

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Labour Party.

The new Labour Members got off the mark very smartly the first night, since when the Speaker has been having the time of his life. There has not been such an unceremonious crowd in the House since Parnell and Biggar led the Irish obstructionists in the early days of the Home Rule movement. The choice of Ramsay MacDonald as leader was a severe shock to the old Trade Union element, who think that those who pay the piper should call the tune; but they have all come into line, and with the others are now working overtime to show the workers that they are earning their £400 a year. MacDonald years ago told the students of Owen College that if ever they got into Parliament they should devote their first year to studying the rules of procedure. Some of his present team are learning the rules by breaking them. If the walls of Capitalism—like the walls of Jericho—could be brought down by shouting, then we might expect them to crumple very soon; but we have our doubts. There is one thing, however, that will be proved by the presence of the Labour Members, and that is that within the limits of constitutional and Parliamentary procedure very little can be done to break the economic chains which keep the workers enslaved. They may be able to ease them a little here and a little there, but the chains will remain. Even if they come into power later on their policy of nationalisation by purchase will not get rid of the parasites, and a policy of expropriating the expropriators will never be carried out by counting noses. We quite recognise that the greatly increased vote for the Labour Party is a sign that the workers are discontented with their present condition, especially the unemployed section; but the hopes of great and favourable changes coming through Parliamentary action are doomed to disappointment. When the Labour Party attains power it will become a constitutional party and uphold the system it was originally formed to destroy.

Death Sentences for Murder.

The death sentences on Mrs. Thompson and Bywaters, for the murder of the husband of the former, were followed in the same court the next day by sentences of death on two more women. On the same day two farm labourers were executed at Lincoln. Does any sane person believe that these death sentences will prevent murders taking place in the future? Of course not. Every month in every year people are executed for murder, and every month in every year more murders are committed, followed by more executions and more murders. Murders are the direct effect of certain causes—unjust social conditions, out-of-date marriage laws, and lack of educational methods for developing character and self-control. This does not mean that we are trying to justify murders but merely seeking to explain them. Many years ago the historian Buckle pointed out that there was an exact relation in any given year between social conditions and the amount of crime. Therefore, until we have just and equitable conditions, with more enlightened ideas on sex relationships, these murders will continue. We would like to ask on what grounds does the State claim a right to kill which it denies to the individual members of the community in whose name it pretends to act? The State says "Thou shalt not kill," and at the same time trains men specially in the science of wholesale murder with the most up-to-date weapons. The effect on the mentality of those men can be seen in the great increase of robberies with violence committed by ex-soldiers. Our rulers regard very lightly the waste of human life in a great war. Speaking of the Crimean War, the late Lord Salisbury said that on that occasion we "put our money on the wrong horse"; and Winston Churchill has spoken of the ghastly tragedy of Gallipoli as "a legitimate gamble." Whilst the people tolerate such flippancy in their public men, it is hypocritical for them to demand the execution of murderers.

Turkey and Capitulations.

At the Lausanne Conference the Turkish representatives are demanding the abolition of "Capitulations," whilst the Allies are insisting on their retention. As the ordinary reader has very little idea of what is meant by the word, we will quote the following from the *Islamic Review* for December:—

"The twofold privileges enjoyed by foreigners under 'capitulations' are: Exemption of importations from taxation and of offence against the law of the land from trial by the tribunal of the land. And what is the effect? Not only crippling of local commerce and industry, but the corruption of the entire social fabric. Islam enjoins strict teetotalism. Islam has unsparing denunciation for sex-immorality. Islam forbids gambling. But these are the very curses that follow in the wake of Western civilisation. Wherever it sets its ominous foot, brothels, houses of ill-fame and gambling houses spring up like mushrooms, with all their disastrous effect on the indigenous culture of the soil. Muslim lands have been absolutely free from these pests so long as they were immune from Western influences. But no sooner was this 'blessing' of modern civilisation implanted there—in whatever form—than the bottle of whisky, with its twin sister aforementioned, came into prominence. Bagdad and Damascus are the typical cases in question. Until recently they were free from every vestige of licentiousness; but since the shadow of the West has fallen over them, Bacchus-worship, with all its hideous concomitants—debauchery and gambling—are taking root in the soil. . . . Well may the Turk abhor the recurrence of these evils."

Those are the things the Allies are struggling for at Lausanne.

Fascism Triumphant!

Dictatorship looks like becoming quite fashionable. Of course, the Russian brand is still a little out of favour in the countries on either side of the Straits of Dover; but the King of Italy has shaken hands with it, as he has since with his home-made brand, so it cannot be very long before it is received into official circles further West. Still, it is rather strange that a war fought to make the world safe for democracy and to save it from a military despotism has produced a Lenin and a Mussolini. We are not champions of democracy, but many of those whose bones fertilise the soil of France and Belgium believed in it with a holy fervour. And now—! Mussolini and his black shirts swept away all traces of representative and constitutional government in Italy when they forced the Chamber of Deputies to give the Dictator supreme power till the end of 1923. Why only till then? The "transition period" in Russia has already lasted five years and shows signs of living to a healthy and vigorous old age. Perhaps Mussolini has hopes of forcing an indefinite extension later on. He has a certain amount of humour. When interviewed in London by a representative of the *Daily Herald* he made some very contradictory statements. He said "the military organisation of the Fascisti will be maintained for the defence of the Fascista State"; but later on he said: "I am out for destroying everything that hampers and obstructs our national energy, and my policy can be summed up in the following words: 'It is anti-Socialist, anti-Monopolist, anti-Statist.'" But an anti-Statist is going to defend the Fascista State! He evidently means to say, "L'état, c'est moi," for that has been his attitude since he built up his army of Fascisti. On his road to Rome he left a blackened trail of wrecked and looted Socialist and Labour halls, and in Rome itself his blackguardly mob burnt out the printing office of *Umanita Nova*, the Anarchist paper. Our comrades, however, soon restarted their paper, and are putting up a good fight. When Mussolini came to London our Italian comrades issued a manifesto denouncing him as a capitalist agent, and exposing his sanguinary attacks on the workers in Italy. We think he is an adventurer, and the people of Italy will soon get tired of his vanity and his bombastic speeches.

My Arrest and Expulsion.

My arrest has raised in France, as well as everywhere else, a wave of protests against the arbitrary action of the Russian Government because of the fact that, in my case, the latter found itself unable to operate with the same calumnies and with the same accusations which are being generally spread when dealing with persecuted revolutionists.

Putting aside my humble self which takes this opportunity to cordially thank all those who have agitated for my liberation, I would like to dot the "i's" with reference to a number of facts which have arisen round my arrest and imprisonment.

To begin with, it must be definitely established—what has already been an axiom for us Russians and for most of the comrades abroad—that the declarations of the Russian Government concerning the non-persecution of Anarchists for their ideas, are so many traps and falsehoods. We need only remind ourselves of Tchitcherin's declarations to the Italian Anarchists on the one side, and the arrests which have so closely followed these declarations on the other. Tchitcherin had, of course, no intention of lying—the Russian Government did it for him and flagrantly disproved every word of its plenipotentiary envoy to Genoa.

Certain declarations made by our comrades referring to my talk with Tchitcherin are not quite correct, just as the official statement of the Russian Government that I had promised to Tchitcherin loyalty to that Government is a pure invention. For the purpose of clearing up the matter, I will here reproduce the letter which I have written from prison to Tchitcherin under date of October 2: it contains everything that had passed between us in connection with my return to Moscow:—*

"ESTEEMED GEORGI VASSILIEVITCH,†—

On the night of the 2nd to the 3rd of September I was arrested in Moscow by order of the G.P.U.‡ I was accused of having had 'relations with the underground Anarchists,' yet my examination touched only upon my activities abroad. It is quite clear that 'underground Anarchism' was introduced for the sole purpose of lending an air of legality to my arrest and to that thorough search that was made in my flat. During this search the representative of the G.P.U. in charge of this task, Mr. Gertzman, was mainly interested in finding the materials and the correspondence which I might have brought with me from abroad.

"And if at this moment I am addressing myself to you, Georgi Vassilievitch, it is in noways for the purpose of asking you to 'intervene' in my favour, but solely with a view of stating certain facts concerning my return to Russia.

"My activities abroad, expressed by articles upon the question of International Syndicalism and by appeals—jointly with other Anarchists of Western Europe—concerning the persecutions of Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists in Russian prisons, were fully known by the Soviet mission in Berlin. . . . When you heard that I had come to the Russian Consulate to obtain my visa for my return to Russia, you immediately invited me into your cabinet, where we had a fairly long talk, chiefly with reference to your interview with the Italian Anarchists concerning the above persecutions. Both at this interview as well as in our conversation you declared that the Soviet Government did not imprison Anarchists *as such*, but only for ordinary crimes such as coining, banditism, expropriations, and the like. When, then, I stated to you that I wished to return to Russia, you replied that there would be no difficulty, and you proposed to speak immediately to the Russian Consul, Brodovsky, that the latter might facilitate as much as possible my return to Russia. You went at once to Brodovsky, and while the latter did not receive me with the same cordiality as you did, I received my visas . . . the forwarding, by diplomatic post, of the books and journals which I had bought abroad, as well as my own journey, were greatly facilitated. The same Brodovsky gave me besides, at my own request, a document asking the civil and military authorities of Russia to 'render aid and service in case of necessity' during my journey in Russia.

"Thus this same activity abroad which did not prevent either

* Certain sentences bearing a purely conspirative character have been omitted.

† Tchitcherin's name.

‡ Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravlenye (Political State Department of the People's Commissariat of the Interior). It is the up-to-date designation of the notorious Vetcheka.

you or the Russian Consulate in Berlin facilitating my journey to Russia . . . was considered a great crime by the G.P.U.—a Soviet body, too, having more than one of its agents attached to the Berlin Consulate—a crime which led to my arrest. Yet you told me that your interview with the Italian Anarchists had been reported by you to the central authorities and that you had received the approval of the central Government. My arrest is thus in flagrant contradiction not only with your own statements in Italy, but, so it seems, with the declarations of the central Government as well which confirmed your interview.

"I do not for a moment doubt that your *personal* feelings towards me are filled with cordial sincerity and friendly attention—and this not only towards me alone. Upon the question of the deported Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists, whose fate was touched upon in our talk, you yourself had raised the question of their possible return to Russia; you asked me to come and see you, upon your return to Moscow, and discuss this matter at greater length with you.

"Any one—however restricted his intelligence may be—will, nevertheless, conclude that in this affair of my return to Russia we find ourselves in front of a *transparent piece of provocation* for the purpose of 'locking me up' immediately upon my arrival. It is thus clear that whatever may be the declarations of the Soviet Government's representatives abroad—be they Communist journalists or People's Commissaries—the *de facto* power in Russia, the G.P.U., brutally and impudently destroys every vestige of free thought, and fights with prison, exile, and bullet—but never with ideas—against Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists *as such*. My arrest, simultaneously with that of many other Anarcho-Syndicalists, has fully confirmed this.

"It seems to me that the Italian Anarchists and Syndicalists who expected—owing to the explanations you gave to them—a final cessation of the police persecutions by the Soviet Power against Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists, must be notified of the fact that your solemn declaration rests upon a deep and coarse swindle—a swindle which, as we have seen, has led into error the revolutionary proletariat of Western Europe and of America as well as yourself personally. It is the duty of every revolutionist to tear off this misleading mask. I am sure that you yourself will be disgusted at the lightheartedness with which the Soviet Government institutions scoff at solemn promises made by their representatives to the proletariat of Western Europe, and will transmit to the Italian Anarchists the practical results of your interview with them."

It goes without saying that no reply came to this letter, but I am glad to learn that the comrades in Italy know now the worth of Soviet promises.

But there is more in it than Tchitcherin's bankruptcy. We have also got to register the moral bankruptcy and the cowardice of the Red Trade Union International.

The French Committee of Syndicalist Defence and the International Bureau of Revolutionary Syndicalists had put some questions to the Executive of the R.T.U.I. upon the reasons that called forth my arrest. That the R.T.U.I. did not want to protest or that it did not find it necessary to reply explains itself quite easily, because *it is thanks to the R.T.U.I. itself that I was expelled from Russia*. This is what its general secretary, Losovsky, writes upon the subject:—*

"DEAR COMRADE,—I have received your letter of October 6 and inform you of the following. As soon as I heard of Comrade Shapiro's arrest I got into touch with the G.P.U., from whom I received the explanation that he was arrested for the appeal you know, and for having been, upon his return, in relations with the underground Anarchists.

"Upon the proposition of the R.T.U.I. and of the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions Shapiro is to be freed and deported abroad.

"The clamour the Anarchists raised round this arrest and the stupid rumours that it was undertaken in the interests of the R.T.U.I. and of the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions are—you will understand it yourself—beneath every criticism. The Anarchists wanted to create, at the Berlin Conference, the illusion that there existed in Russia an Anarcho-Syndicalist minority within the Russian Trade Unions; this is, as you well know, a mirage. There

* This letter was addressed to Comrade Sandomirsky, who had written to Losovsky asking him what he thought of my arrest. Losovsky's letter is dated October 12. The R.T.U.I. knew, therefore, on that date that I was to be expelled. I received the official notification only on October 17.

is no Anarcho-Syndicalist minority within the Russian Trade Unions. This invention was made abroad and is composed of a dozen Anarcho-Syndicalists, deported abroad, together with their wives and children.*

"Believe me that the rôle of Shapiro and his friends in the Labour movement of Russia is *nil*. Personally I believe that their rôle in the international Labour movement is approximately on the same level.

"We have done everything to liberate him. Shapiro will be freed and will be sent to a country of his choice where there is no 'reactionary' and 'autocratic' Soviet Government.

"The General Secretary of the R.T.U.I.,

"A. Losovsky."

It will be noted, first of all, that Losovsky has proved to be more Tchekist than the Tcheka. The latter did not itself for a moment believe in my having occupied myself with underground and illegal activities. It was a subterfuge necessary for "legalising" my arrest, but rejected when the deportation sentence was delivered: the latter only spoke of my "anti-Soviet" activities (abroad). Yet Losovsky is credulous enough and swallows with satisfaction the official Tchekist pill and is proud to have got me out of the Tcheka claws and obtain my expulsion—which he well needed, in view of the approach of the R.T.U.I. Congress.

I may mention here that soon after my arrest I wrote a letter to the R.T.U.I. asking it to notify the International Bureau of Revolutionary Syndicalists and the Syndicalist organs whose correspondent I was in Russia of my arrest. I have received official confirmation of the authorities of the G.P.U. that my letter had actually been sent to the R.T.U.I. The latter paid no attention to it and did not consider it necessary to satisfy my request.

Let not the comrades think that my arrest has simply been "a regrettable mistake" committed by the G.P.U. This "mistake" continues, and will, no doubt, continue with greater zest after my departure. One of our women comrades, whose participation in the movement consists in working in the "Golos Truda" book-store, has received a sentence of one year's exile by administrative order for *having had relations with Anarcho-Syndicalists!* It is thus a question of principle. Anarcho-Syndicalism, in the Bolshevik vocabulary, has become synonymous with counter-revolution. It is rather lucky for Monmousseau, when he comes to Moscow, that 99 per cent. of the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists are either in exile or under lock and key: there might have been a danger of his own arrest then.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Monmousseau—whom I never met in my life—was the first to denounce me to the Russian police, when he wrote in the *Vie Ouvrière* (June) that I was returning to Russia with the purpose of smashing up the Russian Labour movement; just as Chambelland, one week later, denounced me—in the same *Vie Ouvrière*—to the German police, when he spoke of me as having taken part in the Berlin Conference. I now hear that this same Monmousseau had promised the Executive Commission of the C.G.T.U. that he would undertake an inquiry on my imprisonment on his arrival in Moscow. I am happy not to be compelled to consider Monmousseau as my possible liberator.

As to the relations between the R.T.U.I. and the G.P.U.—i.e., the secret police—they are quite clear to us. A number of important posts in the offices of the Executive of the R.T.U.I., as well as in those of the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions, are filled by *agents of the G.P.U.* The contact is thus established to perfection, and Losovsky did not have to go far to obtain the necessary information upon the reasons of my arrest.

The Moscow heads of the R.T.U.I. admit themselves that the famous Red International is devoid of any kind of influence in the Labour world. The latest national congresses in Europe are there to prove it. It is time to make an end, once for all, of the dangerous and nefarious illusion which prevents the international Syndicalist movement organising itself and fighting the battles of labour. The forthcoming Syndicalist Congress, in December, will have to put an end to the misunderstanding which divides the Syndicalists at present, and I hope that after the R.T.U.I. Congress the C.G.T.U.—the last of the Moscovite Mohicans—will bethink itself and will see that it has taken the wrong turning at Saint-Etienne by allowing itself to be hoodwinked by the flat and monotonous jokes of the pitiful clown Losovsky.

A. SHAPIRO.

November 15, 1922.

* This "joke" seems to please Citizen Losovsky. He repeats it in and out of season, on all occasions. I have met many belonging to that minority in the Moscow prisons. Many wrote to me from the provinces. Everybody will understand why I cannot mention any one.

SONG OF "OLD REBBLE."

From "Faust and the City," by A. V. LUNACHARSKI.

Me have ye gaoled and chained and burned;
I have writhed in bitter agony;
I have wasted to death for liberty;—
But how to slay me ye never learned.

I have gnawed my fingers lacking food;
I have rotted in dungeons dank, forlorn;
My flesh in shreds vultures have torn
And feasted in the martyr's blood.

And I have been one running sore
Under the lash, my life's blood lost.
And oft my carcase, ocean-tossed,
From ocean-deeps was washed a-shore.

But, from my ashes to new birth
I rise again, I rise from death;
My soul, returning home to earth,
Builds a new body for its breath.

I went, I come, I shall not rest;
I will eat through the whole world's chains;
I will dry the tears of all oppressed,—
The last of tears for the last of pains.

How shall I dry the tears of woe,
Tears of oppressed and humbled slaves?
Down with the tyrant's purple show!
To your graves, princes! Down to your graves!

Down! And be ancient wrongs forgot,
And cleansed be all hearts of pride,
When, in their blood-stained graves to rot,
Your heads and crowns fall side by side!

STARTING WORK ANEW IN U.S.A.

The present inactivity and lack of any effective Anarchist movement in the English language has caused a score of comrades to get together for a heart-to-heart talk. Things as they have been, and what new roads to pursue, were discussed. The fact acknowledged by all was that invariably every group has come to its death chiefly for lack of sufficient interesting work to keep it alive. For an Anarchist group cannot exist on compulsion. Work in these groups can only be of such a nature as to voluntarily attract participation in it.

Basing our past failures on these grounds, we agreed to concentrate our energies in the following direction:—A continuous series of discussions, oral or written, on subjects pertaining to our ideal should be carried on by members of our own group. This will enable us not only to develop ourselves, but also make it possible for some of us to become of use in propagating our ideas among others. The group is an Anarchist Communist one. Contributions to it are voluntary. No one is to be taken in as a member unless one or more comrades can vouchsafe for the proposed one.

Any comment or statement printed in the daily press regarding our movement will be utilised for the issuing of leaflets stating our side of the question.

We have also undertaken to publish each year at least one original manuscript on Anarchism, or, if this is not available, to reprint one of the most needed books that is out of print. It was agreed that our first work along these lines should be a reprint of "Speeches of the Chicago Anarchist Martyrs." A literature fund to cover the expense of printing this book, as also for the purpose of issuing other literature, is now opened. We appeal to all comrades and groups to contribute as much as they are able to this fund. We also wish to know how many copies comrades think they may be able to dispose of. This will enable us to know how many copies to print.

In making public the above we hope that comrades in other cities will follow our example in forming groups along similar lines. We will be glad to correspond with any group that may come into being, or help individual comrades in the formation of such.

Comrades! Never before was there such a great field for propagating our ideas as there is at present. It therefore ought to be the desire of every sincere comrade to utilise this great opportunity. Without an organised movement our ideas cannot make any effective headway. With each of us doing our share, the organisation of an Anarchist movement could soon become a reality.

With comradely greetings,

WORKER'S LIBERTY GROUP OF BOSTON.

P.S.—All contributions to the literature fund will be acknowledged in the press. These, as also all correspondence, should be addressed to J. Anderson, 15 Cazenova Street, Boston, Mass.

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WHO IS TO BLAME?

Year in and year out the speakers of the Labour movement give voice to the woes of the workers, pointing a menacing finger at the capitalist as the source of all the miseries which they suffer; but very few of them have the courage to tell the workers that they also must bear a part of the blame for their present condition. Without their help the chains they wear could not be made, without their own help they could not be exploited, and without their active co-operation wars and their attendant evils would not be possible. The capitalists may be responsible for the organisation of all these things, but their plans would be so much waste paper if the workers refused to carry them out. By "workers" we do not mean only manual labourers and mechanics, but all those who work for the capitalists with hand or brain.

At the time of writing a Workers' Peace Congress is being held at The Hague, and Labour representatives from many countries are discussing ways and means of preventing wars in the future; but nothing done at that gathering will have much effect so long as the workers continue to manufacture all the diabolical weapons used in modern warfare and to join the armies and march at the word of command. To talk of a general strike on the declaration of war, whilst working every day producing the material for war, is to talk nonsense. If guns are made, some day they will go off.

One of the worst evils from which the workers suffer to-day is lack of decent houses, due partly to the cessation of building during the war, though slums were always a feature of our cities and towns. Now it would be quite natural to expect that houses for the workers would have been one of the first things that workers in the building industry would have insisted on after a war in which their class had sacrificed so much. Instead they allowed themselves to be concentrated on the building of picture palaces, dance halls, shops, offices, factories, and smart villas and mansions. On the outskirts of London, for instance, in the pleasantest parts of Surrey and Bucks, new middle-class villas have sprung up in thousands. Before daylight every morning workmen's trains carry the bricklayers and carpenters from overcrowded slums to these country districts, where they build spacious houses for the master class, returning at dusk to their own wretched dwellings, perhaps attending later on a meeting of their Trade Union to pass a resolution calling upon the Government to provide more houses for the workers!

Then there is the daily Press, "Labour's worst enemy," as a Labour Party organ calls it. Who set the type, put it on the machine, print it, and distribute it? Trade Unionists, of course, who in this way help the capitalists to carry on their subtle work of poisoning the minds of the people. And the workers not only produce these poisonous papers for their masters, but also support them financially by purchasing them.

Again, take the question of rotten and adulterated food. The workers engaged in the industries connected with the food supply are well aware of the fearful amount of adulteration that goes on and the tricks of the trade by which inferior and disgusting food is turned out for working-class consumption; yet who ever heard of Trade Unionists refusing to carry out these deadly deceptions? Providing they get the Union rates of pay, they obey their master's orders. It never seems to occur to them that they are morally responsible for these frauds equally with the employer.

But it is when we consider how the capitalists are able to hold on to their plunder and privileges that we see the workers' supreme folly. Attracted by various baits, they join the army and the police force in their thousands; and however much they may sympathise

with the downtrodden class from which they have come, they will knock them down or shoot them down if ordered to do so. Should a few starving and desperate men dare to seize a piece of idle land for the purpose of growing food for their families and themselves, these uniformed members of the working class will fly to the defence of the land monopolist's interests and drive the invaders away. On the occasion of the last great unemployed demonstration in London hundreds of mounted and foot police accompanied the procession, ready to crack the skull of any man should he attempt to help himself to any of the food displayed so invitingly in the shops. Yet nineteen out of twenty of the police came from the same class as the unemployed, some probably having relatives in the procession.

So long as these things continue it is useless for the workers to complain about their lot. They must learn that Capitalism could not last a week if they did not co-operate with their exploiters. We know that many are driven by hunger to join the army or the police, but many more join for the extra money or the uniform. Whatever the reason, they are helping in the murder and exploitation of their fellows, and protecting the privileges of the great exploiters and monopolists.

Thus we see that the chains the workers wear are wrought by themselves. Most of them consider that chains of some kind are a necessity, and find fault only with the particular make they wear. Some like chains bearing the sign of a cross, some prefer those with a crown, and recently there was a perfect craze for chains stamped with a hammer and sickle. However, as soon as they are convinced that chains only serve to cramp their limbs and hinder their free movement, chains will become unfashionable. It is a hard task to convince them, but no progress will be made to that end by throwing on their masters all the blame for the festering sores caused by the chains.

I.W.W.'S MARTYRDOM.

J. Giesen, secretary of the International Anti-Militarist Bureau, has issued a powerful appeal on behalf of the seventy-five members of the Industrial Workers of the World now serving hideously severe sentences in the United States. The appeal is also a protest against the many other acts of almost incredible barbarity committed in that country against those whose crime was that they hated war and worked, courageously and openly, against as conscienceless a set of vultures as ever gorged themselves upon a nation's carcase and drank its blood.

These men had the audacity to stand between plutocracy and its prospective loot, and plutocracy went crazy. Every constitutional right was swept aside, and the Government, cringingly eager to do its master's bidding, set on foot immediately one of the vilest reigns of terror yet recorded. Men were thrown into prison by the thousands, lynched, tortured, driven into the desert, ostracised, and subjected to humiliations it is indecent to name, for the baser elements quickly realised that the Government would wink at their brutalities, and there was never any lack of "leading citizens" to organise and head the mob. All the parasites, seeing their profits jeopardised, got busy, and many of them believed that the long-threatened Social Revolution was about to break. A disgusting exhibition of cowardice, accompanied by all the cruelties that cowardice invariably begets. A shameful page.

The United States authorities have made no effort to wipe out that shame. The I.W.W. victims still rot in gaol, working out, in many cases, sentences of twenty years. President Harding will consent to a reconsideration only on the understanding that the prisoners confess their guilt and sue for pardon. This they refuse to do, saying truthfully that they have done nothing of which they need to be ashamed.

In all these cases the real crime for which these men were, and still are being, punished was—agitation. They were marked out for slaughter as being the most active and capable; as being, therefore, the plutocratic looters' most dangerous foes. It is a story as old as history. Even a hundred-per-cent. profit habitually sticks at nothing, and the war-profits of American millionairessdom were far above a paltry hundred per cent. The tiger had the supreme chance of all his voracious lifetime, and he made full use of it.

Giesen calls for a world-wide protest, addressed to the White House, at Washington. Certainly the bigger, and the more quickly, it can be made, the better. In fact, it should be continuous. Every individual voice raised will find its echoes, and the echoes eventually will mass themselves into a compelling roar.

DEATH OF RICARDO FLORES MAGON.

Ricardo Flores Magon is dead. Usually the news of a death affects me little, but in this case I feel differently. It is not because, after long years of imprisonment and exile, this indomitable battler for Liberty has died in gaol. Some larger sense than that of pity or personal bereavement possesses me. For reasons I cannot analyse this death appears to me as summing up a period, and arouses thoughts and feelings I find it hard to put in words. I have the feeling that some force which was essential has ceased to operate.

It seems to me that all who were brought into close relations with Ricardo Magon will feel as I do. Something had set on him its special mark. No matter what the conditions in which he found himself, he remained always a Somebody, a force to be reckoned with, a personality that could not be ignored. Even court and penitentiary officials, whose natural instinct it was to regard him merely as a law-breaker, appeared to me, when I discussed the matter with them, fully conscious of that fact.

As I think, it was because the man was so obviously sincere; so set in his conviction that, whoever else might be tamed into silence, he must speak; so intense in his determination to play out his part in that great struggle for the overthrow of human slavery which he individually, at any cost, must fight out to the bitter end. Whatever oppressed he hated, be it Government or Land Monopoly, Religious Superstition or High Finance. As a Mexican he knew how these had wrecked the life of his own people; as an Anarchist he understood that this was the fate also of the disinherited, of all who have allowed themselves to be reduced to helplessness, throughout the world. To most of us there comes at intervals a fit of righteous indignation, but Magon seemed to me a volcano that never slept.

If I remember right, it was at San Luis Potosi, some thirty years ago, that Ricardo Magon, then a young journalist, first leaped into prominence. Characteristically he came with a leap. The Freethought Party was in convention and, in accordance with its traditions, was centering all its denunciations on the Roman Catholic Church. Ricardo, as the story has come to me, literally stampeded the convention by a speech in which he attacked Porfirio Diaz, Mexico's omnipotent dictator, as the man who was selling Mexico to Wall Street and was, therefore, the real source of all the country's evils.

The point, of course, is that denunciation of the Church was at that time both popular and safe, whereas the attack on Diaz was unprecedented and full of danger. It brought Ricardo the lifelong comradeship of Librado Rivera, who henceforth shared all his fortunes and now survives him in Leavenworth Penitentiary; but it made him, his brother Enrique, and Rivera the special target of the Dictator's wrath. The trio, however, started and pressed with great activity an agitation on the lines suggested until, after several imprisonments, they found Mexico no longer possible and migrated to the United States. They had set the ball rolling. With great boldness they had started the economic movement that ultimately drove Porfirio Diaz into exile. As I see things, the mover of the movers is always the real man; but, for him, the road he opens leads directly to the Cross.

Ricardo Magon, I am very certain, foresaw this clearly, for in conversation he accepted it stoically as the price that must be paid. He was often far too greatly swayed by personal affection or dislike, and he seldom could find any virtue in those whom he opposed. But on fundamental issues I always thought him sound, because fundamental facts he would not flinch. Repeatedly I considered his condemnations most unjust, but usually the men he had criticised so harshly turned out to be the time-serving politicians he had branded them as being. He was most aggressive, most positive, and he made friends and enemies by the score.

I myself became interested in the Magons through the reading of John Kenneth Turner's "Barbarous Mexico," but it was their passionate hatred of a social system which seems capable of thinking only in dollars which drew me closely to them. For many years past it has been my settled conviction that the worship of the Calf of Gold is the most ignoble of all worships and the greatest of all barriers to that long step upwards which our race, by reason of the intellectual conquests of recent centuries, is now summoned to make. I have met many men and women who shared that view, but never any so saturated with it as were the Magons. I believe Ricardo to have been completely persuaded that for Mexico the worst of all possible fates would be to lie helpless beneath Wall Street's yoke.

The one great fact he saw was that all humanity was being bound to the chariot-wheels of a brutally triumphant Money Power, and that it must either free itself or perish. I myself hold that view. My study of the Mexican Revolution, and my contemplation of the manner in which Plutocracy had taken away from Mexico about everything which was worth taking, converted thought which had been largely vague and theoretical into unshakeable conviction.

Ricardo Magon was one of the most powerful writers the revolutionary movement has produced. Except when he allowed himself to be allured into deplorable polemics he did not waste himself on minor details. He struck invariably the major chords, and with extraordinary firmness. Throughout his work there ran always the appeal to the highest and, therefore, most powerful emotions; to the heroic. He demanded much of men. I doubt his having been acquainted with Nietzsche's writings, but he seemed to me another Nietzsche, though a democratic one. However, in such characters there is always a strong aristocratic strain. They insist on the best; on the realisation of their ideal in all its fullness; and for that realisation no sacrifice seems to them too great.

I have no wish to write either a biography or eulogy, and confine myself to a few personal reminiscences which may give some insight to the actual man. I remember him being forewarned of an impending prosecution, and his refusal to withdraw to a safe refuge, because it would "disorganise the movement." When, after a delay of many weeks, we got him out on bail, he marched directly to the *Regeneracion* office and within an hour he was labouring once more at the enormous correspondence to which he probably devoted fully eight hours a day. Never have I met so industrious a propagandist, his brother Enrique perhaps excepted. He lived poorly and, so far as I know, had no personal vices. Indeed he had no time for them.

On my first visit to the offices of *Regeneracion* I noticed a large packing-case and learned that it contained only copies of Kropotkin's "Conquest of Bread," for shipment to Mexico. For years these men pursued, with infinite tenacity and at a great strain on their slender personal resources, such spadework. Their great idea was the development of revolutionary personalities. They had an overwhelming admiration for Kropotkin; one, in my opinion, too uncritical.

When I succeeded John Kenneth Turner as editor of the English section of *Regeneracion* the circulation was about 17,000 and the paper must have been making money. Every cent of it was spent on spreading the propaganda. We had between 600 and 700 papers on our free exchange list, and got extraordinarily full notices throughout the Latin world. Our great aim was the uniting of Latin opinion, in Mexico, Central and South America, against invasion by the Plutocracy, and the creation in the United States of a sentiment strong enough to hold in check the intervention perpetually threatened. I believe Ricardo regarded this last as *Regeneracion's* special task, and that on this account he opposed the transfer of the paper to Mexico, a step I at one time urged.

In his book "The Real Mexico," Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, now editor of the *Daily Herald* but then a travelling correspondent of considerable note, treats of the unexpected fall of Porfirio Diaz, recognised by the United States as a Power of the first rank, with a large army at his back. Mr. Fyfe remarks that Diaz forgot one important factor, viz., a certain gentleman named Ricardo Flores Magon. I have always regarded that remark as accurate, and have looked on the Magons as the men who really set in motion the forces that ultimately drove Diaz into exile. I considered it a great accomplishment and a real epoch-making event. Diaz was the man who, as William Archer said, had sold his country for a mere song, and with the carelessness of a child blowing bubbles. His dethronement was the first check Northern Plutocracy had met in its triumphant Southern march.

When Madero succeeded Diaz as President he made the Magon's brother, Jesus, then a prominent lawyer, Secretary of State. It is within my knowledge that Jesus made repeated efforts to induce both Ricardo and Enrique to return to Mexico, assuring them perfect safety and quick preferment. These men were very poor. They had been subjected to repeated prosecution and imprisonment as inconvenient disturbers of the plutocratic peace. Yet they refused their brother's offers, persistently. That always seemed to me decisive. It may be difficult, and it is perhaps impossible, for us to understand the workings of Mexican thought and the ways of men who have in them so much of the old Indian blood. But that, at bottom, these men—Ricardo and Enrique Magon, and Librado

Rivera, who is still in Leavenworth Prison—were fanatically loyal to their Anarchist convictions I cannot doubt.

Well, Ricardo Flores Magon is dead, and surely "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well." Neither praise nor blame can affect him now. He died in the Leavenworth Penitentiary, U.S.A., when he had completed five years of the ferocious twenty-one-years sentence imposed on him for having written articles prejudicial to recruiting. He had been suffering for years from diabetes, and latterly he was threatened with total loss of eyesight. He could have purchased release by confessing repentance—a confession impossible to a nature such as his.

For months past organised Labour in Mexico had been agitating for Ricardo's release, and on hearing of his death the Parliament in Mexico City ordered its tribunal draped in black. The Government asked for the return of his body, that they might give it the burial suitable to one whose life was one incessant struggle in the cause of that emancipation which the masses in Mexico, in common with the masses throughout the world, have still to win. But his comrades have respected his principles and declined a Government funeral, and he will be buried at Los Angeles, California.

We hope that, inspired by the example of this indomitable battler, the people of the United States may rouse themselves to demand the release of the many political prisoners, martyrs to conscience, now rotting in that country's gaols. Such an achievement would be the most appropriate of monuments to the life and memory of Ricardo Flores Magon.

WM. C. OWEN.

THUS SPAKE FERRARI.

Among modern historians none ranks higher than does Giuseppe Ferrari, whose "History of Italian Revolutions," praised warmly by Ernest Renan, is standard. Ferrari maintains that every Government carries in itself the seeds of its decay, its own necessary functions finally killing it. His description of those functions we reproduce in part, both on account of its intrinsic merit and because it agrees with the analysis Anarchism has made. He writes:—

"Government protects society, defends it against the foreigner, and reduces itself to a war machine, a living fortress. Its whole reason for existence rests on its defensive function, and is summed up in its right to make war and peace. A careful examination of this formidable right shows that Government claims a legal power entitling it to commandeer men and money at its discretion, hold all citizens at its beck and call, make itself master of their persons, take them from their families and throw them to the cannon. Nor are those who remain at home any the less exposed to siege, famine, bombing, and destruction in all its forms. Here then we have it with its right over life and death, without taking into account its power to shoot on the spot deserters, traitors, the factious, or those who may threaten its overthrow. To these must be added its right to keep all its war operations secret—a right which embraces all its preparations for war, its intrigues, its surprises, and its spyings. This confers on it the right to lie, and legitimises despotism unlimited, for the safety of the public. Yet the right to make peace is no less cruel, even though it shows a mild and ingenuous front. It presupposes, in the first place, that the Government has a full right, and therefore a duty, to make to a victorious enemy any concessions needed; to raze to the ground fortresses that discommoded him; to pay him the richest of indemnities; to make over to him entire populations and deliver them in chains, even though it may have incited them in all possible ways to insurrection and the most extreme of warlike measures, in its own defence. This power to make peace implies also the power to preserve it, and to crush him who seeks to disturb the peace, even though he does so in the name of the most sacred principles. Instantly it has the property, the lives, the thought, of all its citizens at its mercy."

Ferrari goes on to show that every Government, whatever it may call itself, is necessarily conservative; for every Government intends that the pact to which it owes its existence shall not be broken. If it patronises science, art, or letters, it does so always for its own selfish purposes; that it may profit thereby, and that its own official position may be strengthened. As contrasted with the progressive thought and activities of its citizens Government remains inactive, inventing nothing, and thinking nothing new.

All this, of course, is the criticisms Anarchists habitually pass;

and if we quote Ferrari it is because the last eight years have shown conclusively how true to life is the picture he has painted. All Governments have been acting exactly as, by the law of their being, he said they would be bound to act. The great Italian historian of to-day echoes the old Roman cry: "Who shall guard us against our guardians?" A question society will do well to note. Our own special business, individually and as a collective movement, is to drive that question home.

"Free Society" Ceases Publication.

We regret to hear from our U.S.A. comrades that *Free Society* has ceased publication. They have fought a long and courageous fight under great difficulties, and we know the seed they have sown has not all fallen on rocky ground. We hope they will soon be in a position to revive the paper.

"TIERRA Y LIBERTAD" TO START AGAIN.

Tierra y Libertad, the well-known Spanish Anarchist paper, which some time ago preferred to suspend publication rather than submit to the censorship, will reappear in the New Year. Address all communications to the paper at Calle Cadena 39, 2°, Barcelona, Spain.

"Freedom" Still Needs Your Help.

We have managed to publish a six-page issue this month, but our need of money is as urgent as ever. If any of our readers are in the habit of making gifts at Christmas time, we would suggest they send one to *FREEDOM*, so as to give the paper a good start in the New Year. The following sums have been received to date (December 9):—

Concert (Workers' Friend Club) 19s., T. Y. Ma 5s. 6d., F. Hirsh £1 2s., W. Benson 1s., J. Dick 5s., H. T. 2s., T. Brothers 4s. 4d., G. Teltsch 4s. 6d., Vulcan (Dundee) 7s. 6d., E. H. Olds 5s., T. S. 5s., W. H. Sikes £1 1s. 8d., A. B. Howie 2s., V. G. 2s. 6d., G. P. 2s., B. Williams 3s., D. H. S. 1s. 6d., Per A. Denido £4 7s., A. Sanders 3s., Per P. Mantovano £1 2s. 3d., J. Bonatsos 8s. 8d., N. Levene 4s. 4d., A. J. R. 10s., E. Wright 1s. 6d., M. L. Sircar 4s. 6d., A. D. Moore 2s.

ANARCHIST DISCUSSION CIRCLE.

Meets every Saturday evening, at 7 o'clock, at the Minerva Café, 144 High Holborn, W.C. (second floor; entrance at rear in Bury Street). Open to all. Admission free.

Debate on "Anarchism v. Communism."

A debate on the above subject, between our comrade Wm. C. Owen and H. Sara (Communist Party), will take place at the Communist Hall, 4 Browning Street, Walworth Road, S.E., on Sunday, December 17, at 7.30. Doors open at 7 o'clock. Admission free. Come early if want to get in.

For the Benefit of Comrades in Russian Prisons.

A Masquerade Ball, arranged by the Group in Aid of the Russian Anarchists, for the benefit of our comrades imprisoned in Russia, will take place on Saturday, December 23, at the Empress Hall, Cambridge Road, Mile End, E. Commence at 8 p.m.

CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

(November 7 to December 9.)

"FREEDOM" SUBSCRIPTIONS.—C. D. Rodman, A. Comero, W. Benson, V. G., H. Compton, L. Caesar, Longwood Socialist Club, F. Cerullo, C. Newlander, D. H. S., M. Brodsky, S. Hartman, O. Caporale, A. Di Russi, S. Matarazi, J. Amitrano, F. D'Amico, J. Caruso, H. Holt, B. Black, C. J. Protheroe, J. Clarke, H. Bertoli, D. Boquet, W. Falconer.

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