break out (particularly the betrayal of the Triple Alliance), yet they all ended in compromise; and it should be remembered that the Unions concerned were not party organisations.

In Germany we witnessed in the Ruhr district uprisings, inspired by the Syndicalists, which failed after 2,000 had been killed; but the Communists did nothing to help the rising. In March, 1921, when the Communists called for a revolution the Syndicalists refused to join in what they truly called a "party" revolution.

A clearer illustration is furnished by the events in Italy in 1920. There an attempted revolution—the seizure of factories by 400,000 metal workers, and seizure of land by the peasants—also ended in failure, a failure due in great part to the treachery of the Socialists and the indifference of the Communists. The Anarcho-Syndicalists and Anarchists fought with all their energy for the revolution, and when it failed many of them were thrown into prison. They issued proclamations against the treacherous peace of the Trade Union and Socialist leaders, but they were not in those Unions, where only the voices of the traitors were heard. Had our comrades remained in the existing Unions instead of starting Anarcho-Syndicalist Unions, they would have had a far better opportunity of foiling the treachery of the Socialists, Communists, and other officials.

In the United States we have an illustration of a different kind. The I.W.W. has existed now for over sixteen years. So far it has failed to get the masses into its ranks, just as it has failed to break up the conservative Trade Unions.

Such has been the result of party Trade Unions all round, and whenever strikes or uprisings occur we may expect a repetition of what happened in Italy and Germany.

Our comrades would have done much more good by remaining in the Anarchist movement instead of going over to the Syndicalists. By working in the existing Unions, organising propaganda groups within them to expose the treacherous officialdom, and agitating for more revolutionary aims and tactics, they would have accomplished far more than they have done. Our movement would be to-day a very effective one; the economic organisations of the proletariat would have cleansed themselves of many a traitor, and have become more revolutionary and class-conscious.

Those comrades who left our movement ought surely by now to realise the great mistakes they have made. They should try to bring about unity between every Syndicalist Union and the Trade Union movement. They should link up all their propaganda with our movement, and work for more revolutionary tactics (which mean, when realised, more freedom) in every economic organisation of the workers, and also among the unorganised. We should also consider it a criminal compromise to accept a paid position in a Trade Union. By thus agitating amongst the organised and unorganised workers we can do the best and most effective work for the spreading of our ideas and the tactics to achieve them.

Most of our comrades who have not been lost completely to our movement took part in the International Syndicalist Conference. It is to be hoped they will now realise their mistake and come back to where they really belong—the Anarchist movement.

FRED S. GRAHAM.

New York.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF "FREEDOM."

A New Year Social will be held at the "Workers' Friend" Club, 62 Fieldgate Street, Whitechapel, E., on Saturday evening, December 31. Comrades, turn up and make this a success, and help our funds.

FREE SOCIETY.

Issued Monthly by the Anarchist Communist Groups of the United States and Canada.

No Subscription. Voluntary Contributions. Order through FREEDOM.

BAKUNIN'S SO-CALLED "CONFESSION" OF 1851.

Bakunin, arrested in May, 1849, after the Dresden revolution, was tried for his life with the heads of that movement. The sentences of death for all were commuted to penal servitude for life, and he was handed over to Austria and tried again—the same sentence, the same commutation; after which he was given up to Russia. All this had taken two years and over, a time he passed undergoing endless examinations, preparing his defence, and studying mathematics and the English language. Of all this time numerous judicial documents exist, also, it appears, every scrap he wrote for defence and even for study. These I do not know, but a number of letters to his closest friends and a long statement for his lawyer are known to me. His attitude was that of absolute constancy to his ideas and faithfulness to his comrades.

In Russia he was never tried; the Tsar Nicholas I. considered him his property, like all his other subjects, and simply sent him to the fortress of Peter and Paul at Petrograd, to moulder there to the end of his life. There were no charges, no fellow-conspirators; he was a passive object in the hands of the Tsar. The Tsar no doubt felt proud to have this rebel at his mercy; he felt curious also about the secrets of the European revolution, which Bakunin, if anybody, was believed to possess; and, with the contempt of men which an autocrat, before whom all cringe, must feel, he may have expected to tame Bakunin, to win him over, perhaps to make him one of his tools.

So his henchman Count Orloff was sent to tell Bakunin that the Tsar wished to receive a statement on his revolutionary doings, and that he might talk to the Tsar with the same confidence which a penitent would exercise towards the priest in the confessional. Bakunin demanded a month's time for reflection, and then wrote a statement which was given to the Tsar (summer of 1851).

His situation remained unchanged, only—and he felt thankful for this—the Tsar let him alone thenceforth. The next Tsar, Alexander II., when Bakunin's family pleaded for a mitigation of his fate, read the document in question (which for convenience I will call here the so-called "confession" of 1851) and remarked that *he saw no repentance in it*. Bakunin, who tells this to Herzen by letter, observes: "He wanted to see repentance, the idiot!" That Tsar, by the way, was the spiritual brother of the U.S. Attorney-General who expected R. Flores Magon to "evince (any) evidence of repentance" (see FREEDOM, July, 1921).

However repulsive this cruelty is, it is less repulsive than the efforts which have been made recently to insinuate that Bakunin's statement is an expression of repentance and a repudiation of his revolutionary past. Four Tsars respected the "secret of the confessional" and did not use the document against the living Bakunin, their open enemy, nor against his memory. It was open to the present régime to publish the document *in full*, text and translation, and thus to enable everybody to form an unprejudiced opinion on it. The means of publicity are not wanting to them in Russia and abroad, yet this seems not to have been done, so far as I know. I have not been able to ascertain whether the document was published at all *in full* in Russia, either in Steklov's biography of Bakunin or separately. But a complete translation does not seem to have been published anywhere. Instead, an ex-Anarchist, Kibaltchitch, also signing "Victor Serge," a decoy-duck to allure Anarchists to support the present régime in Russia, is beginning a campaign against Bakunin's memory by presenting parts of the document in his own way; and there is already an under-Kibaltchitch at work, who repeats and, to all appearance, exaggerates even Kibaltchitch's statements. I see but very few papers at present, and the original Kibaltchitch, appearing in the Berlin *Forum* and spreading to Italian and perhaps French papers, is unknown to me; I have met only with the under-Kibaltchitch who signs "Genosse" (comrade) in the Milan review *Comunismo* (August 1).

There is already an able examination of the whole question by Renato Souvarine (*Le Libertaire*, Paris. Nos. 143, 144), and a generous article by Madame Séverine (*Journal du Peuple*, October 27). Kibaltchitch, now that Kropotkin is out of the way, goes for Bakunin. This is not simply a way of speaking of mine, for there is a report that Kropotkin was shown the document (the existence of which was widely known) and—that he saw nothing in it. If Kropotkin was alive, everybody would question him now and listen to his opinion. It is possible and not at all unlikely that his testimony survives and will be forthcoming.

I speak here without more evidence before me than the few extracts given in *Comunismo*. They presume, however, to tell the worst. Still, they do not affect me very much! Everything may be interpreted with unfairness and in a demagogic spirit—nothing is easier than that and nothing more worthless. Only an interpretation based upon ordinary fairness, commonsense, and exact knowledge of facts can be of any value. I hope to be able to try my hand at it when the document *in full* will be before us. Meanwhile I can only say this: We know much of Bakunin's life from his youth to 1851, and much more still of the years from 1851 to his death in 1876. Both halves—two periods of twenty-five years each—show an unbroken evolution, too long and too rich in detail to be given here; and it would be extraordinary indeed if this was interrupted or contradicted by one single act, that document of 1851.

It is further quite useless to say he *ought* never to have written

anything at all or he *ought* to have defied the Tsar by a revolutionary outburst. He knew this as well as we do, and he chose to write in the way he did. He may have had a triple purpose: not to say anything harmful to the revolution, to speak in such a way as to be let alone henceforth, and yet, as a propagandist, to wrangle intellectually even with the incarnation of reaction, the Tsar. Consequently he would write anything about the revolution and the revolutionists, himself included, *except the truth*, to tell which to the Tsar would have been an act of treachery. He would willingly belittle himself to reduce the exaggerated attention centring about him. And, as is known to everybody who is acquainted with his life, ideas, and writings in detail, he was a Slavonic nationalist (of a federalist, nay, Anarchist shade); and *as such* had some ground in common even with the Tsar, whose Slavonic nationalism meant to him the universalisation of his own autocracy. These three elements—to give the Tsar a wrong idea as to the real position of the revolution, to show the absurdity of his exaggerated personal persecution, and just to tell the Tsar some plain truths about nationalism as he interpreted it—these or similar considerations would explain to me everything which may be contained in the document. The Tsar was no fool and saw plainly through it; he saw that, in spite of all his polite and apparently recanting phraseology, Bakunin remained what he was and would not change—and he left him to his fate in the fortress prison.

It was left to Kibaltchitch to be more cruel, more unfair, and less intelligent than the Tsar.

Almost fifty years ago (1872) Karl Marx tried to kill Bakunin morally by showing to a private committee at the last moment a secret document, thereby making the docile majority of an international congress (at The Hague) vote Bakunin's expulsion. This intrigue has been disentangled since to its minutest details, and I once had, by accident, a glance at the document, which has never been produced in public. And in the spring of 1848 Marx had another convenient little document at hand to proclaim Bakunin's dishonour, words which he soon was forced by Bakunin himself to retract. Marx is dead, but Kibaltchitch still flourishes.

I say once more, when the full text of this so-called "confession" will be before us, it will be carefully examined; and the most elementary fairness would have begun by giving the complete text of this and all other documents concerning Bakunin, which even Tsarism did not care to utilise, but which its successors seem not to disdain.

November 11, 1921.

M. N.

Gambling Stimulated by Anti-Gambling Laws.

Though the recent decision in the law courts regarding gambling debts paid by cheques does not directly affect the policy of the Gambling Acts of Parliament, the subject of gambling and betting cannot but be seriously thought of by any reflecting person. Has such legislation and the irregular and occasional enforcement of it tended to repress or increase those vices? Some years ago a prominent and skilful writer on racing, the late Mr. John Corlett ("White and Gold"), declared that the Gaming Acts, instead of preventing gambling, had in reality increased it, by driving it from private places, the resort of the rich only, to public places among the community generally. A foreman of an iron foundry in a large city once pointed out to me a group of men and women in the middle of the street, and said: "Those are bookmakers and their dupes. I remember the day when you could not make a bet without going to a small shop in a by-street. Now the bookmakers waylay working men and women in the public streets, even in his novel "Endymion" Disraeli writes:—

"The turf at that time had not developed into that vast institution of national demoralisation which it now exhibits. That disastrous character may be mainly attributed to the determination of our Legislature to put down gaming houses, which, practically speaking, substituted for the pernicious folly of a comparatively limited class the ruinous madness of the community. There were many influences by which in the highest classes persons might be discouraged or deterred from playing under a roof, and in the great majority of cases such a habit was difficult, not to say impossible, to indulge. But in shutting up gaming houses we brought the gaming table into the street, and its practices became the pursuit of those who would otherwise have never witnessed or thought of them. No doubt, Crockford's had its tragedies, but all its disasters and calamities together would hardly equal a lustre of the ruthless havoc which has ensued from its suppression."

Such is the futility of Law and Governments, and every one ought to confine themselves to moral suasion. Bettors and gamblers, in however small a way, should take to heart the lesson conveyed in a page cartoon in *Punch* of November 2 ("Cash Business as Usual"). "*Working Man*: What's all this about the House of Lords interfering with betting? *Back-Street Bookie*: Oh, that won't affect us, my boy. You can go on losing your wages to me the same as ever." W. DOUGLAS.

CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

(November 17 to December 14.)

"FREEDOM" GUARANTEE FUND.—J. Freedman 5s., E. R. £1, L. Sabel 7s., Ida Miller 5s., A. D. Moore 2s., Concert (Dec. 3) £2 2s. 6d., W. M. S. 2s. 6d., N. B. Ellis 5s., E. Griffin 4s., C. D. Rodman 5s., P. Hertford 10s., Wm. C. Owen 10s., L. G. Wolfe £1 10s., G. Cotterill 1s., J. S. R. 3s., V. Perez 2s. "FREEDOM" SUBSCRIPTIONS.—T. Ciulla, L. Boquet, J. Isaacson, W. Lagsding, L. Sabel, L. D. Abbott, E. Cartwright, E. Forster, L. Organ, E. Griffin, C. D. Rodman, C. Moxon, B. Plattin, B. Black, G. Senior. INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CONGRESS.—C. N. L. and T. Y. M. 5s.

Anarchist Movement in Belgium.

The Belgian groups of the Anti-Militarist International have issued a short but stirring appeal to the world-wide proletariat, urging it to combat Militarism in every form, and reminding it that reaction is triumphing all along the line. In the Netherlands, where an energetic propaganda has been made and some anti-military feeling has resulted, many agitators and others who on grounds of principle refused army service have been sent to gaol. One of these, Herman Groenendaal, went recently on a hunger-strike which he maintained with great fortitude; and his case was the subject of much agitation. In Belgium fantastic war budgets have been voted, and the army has grown since 1914 from 44,000 to 105,000 men. The appeal bitterly arraigns the Social Democrats for the pliant servility with which they played into the hands of Plutocracy by voting for these budgets and urging the masses to submit.

L'Emancipateur reports that recent efforts made to bring together those who are outspoken Anarchists have proved unexpectedly successful. Much scattered activity has been manifested of late, the Brussels comrades having issued *Le Bulletin Libertaire*, and those at Louvain having established *De Baanbreker*. It has been decided recently to merge these in *L'Emancipateur*, with a view to concentrating energy and lightening the heavy costs of publication. It seems that a Congress will be held at an early date, and an Anarchist Federation formed. The D'Ougrée-Marihaye strike, which has lasted several months, has been marked by constant arrests of working men and women, chiefly for such petty causes as insulting the police or blacklegs by calling them "yellow." The Liège Union of Syndicates is now publishing *Travail* as its official organ.

LEON PROUVOST.

The tragic death of Léon Prouvost should be recorded here. This comrade, born at Roubaix in 1856, arrived at our ideas in ripe years when after a life spent in business he had retired to St. Raphael (Var), on the south coast of France. He did his share of propaganda work by a liberal support of Anarchist publications and by issuing many small publications, circulated numerously, of his own, from a typewritten Anarchist paper to great quantities of leaflets of a specially anti-clerical and anti-militarist character. In 1914, for one of these leaflets opposing the war he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. He continued encouraging and organising a propaganda against the revival of the Jesuit spirit in France, recorded in his *Chroniques du Mouvement Anti-religieux* (Chronicles of the Anti-Religious Movement), January, 1919, to October, 1921, mostly written by himself.

On the pretext of some leaflets found among marines on French warships, Prouvost's house was ransacked on July 27 and 28 for thirty-four hours by eight police, who took away all his papers, about 3 cwt. of written and printed matter. This plundering of everything he had brought together and upsetting of everything unnerved the old man of 65; he wrote that all he loved was destroyed, that he would not begin all over again. He then had work enough to do that last day to arrange matters at home, to leave things in order, feeding his cat up to the last; and then he hinted at a fast train passing that evening. He must have changed his mind about the train, for he was later on found dead in the well in his garden. He signs that last letter "Victim of Militarism and of the Jesuits," and he might well say so. Another peaceful propagandist driven to death! N.

An Appeal for Anarchist Refugees.

DEAR COMRADES,—With ever-increasing frequency our foreign comrades, persecuted in their own countries, are seeking refuge in Germany and coming to Berlin. We need not emphasise the fact that we have observed toward these fugitives the widest spirit of Solidarity, especially in the matters of finding them work and shelter.

Now, however, our resources are exhausted. The German comrades are no longer in a position to help permanently, as they have done hitherto, these new arrivals.

We turn, therefore, to you and ask you to assist our efforts. The rates of exchange render it comparatively easy for you to help us and our persecuted comrades. Send therefore, so far as you are able, money to the address of the undersigned, in order that our efforts to support the foreign comrades coming here may not be brought to a halt.

He helps twice who helps quickly.

All moneys received will be acknowledged in *Freien Arbeiter*, under the heading "Solidarity."

With brotherly greetings,

FEDERATION OF COMMUNIST ANARCHISTS OF GERMANY.

HERMANN HEITMANN, Stettinerstr. 33 v. II., Berlin N. 20.

[We will be pleased to receive donations and forward them to Germany.—ED. FREEDOM]

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