

Freedom

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NOTES.

Slipping Towards the Precipice.

The invasion of the Ruhr has thrown a flashlight on the relations between Britain and France. It is no use disguising the fact that, unless French statesmen restrain their economic and political ambitions in Europe, war between the two countries is only a matter of time. Politicians and writers on military matters are calling attention to the large air forces possessed by France, and they are beginning to realise that the Government's inactivity on the question of the Ruhr is largely due to the overwhelming superiority of the French air fleet. Our "ally" knows how little the Entente is worth now, and, as a precaution against surprise attacks, has moved its aircraft manufactures and depots to the South of France. In the debate on the Ruhr in the House of Commons on March 13 Mr. Mosley said: "Statesmanship should lay down in advance, and be careful to observe, one fundamental maxim, that not another drop of British blood is to be spent in the European quarrel." He did not believe the present generation will consent to "the pouring of another drop of British blood down the gaping drains of its seething animosities, its racial hatreds, and its atavistic prejudices." But it is not a question of fighting in other people's quarrels, but of finding work and food for the forty million people in these islands. As the president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce said, Britain is dependent for the disposal of its products on the ability and willingness of overseas purchasers to buy them. "*Such a nation had handed its destiny, to some extent, into other people's keeping.*" We have allowed the monopolists to drive us off the soil and compel us to buy food from the uttermost parts of the globe, and we must of necessity fight to uphold our power to sell our products in exchange for that food. French Capitalism is working for the control of European coal and iron, which will automatically put British manufacturers out of business and British workers on the scrap heap. That will mean intervention or starvation. These are blunt facts which Mr. Mosley ignores. If we insist on holding fast to Capitalism, then war follows as night follows day.

Farm Labourers' Strike.

The strike of farm labourers in Norfolk and Suffolk may lead to an upheaval in the industry. With prices of agricultural produce cut in half during the past two years, farmers find their occupation anything but a paying one; and although a few still have some of their war profits to fall back on, most of them are almost bankrupt. As usual, their first thought has been to cut wages, which are now down to about 25s. per week; they seldom ask the landlords to forego some of their rent. Representatives of the farmers and labourers waited on the Prime Minister, to solicit his help, but he said the Government could do nothing. Protection was the only remedy, and to that the country would not agree. The present situation is tragic. Millions of people barely living on the paltry unemployed allowance, millions of acres of good land lying idle, whilst the people who produce food for the nation are unable to get a decent living out of it for themselves. That alone is sufficient to damn Capitalism. We Anarchists hold that no amount of patching will ever make the system tolerable, and the worst service that reformers and so-called "practical" people can do is to prolong its life. If farmers, labourers, and unemployed were clear-sighted folk they would start to cultivate the land and refuse to pay rent to the landlords. But their reverence for title-deeds and law and order is stronger than their reverence for their own natural rights as human beings. Therefore they must continue to suffer. They only can save themselves.

Snowden's Attack on Capitalism.

Mr. Philip Snowden's much-advertised attack on Capitalism has created some excitement in the Press, but the moderate and carefully worded resolution which he moved in the House of Commons will cause little anxiety to capitalists. It declared that "legislative effort should be directed to the gradual supersession of the capitalist system by an industrial order based on the public ownership and democratic control of the instruments of production and distribution." We have not noticed a slump in prices on the Stock Exchange, but we saw that on the day the resolution was moved three issues of new stock to the value of over £2,000,000 was over-subscribed almost as soon as issued. Mr. Snowden took the edge off the knife by saying "the Labour Party proposed no revolution, and he certainly would always resent confiscation." In other words, the Labour Party will buy out the landlords and shareholders at a price which will give them the same income as they now receive, and will squeeze it out of the workers. Why need the exploiters worry? Mr. Snowden's resolution is a political manoeuvre intended to spike the guns of the Communists, just as his Land Nationalisation Bill has been introduced to forestall Lloyd George's new land campaign. A resolution in favour of the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange was passed by the Trade Union Congress about twenty years ago, so no one can charge the Labour Party with undue haste. But the introduction of Mr. Snowden's resolution is a sign that the party is feeling the pressure of the demand for a revolutionary change which is stirring in the world to-day.

Medical Infallibility.

In the recent libel action brought by Dr. Marie Stopes against Dr. H. G. Sutherland and a firm of publishers, witnesses for the defence said that when birth control methods were necessary they should only be practised under medical supervision, and great stress was laid on the fact that Dr. Stopes was not a doctor of medicine. This claim of monopoly on the part of the medical fraternity seems to be based on the presumption that professors of medicine are infallible and only laymen make mistakes, and also suggests that when doctors give advice they are actuated solely by a desire to cure the patient. This is sheer humbug. They are as liable to mistakes as other mortals; and are exactly in the same position as others who sell their knowledge for a living, and have no higher standard of morality than other tradesmen. If doctors were to tell the truth to all their patients, half of them would be drawing the unemployed dole before six months were out. The motto of most panel doctors seems to be: If a patient is on the panel, don't let him get into bed; if he is a private patient, don't let him get out. They know how to make a good bargain, and always use their professional influence to forward legislation in their own interests. Most of our readers will remember how they compelled Lloyd George to grant them much bigger fees under the Health Insurance Act than they had obtained previously from the Friendly Societies. Some years ago, after King Edward had been operated on for appendicitis, it became quite a fashionable complaint among the class which loves to copy royalty; and many a surgeon laid the foundation of a prosperous career by operating on these foolish people, who parted with big cheques and little appendices at the same time. Even the recent smallpox scare was nothing less than a well-planned raid on the public purse, to revive the doctors' drooping bank balances. When medical knowledge becomes a monopoly it is as harmful as any other monopoly; and this "medical Popery," as Herbert Spencer called it, will have to be fought if we wish to call our bodies our own.

The next issue of "Freedom" will be published on May 1, and will be eight pages.

ANARCHISTS AND COMING REVOLUTIONS.

An International Congress which is sure to meet sooner or later will discuss, among other questions, *the action of Anarchists during a revolution*. To make this discussion as useful as possible, the ground should be cleared by establishing the points upon which we all agree, thus narrowing the field of controversy; moreover, differences of opinion are rarely settled by debate, and there is no need to continue polemics to the bitter end. As matters stand, more help would be given to the natural development of our ideas and action if new ideas, new arguments, were brought forward for future discussion and action to probe and sift. A congress is a convenient receptacle for the best intellectual efforts of as many as possible, but the real investigation of these proposals can only proceed from future study and experiment. A good international paper could combine both the accumulation and careful presentation of new ideas and arguments, and their examination in the course of study and experience, thus replacing the intellectual side of congress work, just as the travels of single comrades or groups of comrades to several countries, those which it is most important for them to know, could provide them with more solid information than will their temporary acquaintance with many comrades from all parts of the world during a congress.

At St. Imier (September, 1922) the problem was clearly defined, that not an eventual Anarchist revolution but revolutionary events, which in our times can arise from many reasons, should form the basis of the discussion; but this very essential distinction is not always made, and it would be disastrous if a debate lacking a common foundation necessarily drifted into various directions.

The possible form and features of the social revolution are not permanent, but subject to historical evolution, like everything else. Only the abstract truism is permanent, that if an overwhelming majority desired Anarchism they could by a social revolution, and one should think even without one, introduce Anarchism, and the question how to deal with the small number of opponents would be a minor detail. But to state this leads to nothing, as such a situation evidently belongs to very remote days, and moreover could only arise if Anarchism made continuous progress until then and all other parties diminished in numbers. This also would involve that Anarchism must be the most successful element in all revolutionary or peaceful evolutions occurring in the long interval. Consequently, the problem how to act during the *next* revolutionary events will also from this abstract standpoint be as important as the general question how to extend the sphere of our propaganda and action at *all* times—before, during, and after revolutions.

In the early days of Socialism and Anarchism a unique gradual or sudden social change by uniform action in the way either of experimental realisation or of revolution seemed possible, or this idea inspired at least the Socialists and Anarchists of those times. Babeuf and the Saint Simonians thought of imposing their systems by violent or peaceful means; Robert Owen and Fourier expected their experimental groups and colonies to spread and to become generally adopted forms of social life. Blanqui, Louis Blanc, and Karl Marx believed in action by revolutionised States; others relied on the spreading of associations or the gradual elimination of the State, and mutual arrangements by contract. Bakunin combined destruction and reconstruction, the free federation of the productive associations on the ruins of the State and private appropriation of the means of production. This idea for a very short time, between 1868 and 1870, came powerfully to the front in the International, and might have become the general doctrine underlying all the working-class movements in the Latin and Slav countries, whilst the Anglo-Saxon and German movements were then, as now, mainly based on State democracy. But the war of 1870–71 led to the disaster of the Paris Commune, followed by other revolutionary defeats in the Latin countries, 1873, 1874; and the large popular current of the later '60's was cut off and a few streams only, running underground mostly, transmitted the tradition of revolutionary Anarchism to a new generation in the '80's. In the meantime wars and capitalist colonial expansion, the capitalist plethora in general, prepared the War of 1914; and the State Socialist parties so thoroughly identified themselves with Parliamentarism everywhere that to their leaders a social revolution appeared as an absurd impossibility to which they did not care to give the least thought.

But the revolutionary current of the '60's came to the surface again in the '90's, and for a few years revolutionary Syndicalism re-occupied the whole ground which the revolutionary part of the International had held and more, taking root also in Anglo-American, Scandinavian, and German countries. Then again a unique social revolution inspired by the idea of Syndicalism seemed an event that was preparing, but this evolution was also frustrated, partly by the

internal decomposition of Syndicalism, which had defects akin to those which caused the degeneration of State Socialism, and partly by the War of 1914, which rekindled national hatreds and made the workers of the whole globe the humble tools of statesmen and capitalists, as if their social aspirations, their vows of solidarity and fraternity, had never existed. So everything seemed lost again.

Since then whatever has happened in the form of revolutions is not a genuine product of the revolutionary spirit alone, but is adulterated by influences connected with the War. When the late Tsar wavered and was no longer trusted by the Entente, the Russian radical revolution was encouraged by the Entente (March, 1917); and to break the renewed Russian war spirit Germany permitted a trainload of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks to pass into Russia; the Kerensky republic was upset, and the Russian war ended for a time. I have no doubt that both movements, once set on foot, led their own life and took genuine and gigantic proportions; but the point is, would all this have happened if this initial capitalist push had not been forthcoming? In a similar way the revolutionary undercurrents and initial facts of the so-called revolutions in Germany, Austria, and Hungary in October–November, 1918, were not unconnected with the Entente propaganda in these countries; and whatever of this character has happened since in Germany and Hungary (1919), and also nearly happened since in present Austria, is undoubtedly and often admittedly connected with Bolshevik—that is, Russian—aims, which are directed in part towards a general social revolution, but which also in part correspond to the national self-defence of Russia, which, like every *State*, is bound to reconquer her national prestige and territorial integrity, and to seek expansion as all *States* do. However all this may be in detail (worse perhaps than we imagine), the point again is that all these events got a lift from outside State factors by which initial difficulties were overcome, but by which a part of the movement, a great part perhaps, was vitiated. It is known what terrible dissensions raged among the Russian Socialists about the continuation of the war; it is also known to what extent the revolutionary efforts in Germany were discredited in the eyes of other Socialists in that country by their real or credited Russian connection, and to what cruelty and internecine struggles all this led. Thus we learn from the sad history of 1917 to 1922, when more revolutionary events occurred in several countries than ever before, that—as was inevitable in an age poisoned by war in every respect—all these events arose only under very *abnormal* circumstances, and, as if to emphasise this, revolutions, revolutionary attempts even, were quite absent in other countries. Even a situation almost crying for an outbreak, as that of Italy in the summer of 1920, was whittled down and ended for the time in the triumph of Fascism.

We see from this how small the revolutionary initiative of the people really is. Has it ever acted quite independently in a social direction? The Paris efforts of May 15 and June, 1848, are as inseparable from the first step, the *general* movement of February, 1848, as the Commune of March, 1871, is from the *general* movement of September 4, 1870, and all the local movements from October to January, 1871. Independent, direct movements found no support, as in Spain (1873) and in Italy (1874); they found considerable support in Barcelona in Ferrer's time (June, 1909) and in the Romagna, the Red Week of June, 1914; this is encouraging and proves that genuine direct movements can make their mark, though the fight is still terribly uphill.

Events since 1917 have had the effect of showing to the immensely developed Socialist and Trade Unionist or even Syndicalist bureaucracy, leaders, officials, and partymongers in general that revolutions *are* possible, and that they offer berths for them quite as comfortable as those provided by present Labourism. The Socialist rival or opponent may simply be killed (the gospel according to both Lenin and Noske!), party monopoly reigns supreme (called dictatorship—not of the dictators but of the proletariat!), Soviet Parliamentarism is no more to be feared than other Parliamentarism and is easily controlled—so power is within their reach and they see a wide field before them for pandering to the masses to get into power and pandering to the bourgeois by preventing, sabotaging, the real revolution.

We will have to reckon with these people. In what way can we count upon the masses? The experience since 1917 seems to show that they easily accept political and social changes, but that they remain as before; that is, they submit to the most moderate, least compromising, most governmental party, and try to shape their lives outside the social and progressive currents, as they always do. They do so by their instinct of self-preservation, as the weak and insignificant always best survive by not exposing themselves in any way. Thus, to my great regret, I must say that all parties except Anarchists are likely to get the greater support of the masses. I cannot imagine that if really that direct action as expressed by the initial Russian Sovietism of 1917–18 had had any hold on the masses the Communist Party would have been able to obtain their absolute monopoly; I conclude that the masses were indifferent, as they usually are, and let slip what they held without much caring for anything. I have not seen initiative, awakening, voluntarism of any

kind come from the masses to any appreciable extent. They cower and let the storm pass, as they always did.

This means to me that some day Anarchism will be as readily accepted by very many as any other system is now, but that we cannot count upon any extraordinary support from the awakened masses. In general, then, if in some parts of Europe events lead to a revolution, the situation will probably be about this: there will be some connection between the present and the then existing political situation, and this means that the example of such a revolution is less likely to be followed than it would have been in pre-war times; and to remove this obstacle a real solidarity and friendship between peoples, *real* internationalism, must be built up again, from which aim we are yet very far and which we do too little to promote. Then the existing Labour parties and Syndicalist organisations with their intricate mechanism, based upon self-interest far more than upon solidarity, will try to get hold of the reins by whatever means possible, and will secure by some befooling measures the support of the masses; they will also have that of the bourgeois and reactionaries, who will cling to them and make themselves useful just to prevent a real thoroughgoing social change.

To combat this we would probably not possess a much greater numerical strength than we have now, for if some dormant sympathisers awaken and join us, others in whom we trusted may leave us, as the Bolshevik defections have shown. What, then, can we do? Very few Syndicates may have a strong Anarchist majority, and any greater action would require arrangements, a compromise with revolutionary Syndicalists who are not quite Anarchist themselves and who have to reckon with other still less advanced members, and so on. We know that such compromise would be disastrous; still it would attract some and our ranks would be reduced by such Syndicalist defections, however well-meant they may have been. In short, the true Anarchist who wishes to influence the general course of events in the spirit of his ideas would be absorbed by organisms and forces much stronger than his own, and which he could not possibly expect to control—or he would become a politician, a dictator, like all the others. So it is but left to him to nail his flag to the mast and stand up for Anarchism as his natural right, which he can claim for himself in full; but *as to others*—here the main question arises.

He has two roads before him: to work to establish practical Anarchism, on a scale large or small, for himself and his comrades, or to work to impress Anarchism upon the whole or part of the new system, just as for many years he has tried to impress it upon his Syndicate or upon any other sphere open to him.

Which road is the Anarchist to follow? It is easy to say both, and this may often happen. But into which task is he to put all his heart. Again one replies: into either; but this is no real reply. Of course, the number of real comrades may be so small that neither decision is of much effect. But if their number is appreciable, in my opinion, at least, a stand should be made for *an independent realisation of our ideal* on a large or small scale, quite complete or undeveloped in the beginning, or we will be submerged by Syndicalism, by Bolshevism, or whichever of the old parties comes to the top.

Can this be done? It must be tried in any case, and it must be claimed in the name of *the right of free social experimentation*. This right implies the duty of leaving the same freedom to others. Whether this principle should at last be firmly asserted—which is my belief—or not, and to what extent it may be realisable even to-day, will be discussed in a further article. Here I wanted to define the problems with which we would be faced in a Revolution.

M. N.

An Unfulfilled Prophecy.

Marx and his followers have proved to be false prophets on many occasions, but the most striking instance we can remember is the prophecy made by Upton Sinclair, in the Introduction to his book, "The Industrial Republic," published in 1907. He says:—

"My purpose in writing this book is to point out the forces which are now rapidly developing in America; and which, when they have attained to maturity, will usher in the Industrial Republic by a process as natural and as inevitable as that by which a chick breaks out of its shell or a child comes forth from the womb at the proper hour. I believe that the economic process is whirling us on with terrific momentum toward the crisis; and I look to see the most essential features of the great transformation accomplished in America within one year after the Presidential election of 1912. . . . I write in all seriousness that the revolution will take place in America within one year after the Presidential election of 1912; and, in saying this, I claim to speak, not as a dreamer nor as a child, but as a scientist and as a prophet."

People who write like that hinder rather than help along a revolution, because their fatalist philosophy induces a belief that, as the revolution is inevitable, there is no necessity to work for it.

DEAD SOULS.

On reading Nikolai Gogol's great novel I wondered in which way he would treat the subject and what he meant by "Dead Souls." I found that the Russian landowners possessed a number of serfs, and they were considered great or small according to that number. The hero of the story, Tchitchikoff, in the hope of gaining a position of prestige and an estate of his own, went round to the various landowners, offering to buy "souls" that had died since the last census. We get incident after incident depicting the characteristics of Russian life, in the happenings of this adventurer in his quest for "dead souls."

A very fascinating book, full of humour and pathos, and worth anyone's while to dip into its pages. But the title "Dead Souls" seems to suggest other meanings than the theme described in this book, and, with apologies to Gogol, I would like to ponder over another line of thought and see what advantage may be gathered from such study.

I suppose everyone's views differ more or less on the questions of economics, ethics, morality, and religion; but, broadly speaking, it will almost universally be admitted that there is something within us that seeks expression in thought and action from day to day. In so far as we have ideas and ideals and strive towards their realisation, even though that realisation may never be reached, or our minds begin to fashion new thoughts before the completion of the old ones, this would be to keep one's soul alive. It is the constant striving to give expression to that in which you find the greatest and deepest interest that is true living. We should stimulate the qualities and conditions needful for this development, such as freedom of thought, understanding, equality of opportunity, etc.

In our present-day social disorder we cannot help feeling the great difficulties we have to face—the huge driving force of wealth and poverty, the damning effects of industrialism, with its overcrowding in our large cities, and its hungry faces. Men brought so low and helpless that they have to beg for bread; women striving with their miserable pittance to keep the home going, their attention ever glued to the sordid things of life; children dragged up in the most horrible surroundings. Dead souls indeed, dead to all that is beautiful, dead to the best things life can offer; their potential faculties stunted, the world being so much the poorer.

The greatest obstacle is the apathy and indifference shown towards these things. To overcome it is like trying to awaken the dead. We have too much organisation and too little vision and display of initiative. Trade Unionism concerns itself with making the best of a very bad bargain with a commercialism that is worn out, and deceiving itself with the hope of a revival of trade that is not forthcoming, the aftermath of war and the unsettled state of international affairs postponing any revival for a considerable period. Attention is centred upon Parliament, where many speeches are being made, but no real progress is making itself manifest.

If we desire to get out of this abominable way of living, bringing untold suffering to the many, with luxury for the comparative few, we should shoulder our own responsibilities, and become more and more self-supporting as a people by utilising the land for our common needs. Build our own houses, not look to the State or to contractors who would exploit us. Direct labour, whether in housing or anything else; that is, labouring direct for that which we need, without usurers or other parasites. If necessary, provide our own currency and banks for mutual exchange on the same principle.

Let organisation spring out of necessity, out of the natural sociability and fellowship between man and man in crafts and industries, each giving and taking the greatest freedom and striving to hand down to nations unborn a worthier civilisation, a better heritage; love of our noblest ideals, and desire to serve those ideals, being our guiding force.

This means hard work, sacrifice, and uphill fighting. The time for tranquillity is not yet. We must solve our own problems, not wait for politicians or Trade Union officials to lead us into the promised land. We have waited for this lead too long already; as the old proverb says, "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and many a heart is now sick with waiting.

There are two roads: the one you can shape and fashion with the stimulating help and free association of your fellows; the other, the one practised throughout the ages of blindly following the dictates of authority, hoping that it might lead to a better day, but feeling sure that the line of least resistance is the easier, even though the results are poor. It is this road that makes for "dead souls."

STANLEY OXLEY.

This is the history of Governments—one man does something which is to bind another. A man who cannot be acquainted with me, taxes me; looking from afar at me, ordains that a part of my labour shall go to this or that whimsical end, not as I, but as he happens to fancy. Behold the consequence. Of all debts, men are least willing to pay the taxes. What a satire is this on government!—EMERSON.

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Why Strengthen the State?

Everlastingly we are accused of being merely idealists, and this is precisely what we are not. The entire Anarchist movement clamours incessantly for facts; for ruthless exposure of the causes that produce objectionable facts; for extirpation of those causes. We loathe sentimentality because it cheats the masses into accepting the shadowy for the real. We hate vague generalities because they are invariably contradicted by the thing that is. Never can we believe in the philanthropist who puts up workhouses while manufacturing the paupers who will inhabit them. Never will we place one atom of reliance on the pious aspirations of those who are content to see millions starving while they themselves wallow in a luxury that knows no bounds. If a man professes to believe in human brotherhood he should stand ready to give every other man just as good an opportunity as he himself enjoys. Anything short of this is nauseating cant; and this is the particular hypocrisy with which the present age is rotten. No country more so than is England. None.

Freedom or Slavery? One or the other must be the better condition, and if freedom is the better it should be real freedom. The half and half is useless; the hybrid always sterile. Freedom to starve; freedom to beg or buy from others leave to live; freedom to elect some ruler, or install some cliques of rulers, whose edicts thenceforth must be obeyed implicitly—these things are shams and heartless mockeries of freedom. We make it our special business to expose them because they prolong indefinitely the life of a system which has reduced the masses to helplessness and, therefore, is slavery incarnate. The slave is one who is in the power of his master, and that is precisely the position in which ninety-nine out of every hundred Englishmen find themselves to-day.

Comparatively few of our people have capital, and without capital they cannot employ themselves. If you wish to cultivate a field, put up a house, or engage in any form of useful and productive labour, you must pay for the privilege of doing so; and pay to the rich, to the monopolists who have cornered the tools of production. If, having bought your way to the sources of production, you wish to market your products, you must have more capital, and you must also be able to command that credit which capital alone secures. Without these distribution cannot be effected. All along the line, therefore, the man without capital is helpless, and he who is helpless is always enslaved by those who have gathered into their own hands all economic power.

The foregoing analysis is either true or false; and if it is false it should be exposed as such, for the question is vital to everyone of us. We say that it is true. We say that whole libraries are written to evade it and explain it away, but that no one ever publishes an exposure of its intrinsic falsity. For example, thousands of articles are written to demonstrate that capital is necessary to labour, and of course it is, for you cannot hoe potatoes without a hoe. But no one has the hardihood to argue that it would not be better for the labourer to own his own hoe, instead of having to beg and pay some capitalist for the privilege of using his. Yet that is the whole question. It is not a question of whether capital is necessary, but of whether the gentlemen who monopolise the use of capital—who have cornered all the means of production and distribution—are essential to the existence and prosperity of life.

We Anarchists ask how this cornering has been effected, and by what means it is upheld. Our analysis leads us directly to the State, to the governing machine, as the fount from which these enslaving monopolies originally sprang, and as the power that still maintains them. It was the weapon wherewith the conqueror

enforced inferiority on the masses, and it is the weapon by which he still upholds that inequality of opportunity which makes them slaves. To-day more than ever; for never were social inequalities more monstrous than they are to-day, and never had the State the omnipotence with which the ignorant submissiveness of the masses has now endowed it. To-day the State and Monopoly work hand in hand. To-day it loads those in power with wealth and divides the earth among them; but all it does for the paupers it manufactures by the millions is to provide them with workhouses and give them, out of the pockets of the workers, fifteen shillings a week.

Socialists wish to conquer the governing machine, and so do we; but our idea of conquest is to throw it on the scrap-heap, whereas they dream of remodelling it, multiplying incalculably its driving-power, and converting it into a hospital for all mankind. To us that is not even a pretty dream. We do not want hospitals. We look around the world to-day and we see everywhere the State rolling in luxury and humanity in rags.

There are to-day thousands of intelligent men and women who are out of all patience with a system under which the masses are mere atoms in the grip of huge monopolistic, State-controlled machines; who know well that there is enough, and more than enough, for all; who understand that need for State or philanthropic charity ought to be to-day absurd; who look out on a State-governed world and see it wracked with anxiety, wasted by poverty, torn asunder by never-ceasing conflicts, and streaming with blood. Let them rally boldly to the banner of those who refuse to be cheated by illusions and have the courage to face their facts. They alone have strength; and now, as always, the battle is to the strong. If Anarchism is a fallacy, it will perish when brought under the light of criticism. If, as we believe, it is a vital truth, it will triumph and prove of inestimable value to all mankind.

The Ruhr Volcano.

The first number of the *Information Bulletin*, issued by the newly formed International Working Men's Association, is worthy of careful study; first, because it gives a full account of the International Congress of Revolutionary Syndicalists, held in Berlin, December 25 to January 2, and attended by delegates representing fourteen nations; secondly, because it contains a stirring protest and appeal "Against the Crime of the Occupation of the Ruhr." Appeals and protests are, of course, useless except as propaganda; but the French invasion of Germany is to-day, above all others, the subject on which it is necessary to conduct a clear, out-spoken, international agitation of the most persistent and unflinching type. Habitually the workers see easily enough any particular stick that beats them, especially if it is a local stick. The hard and all-important task is to open their eyes to the existence of those Powers, hidden far away back behind the scenes, by whose orders all the sticks are wielded.

We know now, to our most bitter cost, how relentlessly the forces of Imperialism and High Finance worked to bring about the Great War. They are again at work, and on an even vaster and more destructive scale. Towering ambitions are running wild. Insatiable appetites are clamouring for new and richer feasts. The game is played coldly, calculatingly, remorselessly, and behind screens the workers have no chance of piercing. It is to-day common talk that vast schemes for the economic domination of Europe are being engineered, and that the schemers work hand in glove with that Militarism which has been one of the chief pillars of human slavery since history began. The workers of all countries know well that these schemers are robbing them, on a huge and ever-increasing scale. On this one point they are united. On others the confusion of thought beggars description.

The German workers have no reason to love Stinnes and his fellow coal and iron magnates, and have little inclination to burn their fingers for the sake of rescuing those gentlemen's chestnuts from the fire. The French workers similarly have no special affection for the Loucheur crowd now controlling the rich mineral deposits of Lorraine, and openly credited with the ambition of ruling the European steel and iron market. Moreover, French

and German workers alike, noting the enormous profits both groups have made, and observing that the shares of their principal companies more than doubled in value as soon as the Ruhr was occupied, have some reason for suspecting that these supposed rivals may be secretly in agreement, and that at present they are merely wrangling over the division of the spoils. Quite openly it has been stated that Loucheur demands 60 per cent., which would give control to the French industrialists, and that Stinnes is fighting for the principle of share and share alike.

Here, then, we have an issue on which French and German workers might well unite, the one great obstacle being the apparent impossibility of getting at the actual facts. But another enormous difficulty intrudes. French Militarism has invaded Germany, and Germans feel about it just as Belgians and Frenchmen felt about a similar invasion nearly nine years ago. In the present writer's opinion, it is useless to pooh-pooh this feeling. It exists as a tremendous fact, and it can show many substantial reasons for its existence. Let us take only one. The laws of a man's native country are hard enough, when that man happens to be poor. What he understands clearly, however, is that martial law, imposed by a military conqueror, is ten times worse.

As we see it, therefore, the workers are presented once more with the identical problem put up to them so forcibly nine years ago. It found them (Socialists, Anarchists, and all revolutionary parties included) entirely incapable of grappling with it, and apparently the mental situation to-day is little better. Before us lies the latest number of *Der Freie Arbeiter*, a Communist Anarchist organ published in Berlin and completely in sympathy with Revolutionary Syndicalism. Its leading article, which occupies all the front page, is headed "The Counter-Revolution is getting ready for action: the Proletariat is marking time." Another danger, and a most menacing one; for, if the present semi-Socialistic Government fails to make its policy of passive resistance a success, there can be little doubt that Ludendorff and his militarists will endeavour to oust them, restore the Monarchy, and try a very different tactic. That opens up black prospects—prospects as black as this ink.

Meanwhile, what about this country? We English, Scotch, and Welsh are also concerned—concerned most deeply. We are a nation of manufacturers and traders, to whom markets are the very breath of life. Driven by the imperious whip of self-preservation, we shall be compelled to move; and we also are divided in opinion. As a whole, our workers and our middle-class, represented in the Liberal and Labour parties, view France's occupation of the Ruhr with growing hostility. As a whole, on the other hand, our aristocracy, represented by the Conservative Party now in power and militaristic in its sympathies, sides with M. Poincaré. Here also, therefore, all the materials for a stupendous conflagration are accumulating; and in such circumstances somebody, sooner or later, usually applies the match. Meanwhile, of course, French Anarchists and Communists, who have been pushing their anti-military propaganda with extraordinary vigour and courage, are being arrested by the dozen.

The problem with which the workers are now once more confronted will come up over and over again, so long as the present system of State-Capitalism, backed by all the forces of Militarism and organised coercion, continues to rule the world. Against it the antiquated tactics of a Trade Unionism which is essentially sectarian and parochial are utterly powerless. This the Revolutionary Syndicalists seem thoroughly to understand. It is the one encouraging feature in a situation well calculated to break the stoutest heart.

W. C. O.

For the Benefit of "Freedom."

A SOCIAL AND DANCE

WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE

CROWN HALL, 40 REDMAN'S ROAD, MILE END, E.,

On Saturday, April 28.

Doors open at 7 o'clock.

Dancing till 1 a.m.

THE CURSE OF GOLD.

In "The Menace of Money Power" Mr. Isaac has given us a book well worth the reading, if only because the author knows his subject. He has studied the social problem closely; he traces clearly the directions in which events and thought are drifting; he grips firmly the significance of the never-dying quarrel between the Individual and the State, and he presents us with an accurate picture of the structure of society as it stands at this moment, assailed by powerful forces from every quarter and shaking visibly under the assault. We Anarchists are attacking the fortress, and he supplies us with a plan showing its vulnerable points. The service is of the greatest value.

That blind faith which sees in the omnipotent State the Saviour of mankind will not easily retain its hold on anyone who takes the trouble to read this book, and the student will discover that distribution is the department in which the State has accomplished its most devastating work. The evil of land monopoly, which rests on statute law, we all begin to understand, but the workings of High Finance are more obscure. There the State rules supreme; increasing or diminishing at its own will the money supply; loading the community with debt; raising values for the benefit of the favoured few; depressing them, in the form of wages, for the impoverishment of the plundered many; and handing over to the Money Power whole nations reduced to helplessness. All in the name of Unity! All under the specious pretence that if the individual were allowed to make his own arrangements for the exchange of his own product, chaos would result! And under the paternal hand of State Monopoly the Russian rouble and the Austrian krone go to-day some millions to the pound, the German mark sinks out of sight, world-trade is at a standstill, and Big Business and usury sweep all before them!

Finance is a jugglery-trick, and the juggler is neither a useful citizen nor, in reality, an able man. He does not make; he takes. This he can do because the State has given him the monopoly of certain machinery, without which Labour can neither produce nor exchange its products; because it will not allow that machinery to be altered, enlarged, or superseded by apparatus more suited to modern needs; because it has decreed despotically that on one article alone, Gold, all the activities of mankind shall rest. In its necessity Society resorts to endless shifts—paper currency, bills of exchange, promissory notes, and other devices for the maintenance of that credit which is vital to the social body. Then, at the first breath of panic, everything collapses; for then all these securities must be redeemed in Gold. So Governments must hoard this precious metal, stowing it away by the ton in safety vaults and shipping it to and fro across the ocean; and men will ransack all the earth, and stoop to meannesses and crimes that seem incredible, for the possession of an almost useless bauble. The State has made it supreme. The State has placed it on the pinnacle whence it rules the world.

Mr. Isaac exposes the trick, as Proudhon, Tucker, and other Anarchist writers exposed it in the past. Starting with that monstrous Government monopoly, the Bank of England, he tells the story of High Finance; and he tells it entertainingly. It is good also that he explains what he calls "the clear-cut distinction between Capital and Finance." In his own words: "The province of Capital is production, that of Finance is exchange. The simplest tool of the primitive hand-workers is as much capital as the mightiest machine used in industry. The cowrie shell of the Pacific Islanders is as much finance as the biggest paper bond of a financial pool. Tools and machines assist labour to alter the form or the position of wealth; they do not change its ownership. Cowrie shells and bonds do not, and cannot, alter the form or the position of wealth; they but serve to transfer the ownership."

It all comes to this: Mankind, foolishly abandoning the principle of Individual Freedom, finds itself to-day in the grip of autocratic machinery, guided and controlled, in the last analysis, by State Authority. The great governing machine is crushing

* "The Menace of Money Power." By Charles Percival Isaac. London: Jonathan Cape, 11 Gower Street.

Man; and, in his profound ignorance of its workings, he lets himself be crushed. It is all a stupidity immeasurable. In the nature of things it is both just and reasonable that Man, the one constructive animal, should be given full liberty to exercise his genius, and be accorded freedom of production to the full limit of his powers. In the nature of things it is also both just and reasonable that the producer should be allowed to make his own arrangements for the exchange and distribution of his product.

This is precisely what the State forbids; and the State, unfortunately, has back of it not only armies and hangmen, but also a dense mass of ignorance it has itself begotten. "The people perish because of their ignorance," and we recommend to our readers Mr. Isaac's book because even Anarchists do not know it all.

W. C. O.

Enrique Magon Returns to Mexico.

The U.S.A. authorities ordered Enrique Flores Magon, brother of Ricardo Magon, to get ready to be deported on March 4; but he did not wait to be deported, returning to Mexico on March 1. Knowing his sad financial condition, comrades in San Francisco collected \$150.00 for him and sent him on his way rejoicing. Magon leaves behind his colleague Librado Rivera, still kept in Leavenworth Penitentiary by the Government. A collection made on his behalf realised \$40.00, which will help to mitigate the severity of prison life. Although the War ended four and a half years ago, many prisoners convicted under war legislation still languish in prison. Surely there is enough radical spirit in the States to shame the Government into releasing these victims of war-time hysteria.

International Anarchist Youth Conference.

A group of the Free Youth Union (Holland) has convoked, in connection with the International Anarchist Congress at Berlin, April 1 and 2, a Conference of the International Anarchist Youth, to acquaint each other with the situation in their respective countries and to work out a closer international connection between the Anarchist youth. We look forward to meeting some English comrades, and ask them to publish this notice in their journal.

On behalf of the Dutch youth, with comradely greetings.

Rollandstraat 97, Haarlem, Holland.

KLAAS BLAUW.

We Really Could Not Help It.

You will notice that this issue of FREEDOM is dated March-April. Why? Well, we had no money in hand, so we had to skip an issue. It is very bad policy to do so, but "needs must when the Devil drives." We started the New Year very well, and the Office Optimist thought a revival of prosperity was coming along; but, alas! it was not so. We try to be cheerful about it, but the financial situation gets worse week by week, so we must again ask our readers to send us as much as they can spare. We have arranged a Social and Dance for April 28, and hope you will help to make it a bumper benefit for FREEDOM. Even if you cannot come, you can buy a ticket (2s. each).

The following sums have been received to date (March 17): G. Wheatley 2s. 6d., G. P. 4s., T. Y. Ma 10s., T. S. 10s., N. B. Ells 10s. 6d., E. R. £2, D. H. S. 3s., A. Sanders 2s., A. D. Moore 2s., R. Gundersen 6s. 6d., W. M. S. 2s., L. G. Wolfe £1, Elizabeth £1.

Anarchist Discussion Circle.

Every Saturday evening, 7.30, at the Minerva Café, 144 High Holborn, W.C. (entrance at rear of the building). Open to the public.

Discussions have been arranged for March 24 and 31. Should it be decided to continue these gatherings, particulars will appear in the *Daily Herald* each Saturday.

A SOIREE AND DANCE,

Arranged by the Group in Aid of the Russian Anarchists, for the Benefit of the Imprisoned Comrades in Russia, will take place on Saturday, April 7, at the Empress Hall, Cambridge Road, Mile End, E. Doors open at 7. Commence at 8 sharp.

THE KRONSTADT REBELLION.

By ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

A moving account of the revolt of the sailors, soldiers, and workers of Kronstadt against the domination of the Communists, and of its bloody suppression by the Russian Government.

Price, Sixpence post-free.

FREEDOM PRESS, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W. 1.

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