

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Deadlock on the Ruhr.

The exchange of Notes between the "Allies" on the question of a collective reply to the German Government's Note has not brought the matter any nearer to a settlement. In fact, it has led to an intensified bitterness between Britain and France, and shown how deep is the gulf between their policies. In the debate in the House of Commons on August 2, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald made one of those "statesmanlike" speeches that he thinks befit the leader of a party that hopes in the near future to control the destinies of the Empire. His speech was in effect a declaration of war on France—but not just yet, as we cannot "successfully challenge the present military position of France." He congratulated the Government on having determined to "devise a policy of its own and to pursue it"; and he assured the Prime Minister that in carrying out the "general conception of British policy" he would have behind him "the vast body of the House of Commons, the great mass of opinion in the House of Commons." No member of his own party dissented, but it seems extraordinary language, for the "vast body of the House of Commons" is capitalistic and inflexibly opposed to the main principles of the Labour Party; therefore one must conclude that their "general conception of British policy" is, quite naturally, the opposite of that of a workers' party. Mr. MacDonald never referred to the position of the German workers in the Ruhr struggle, but he was nervous about reparations helping Germany to become a powerful competitor with us in the markets of the world. Meanwhile the great majority of the workers in Germany are suffering the tortures of the damned. Toiling incessantly, they get no reward. The wage they draw on Saturday loses half its value by Monday, owing to the collapse of the mark. Writing from Berlin on August 1, a comrade says:—"The conditions here are getting worse from day to day. Now we earn about 7s. a week. One can't even afford to buy margarine for the bread. And no one knows what the morrow will bring. It is a life without hope. The workers have lost all hope in their cause." And the great statesmen of the international Labour and Socialist movement do not lift a finger to help their comrades in their misery. The moral collapse of these men is as complete as the collapse of the mark.

Mr. Baldwin on Socialism.

When the Prime Minister of a Conservative Government holds forth on Socialism we feel interested, as the Conservative Party is the party which, above all others, represents Monopoly and Special Privilege. In his speech to the Scottish Conservative Club in Edinburgh on July 27 he expressed his conviction that the United Kingdom would show a united front against Socialism, which, he declared, would lead to the weakening and disintegrating of "our people." His principal argument was that the control of industry by the State would take away the sense of responsibility from the individual and ultimately turn the self-reliant man into a shiftless and a useless creature. We are afraid that argument will have little effect on the vast mass of the workers in this country. From the day when, as a child, he enters school to the day he is discharged from the factory a prematurely aged man the worker seldom gets a chance to develop the spirit of self-reliance, and there can be little sense of responsibility in an individual who tends a machine and makes the same monotonous motions all day long, year in and year out, a mere cog in a wheel. It is this endless repetition work which to-day produces the shiftless creatures who hang around the Labour exchanges when out of a job. Mr. Baldwin trotted out the old wheeze about capital being the savings of people who have exercised the primitive virtues of thrift and self-reliance. We think at once of the "primitive virtues" of the Rockefellers, the Levers, the

Liptons, the Harmsworths, the Baldwins, and similar thrifty folk. When a Conservative Premier condemns reliance on the State, he is surely speaking with his tongue in his cheek, for the peers and aristocrats, with Norman and Gaiety Theatre blood in their veins, whom he represents, rely on the State machine to protect the land monopoly and the other privileges by means of which they squeeze their wealth out of the industrious and productive class. If they were to cut adrift from the State, their power to plunder would vanish in a night.

Ignoramus or Liar?

Both Socialism and Anarchism are now well-established movements, and every one who discusses them publicly is supposed to know the difference that parts them. For at least fifty years the Socialists have been attacking us unceasingly for imagining that society could well conduct its affairs by mutual agreement, and without the coercive machinery of the State. Throughout that period we Anarchists have been retaliating that Socialism, seeking always to strengthen the governing machinery and equip the State with ever-increasing powers, is deepening slavery and reducing mankind to a helplessness from which it may prove impossible to rise. Between the advocates of these two opposite ideals there has always been war, and when the Russian Revolution came about the struggle became at once, and of necessity, most bitter. We Anarchists accuse the Russian Dictatorship of having climbed to an imperial throne by betraying the Revolution, and we assert that its main object now is to retain that throne. For its part, the Dictatorship regards us as its most uncompromising enemies, and unspeakably ferocious has been its treatment of us. Yet Mr. Jack Jones, Labour M.P. for Silvertown, can tell the annual conference of the Social Democratic Federation that the upholders of the Dictatorship are not Communists but Anarchists who have merely changed their name. If he spoke ignorantly, his ignorance is shameful. If he misrepresented wilfully, he is a shameless liar. And these Social Democrats, these dyed-in-the-wool Karl Marxists, applauded him! Lenin was Marx's highest priest, and only now, when their own system has proved unworkable, do these Social Democrats repudiate the men who tried to make it work. Marxism, however, they still profess; while we Anarchists maintain more stoutly than ever that Dictatorship is its very essence, and that inevitably it must produce everywhere the condition into which Russia and Italy, both under Marxian autocracy, to-day have fallen. Between us and State Socialism there has been always war to the knife, and there will always be.

The Tyranny of Passports.

Indignation against the tyranny of passports must be running very strong when the *Times* publishes such a letter as the following from a correspondent:—

"Before the war, the only country where passports were necessary was Russia, and rightly it was thought that this was a sign that that unfortunate country was wallowing in barbarism. During the war millions have laid down their lives, not so much for King and country, as for liberty, and what is the result? We have less liberty than we ever had before. Of course, the police and the Home Office like the passport system, but then they like all forms of tyranny. Is it right that we should submit to this tyranny? Do the police exist for the public, or does the public exist for the police? In present circumstances, this last would appear to be the case. Frontiers are a sufficient nuisance in themselves without the addition of passports. Let us abolish them."

We could not have put it better ourselves.

Push the sale of "Freedom."

RUSSIA TO-DAY.

By A. SHAPIRO.

(Continued from last month.)

As to the famous eight-hour day—the glory and pride of Soviet Russia—it is determined by §96 of the Labour Code and practically destroyed by §106 of the same Code, which says that overtime work can be allowed “for the execution of tasks necessary for the defence of the Republic and for the averting of social miseries and dangers, for the execution of tasks of a public character, such as water-supply, lighting, canalisation, transport, and postal, telegraphic, and telephonic service for the purpose of finishing work begun but which could not be finished in normal time owing to temporary breakdown of machinery for the execution of temporary tasks, such as the repair and restoration of machinery and structures, when their breakdown causes a stoppage of work for a large number of workmen.” It goes without saying that overtime work in Russia is not the exception but the *general rule* in almost all factories and workshops.

It is characteristic of the New Economic Policy that it has “freed” the Unions in the sense that a workman is not compelled now, as heretofore, to be a member of a Trade Union. Yet this emancipation is, as everything else, nominal and only on paper. The organisation of Trade Unions other than official ones is permissible. But §155 says that any economic organisations that are not registered at the local (territorial) Councils of Trade Unions “cannot call themselves Trade or Industrial Unions, nor can they appropriate to themselves the rights of the latter.”

Here again, outwardly, the Bolsheviks have their mouths full at present with “freedom of Trade Unions,” which, by the way, is only another way of admitting that they were *not* free during the first four years of Communism, while *actually* no group of workers can organise a Union unless it is registered somewhere, and this “somewhere” is, of course, just the tail-end of the Bolshevik machine!

That Trade Unions are not free in Russia is still more definitely demonstrated in §160, where are set forth the functions of the Factory Committee, which, as usual, is not an independent unit but the “fundamental unit of the Trade Union in any concern.” The Factory Committee is to co-operate towards the normal development of production in State concerns and to participate through the corresponding Trade (industrial) Unions in the regulation and organisation of national economy.

It is thus clear that the Unions are compelled by the State to co-operate with it in the organisation of industry, even where this development of industry goes against the interests of the working class.

But this “freedom” still further dwindles to State compulsion when we read §175, which says that decisions of Arbitration Courts when not carried out by one of the parties—say, by the workers—are referred to City Tribunals: the final decisions of these Tribunals are to be carried out by compulsion.

Is there any need to dwell further upon what is quite clear? As heretofore, the Russian Labour Movement is tightly fettered in the chains of State compulsion, just thinly covered with the one or two fig-leaf paragraphs on freedom of Trade Unions.

Freedom of commerce has not brought freedom to Labour, and the New Economic Policy in introducing bourgeois methods and bourgeois ideology has also been very careful to follow the capitalist principle—now extended to a State basis—in keeping the workman down and in forbidding the development of his initiative and of his yearning for freedom of action and freedom of organisation.

It remains now to say a few words about the different “freedoms” so much boasted about in Western democracies: freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of thought. We all know, of course, that these freedoms are, at best, democratic fakes: that they are always very limited freedoms. We are much more thorough in Russia: there we have done away with compromises, half-measures, reforms, and the like. There is not a trace of freedom of speech, freedom of press, or even of freedom of thought.

The system of State Monopoly has swallowed not only the production and distribution of material necessities of life, but also the production and distribution of intellectual and spiritual necessities of life. But while the New Economic Policy has introduced a certain relief by loosening the tight grip of State Monopoly on the *material*

necessities of life—a grip that wellnigh strangled and choked the population—this New Economic Policy has certainly not spread to the *intellectual and spiritual* necessities of life, except by introducing a series of illusory substitutes.

Thus, freedom of speech. It is impossible, up to now, for any group of revolutionists, whether they be Anarchist, Syndicalist, or of any other Socialist shade, to hire a hall for a lecture; the halls are under the control of the Soviet of this or that town, and as soon as you fill in the requisite form for the hiring of a hall you are safe in presuming that permission will not be granted.

On the other hand, harmless “ersatz” freedom, in the shape of lectures on art, abstract philosophy, sexual problems, mock trials of prostitutes, and the like, is flourishing and gives an impression of complete liberty of expression that is admired by the Communist visitor from foreign lands. People who visit Moscow for a short period return enthused with the broad liberties of speech which they have witnessed during their stay. But they were certainly unable to be present at a lecture or meeting that would be addressed by revolutionists. It was possible formerly to speak and lecture in the few Anarchist clubs that existed at one time, but since the complete smashing-up of Anarchist and Anarcho-Syndicalist activities, and therefore the smashing-up of the clubs too, there is *absolutely no possibility* of obtaining a hearing anywhere.

At meetings called by Trade Unions or by the State party not even the very mild and well-meaning exponents of Anarchism are allowed to participate in the debates, and if by chance a comrade happened to have his say he would soon be denounced to the authorities by the thousand and one officials swarming at these meetings, who to their official duties add the more lucrative one of secret service in the pay of the Tcheka.

It is still more lamentable with the “freedom” of the press. While the “ersatz” freedom of speech exists in the shape of Cubist art lectures and harmless philosophic debates, the stringent press regulations make such “ersatz” press liberties quite impossible. Very often *official* publications—issued by Government offices—bearing the official visa of the Censor are subsequently stopped as “heretic” and “subversive,” and the entire issue destroyed.

As to revolutionary propaganda by book or pamphlet, its possibilities have dwindled to an imperceptible minimum. The history of the “Golos Truda” is full of these difficulties. Pelloutier’s “Histoire des Bourses du Travail” has been prohibited for publication; so has Bakunin’s “State and Anarchy”; so has F. Oerter’s pamphlet on Syndicalism, because “it might be easily bought by workmen”; our comrade Borovoy’s booklet on Dostoevsky has been cut up by the Censor, who saw anti-Bolshevist ghosts in almost every sentence—for the sole reason, no doubt, that the author was an Anarchist. An attempt at publishing a small bibliographical bulletin has been stopped by the Censor: he has to give his sanction not only for the publication of books, but also of reviews, of newspapers, of leaflets, of handbills, of advertisements—in short, of everything that is to be printed.

The only press that is permitted to see the light of day is the one that has the official sanction of the State. Whether medical or philosophic, literary or artistic, political or scientific, the benediction of the corresponding State department is necessary before anything can be published. Then comes the Chief Inquisitor—the Censor—who, blue pencil in hand, passes over often enough even the holy benediction of these State departments and crosses out this or that, without rhyme or reason, without logic or sense.

But it is not only the freedom to publish that is absent; *there is no freedom to read*. As there is no other press than the official one in Russia, many naïve citizens have turned towards Europe for their intellectual food. But by a decree of the Soviet Government every one wishing to receive books or newspapers from abroad must first receive permission to do so from a special extraordinary commission set up for the purpose, his name and address to be sent to the Tcheka! And with a view to capturing illegal literature coming from abroad over the head of that commission, there are special censors attached to the Petrograd and Moscow General Post Offices who—besides dealing in the fine art of perustration, which is quite a regular phenomenon in Russia—have to stop any “counter-revolutionary” book or paper that may be sent from abroad to any unauthorised person.

There remains one other freedom to search for in Russia—that is freedom of thought!

Readers may think that I am either exaggerating or falsifying

statements when I paint in such dark colours the present situation in Russia. I can only affirm that my impressions which I have tried to impart to the reader are not the impressions of a tourist, but statements of fact, based upon my own experience gained by everyday participation in the life of the country from the first day of the Revolution. And if I speak now of the absence of freedom of thought, it actually means that in Russia you are compelled—outwardly, of course—to think as the State thinks, or, at least, to *act* as if you were thinking in the same way as the State does.

You must think you are for the Revolution as the Communist Party sees it; and if there is no scientific method yet found to detect your actual thought, *you are made to act* in a way you should have acted had you thought so yourself. Do you agree with that Revolution and with its developments? Do you accept as gospel everything that has taken place in Russia? Do you feel happy at the thought that, say, five years of revolutionary activity has elapsed since November 7, 1917, and that these five years are to be celebrated with enthusiasm and delight?

You may not think so—but the Government has seen that every citizen should, by some outward sign, prove that he *does* feel so!

Here is the "Order in Council" issued by the Moscow Soviet in connection with the fifth anniversary of the November Revolution. I translate it literally and in full:—

**"COMPULSORY ORDER OF THE PRESIDIU OF THE
MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND PEASANTS'
DEPUTIES OF OCTOBER 19, 1922.**

"PUBLISHED IN THE 'IZVESTIA' OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF OCTOBER 27, 1922.
(No. 116.)

"With Reference to the Hanging-out of the Flags of the R.S.F.S.R. during the Proletarian Holidays.

- "1.—All the house-managements are obliged, on the days fixed by the Soviet Power for the celebration of revolutionary events and on those of proletarian holidays, to decorate the house with the flags of the R.S.F.S. Republic, of red colour. The length of the flag material must not be less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ arshin, and that of the staff not less than 2 arshin.
- "2.—The flags must be hung up over the gates of buildings or should be fastened to the outer walls of the houses, but so that they should not be in the way of the passers-by.
- "3.—The carrying-out of this order rests upon the Administrative Department of the Moscow Soviet.
- "4.—The responsible representatives of the house-managements guilty of infringing these regulations will incur a fine not exceeding 10,000 roubles* or compulsory labour for a period not exceeding 14 days.

"(Signed) CHAIRMAN OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET.
SECRETARY OF THE MOSCOW SOVIET.

"On the forthcoming celebrations† the flags must be hung out not later than 6 p.m., November 6, and on each façade."

I had the great honour of being expelled from Russia at this very same moment—at 6 p.m. on November 6, 1922—but I daresay that the whole city, the whole country, was duly beflagged with the regulation size material and flagstaff, and that very few risked compulsory labour as compensation for daring to think otherwise.

Are any comments necessary as to freedom of thought in Russia?

* * * * *

This is sketched hastily and concisely, what I saw in Moscow during the fortnight in which I enjoyed "freedom of movement" upon my return to Russia, and the six days' grace which the Tcheka gave me to settle my affairs before departing into exile.

I crossed the Russian Soviet border on November 7, 1922, on the great anniversary of the Great Day in 1917 when all our hearts beat in unison and hailed the advent of Labour's Emancipation.

But that day is yet to come in Russia. The fight for the Emancipation of the Working Class is still before us. And instead of New Economic Policies—old enemies in almost the same old make-ups—we had better prepare for a New Economic Revolution which will sweep away political quackery and fraud, and bring to Labour its full rights.

(Conclusion.)

* 1922 currency, i.e., 100 million roubles of pre-1922 currencies.

† The fifth anniversary of the November Revolution.

MEXICAN WORKERS' FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

The New York Nation of May 23 contained a long and valuable article by Ernest Gruening, entitled "Will Mexico be Recognised?" The writer states frankly that he had been a strong advocate of recognition by the United States, and that four months' personal investigation in Mexico made him change his mind. He now thinks, after observing all the horrors of American military rule in Haiti and Domingo, that Mexico may congratulate herself on her present freedom from alliance with Washington. Mexico's spiritual and intellectual growth amazes him. "With unassisted effort," he says, "there has developed a new consciousness of self-reliance. With the non-interference of high-power 'development' there is emerging a different sense of values, a realisation of the inherent and always neglected possibilities of Mexico itself. . . . For the moment, and for the first time in a generation, the foreign overlords were voiceless by their own consent. Land, a new freedom and dignity for labour, an intellectual renaissance, a new appreciation of things inherently Mexican, an opportunity for Mexico to find itself spiritually, these seem to be the factors emerging out of chaos."

Ricardo Magon was right when he said, fully fifteen years ago: "There is chaos in Mexico, but out of that chaos will come some good for the poor and disinherited." Mexico had to tear herself loose from the strangling grip of Wall Street, which, though temporarily relaxed, is still clutching at her throat. Mexico's disinherited had, somehow or other, to recover for their own use the vast domains her former Dictator, Porfirio Diaz, showered on the foreign Plutocracy that kept him supplied with ready cash. Mexico had, and still has, to throw herself as a barrier against the onward rush of that Plutocracy whose aim is to corner the natural resources of the three Americas, and rule from the Canadian border to Cape Horn.

It has been, and still is, a frightful struggle. The outside world, as a whole, knows nothing of it. The revolutionary world, habitually exhausted by never-ending contests on its home battle-grounds, has but the dimmest conception of how important is the rôle Mexico has been compelled to play. Hardly yet is it conscious that a powerful shout of revolt, first uttered in Mexico by a fearless few, has aroused all Central and South America from slavish torpor.

The wealth of these new countries is incalculable. They contain everything Plutocracy longs to exploit, and Plutocracy expected to exploit those vast resources with the cheapest and most servile labour. That ambition is being baulked, and against those responsible for the baulking its fury knows no bounds. Blood is shed habitually like water. All the terrors of a legal machinery, constructed for and operated by the exploiters, are used remorselessly against the rebel. How dare the slave revolt? In the entire category of crime there is none so great as that.

Mr. Gruening is entirely right. The Mexican of to-day is a fighter for his rights; and barely a generation ago he was looked on in the United States as a crushed spirit, with all the fight knocked out of him. Life has sprung up again, invincible. Once more, and now on an incomparably larger scale, the will to have done with slavery has broken loose; and with every day that passes it becomes harder to chain it up again.

In this struggle the Magon brothers have played unquestionably a leading part, and their influence on Mexico's thought-development has been, in all probability, enormous. Ricardo died recently, on the very day when he was to have been released from prison in the United States, and the Mexican House of Representatives, awakening too late to a sense of his services and worth, went into mourning and decreed him a public funeral. This his family properly refused, and Labour took sole charge of the last services. About the same time Enrique returned to Mexico, and forthwith began a propaganda tour. Moving from State to State he was greeted by enthusiastic crowds, the workers of all grades pouring out of factories and mines to cheer him on his way. Vainly the authorities tried to suppress these meetings, and, according to our latest information, five indictments had been brought against Magon, but, thanks to popular indignation, only in one case had arrest been attempted. The charges placed against him are: Insulting the President, insulting the army, and treason against the State. This last charge carries the death penalty, but the despatch from which we take our information expresses the opinion that the Mexican Government will not dare to enforce it.

We shall see; and meanwhile we can only say that Obregon's Government appears to be acting as did its predecessors, and as it is the habit of Governments to act. Serious criticism is regarded as an insult to the ruler and treason to the country.

FREEDOM.

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Labour and Disarmament.

On July 24 Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the Labour Party, moved a resolution in the House of Commons deploring the growing expenditure on armaments and urging the Government "to take immediate steps to call an international conference to consider a programme of national safety, based upon the policy that by disarmament alone can the peace and liberty of small and large nations alike be secured." The motion was defeated by 286 votes to 169.

A few days later, on July 28 and 29, "No More War" demonstrations took place in many countries, the organisers in this country stating as their object: "To demand that the Government shall make a definite proposal for immediate disarmament by land, sea, and air, by mutual agreement."

Now we Anarchists are in hearty sympathy with those who wish to abolish war and the moral degradation which it brings in its train, but we consider that this can only be done by abolishing the causes of war, and that in proposing that Governments should call conferences to bring about disarmament the pacifists are putting the cart before the horse. If we abolish Governments we may abolish wars, but as long as we have Governments we are certain to have wars. To us this is so obvious that we wonder how it is that our well-meaning pacifists cannot see it; but we will state our argument as clearly as possible.

To-day, in every so-called civilised country, society is founded on the exploitation of the workers by a minority who have taken into their hands all the means of life. This minority control the Government, which keeps armed forces to protect their interests at home and abroad and to safeguard the monopolies by which they are enabled to exploit the workers. Each national group maintains the forces which they consider necessary for this purpose, in conjunction with those of other countries with whom for the time being they are allied. Prior to the War of 1914-18 these national groups of Europe were ranged in two camps—the Triple Alliance and the Entente. The War smashed the Triple Alliance and the Peace has smashed the Entente. New groupings are now being formed, and the War to end War has so intensified national hatreds and prejudices that there are more men actually under arms or ready for military purposes on the Continent of Europe at the present moment than there were at the time when war broke out in 1914. This in spite of the League of Nations and the Naval Disarmament Conference at Washington. Looking at the world, then, as it is to-day, can anyone say that disarmament is within the range of practical politics? Why, the world is full of rumours of war!

In any case, we should say that British statesmen are the last ones likely to advocate complete disarmament. Consider the plunder drawn from all parts of the world by British bondholders and capitalists, who look upon the Army and Navy as their debt collectors, now supported by the bombing squadrons of the Air Force. To imagine that these people would throw on the scrap-heap the weapons which maintain their privileges and protect their dividends is to imagine a moral revolution in the capitalist world. The mere threat of a capital levy sent cold shudders down their spines, whilst the stoppage of their tribute from abroad would drive them to suicide. No, we cannot see these gentry leading the way in disarmament. Besides, how would they keep Labour's nose to the grindstone at home if there were no armed forces? How long would their monopoly

of land continue if there were no soldiers to uphold the sanctity of their parchment privileges and title-deeds? Would there have been any "Black Friday" if they had not been able to put a blue funk into Labour leaders by their military manoeuvres throughout the country?

Some day in the future, however, we can imagine a reduction of armaments taking place, but not in a manner likely to benefit Labour or to make possible greater freedom for the smaller nations. Some day, when the lords of international commerce and finance see the folly of fighting each other for the markets of the world, they will fashion a new League of Nations, with a Council nominated by themselves, including perhaps a few tame Labour leaders who believe in the community of interest of Labour and Capital. This nominally impartial body will decide all disputed questions in accordance with the wishes of those who put it in power, and will have at its disposal armed forces at strategic positions throughout the world, which will be able to enforce the decisions of the League. The League, of course, will be the only munition-maker, and will employ a body of scientists whose task it will be to invent more and more effective bombs and poison gases, and larger and speedier aircraft to distribute them where necessary to uphold the prestige and dignity of the League, and maintain a constant flow of wealth into the hands of the Great Ones of the earth. By the international control of raw materials and of the distribution of commodities, constant employment and a minimum wage will be guaranteed to all. The Fabians will realise their dream of a well-regulated world without waste, and the Communists theirs of a universal Dictatorship. Thus will universal disarmament—plus the international police force—bring peace and security to all. This is not a fanciful sketch on our part, but embodies the ideas proposed by various reformers as a means of putting an end to war.

For our part, we think all the schemes for the limitation of armaments or disarmament are a waste of time as long as the capitalist system is in existence. They all tend to concentrate political power in the hands of a super-State, and instead of leading to greater freedom can only lead to greater slavery. At present the schemes could only be carried out by capitalist Governments, who would ensure the safety of all their privileges before they would turn one sword into a ploughshare. Monopoly and War stand and fall together.

SAVE NESTOR MAKHNO.

Nestor Makhno is a prisoner in the hands of the Polish Government and is to be tried shortly on a charge of organising uprisings in Poland, aided by Bolshevik money. At the same time the Bolshevik Government are asking Poland for his extradition so that they can put him on trial for his so-called "counter-revolutionary" activity in Russia. Our readers will find an account of the Makhno movement in FREEDOM for April, 1922. They will read there how, after accepting his help against Wrangel in the Crimea, the Bolsheviks broke their treaty with him and sought to arrest him. In escaping from the Bolsheviks he fell into the hands of the Poles.

When our Russian comrades in London heard of his forthcoming trial they decided to organise a protest meeting. The meeting was held on July 27 at the Mantle Makers' Hall, Whitechapel, and was well attended. The speakers were Wm. C. Owen, Sylvia Pankhurst, M. Hassine-Arnoni, and T. H. Keell. A resolution was carried unanimously protesting against his imprisonment and trial, and also against his extradition to the Russian Government, the resolution demanding his unconditional release. Copies of the resolution were sent to the representatives in London of the Polish and Russian Governments.

Protest meetings have also been held in other countries, and it is hoped that the publicity given to the case will stay the murderous hands of the reactionaries who seek to revenge themselves on this gallant fighter for the freedom of the workers and peasants of the Ukraine.

ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM.

By WM. C. OWEN.

32 pages, with Wrapper. Price, Threepence.

WANTED—A NEW PLANT.

He strolled slowly through the works, a heavy hammer in his hand. From time to time he paused before some piece of machinery, examined it thoughtfully, and dealt it a smashing blow. He was a wrecker, but he was also a most important worker, engaged on important business. It does not pay these large establishments to potter along with what has become obsolete and inefficient. Sound economy requires that it be knocked to pieces and committed to the scrap-heap.

This world is, of necessity, a gigantic workshop; but does anybody claim that its present machinery is up-to-date? Who, gazing on the blood-stained chaos in which we now are weltering, dares to pretend that existing institutions are working well? They talk of dreamers, but I think the real ones are those who close their ears to the groanings of a huge apparatus which no amount of human ingenuity can coax into running smoothly.

The human ant of to-day is struggling along under a load of regulations devised for his impoverishment, and for the enriching of his impoverishers, long before Christ was born. When the miner receives less than the duke gets for graciously permitting him to toil; when the tenement-dwellers of New York City sweat day and night to pay the rent demanded by the descendants of a gentleman who had the foresight, a century ago, to corner large sections of that metropolitan site; when England and Scotland, converted into a happy hunting-ground for the wealthy, are preparing to dump their superfluous workers on the distant wildernesses those same wealthy have fenced in already, as part of their own private compound—when we see all this going on beneath our noses, at what are we actually looking? At machinery perfected by the Cæsars pretty well two thousand years ago. At ancient machinery no more fitted to modern needs than would be the dug-out of an Alaskan Indian to the requirements of the British Fleet.

This antiquated plant is no longer workable, and all our frenzied efforts to patch it up are racking society from head to foot. In order that Monopoly—for, in one form or another, it is always a question of Monopoly armed with some Special Privilege—may still reign supreme, this great workshop of a world is thrown into, and kept, in perpetual confusion. The hive is found to be over-stocked, and a certain number of the working bees must periodically get out of it; honey-making must be stopped and the surplus destroyed. This process has now become chronic, and it operates on an ever-increasing scale. To many of the drones themselves it brings ruin, but its grand victim is always the working bee. He straggles feebly from his assured shelter, and dies, more or less lingeringly, of cold and want. If a trifle stronger than his fellows he may strive to wing his way to other shores, but there also he is not wanted. There also the hives are over-stocked, and the drones have more of their own slaves than they can handle.

If the workers had that ordinary business sense which distinguishes their masters, they would say: "This rubbish must all be thrown away, every bit of it; and we must put in its place an up-to-date equipment that can do the job." But the workers are under the influence of leaders who assure them that, given plenty of time and patience, they can tinker things up. Moreover, the drones have plenty of leisure for the cultivation of oratory, and they have at their command an army of satellites who make a speciality of that misleading art. Any lawyer will tell you that Roman law is the acme of human wisdom, although that same law brought about the downfall of the Roman Empire, and plunged us into the Dark Ages. Any Church dignitary will assure you that the existing system aims at the establishment of the Brotherhood of Man, although it seems clear enough that he who claims to be my Brother must ask for himself no more favoured seat at Life's banquet than he stands ready to yield to me. My own judgment, therefore, is that the workers must open their own eyes, and do their own thinking for themselves. At present, as I see it, they are killing themselves over the hopeless task of pouring Niagaras of labour into a prehistoric and gigantic sieve.

For my part, I merely invite men to examine their present institutions impartially and fearlessly; and to consider that the race which has conquered earth and sea and air is entirely capable of installing a new and adequate plant. But I am very certain that it will never work if constructed on any lines of Special Privilege; of the domination of the many by the few; of, in a word, that State Capitalism which is only another name for Military Imperialism of the most crushing and degrading type. Our task it not to bind but to loose; to throw down the barriers that now stand between Man and feeding-grounds of inexhaustible fertility; to force open the gates of equal opportunity; to toss slavery, as a worn-out implement, into oblivion and instal in its place the more competent equipment Freedom offers.

As I see it, Freedom is the only workable plan. Freedom of thought has brought us, in immeasurable quantity, all the means of satisfying every reasonable human want. There must now come Freedom to employ those means, and to gather—each one of us, and not any pampered minority or insolent majority—his full share of the harvest to be reaped. But we cannot have it both ways; and, since without work we cannot exist, our choice is simple. Either we work by mutual agreement, and as free men no longer helpless, or we work as slaves under the orders of those who, having cornered the opportunities of life, have made the masses helpless. For my part, I say that the former plan offers the surest guarantee to all and each of everything that makes this life worth living. As to the latter, I point you to our so-called Civilisation as you yourselves now see it.

After all, there is nothing truer than Tolstoy's simple statement: "The rich will do everything in the world for the poor, except the one thing needed—get off their backs." That means, of course, that the drone must go; that every exploiter who now exists by having cornered the means of production and distribution will be told that, if he wants to continue in existence, he also must become a really useful, fully productive working bee. As it seems to me, that is the Alpha and Omega of all this social struggle. For no Dictatorship, however it may label itself, have I the slightest use.

WM. C. OWEN.

SYNDICALIST SIDELIGHTS.

The Congress of the French Anarchist Union is to be held in Paris, August 12 and 13, and the official notice states that the four sessions will be devoted to discussion of the proposed conversion of *Le Libertaire* from a weekly into a daily. That paper has stood consistently for active participation in the Syndicalist movement; but its last issue, like many that preceded it, does not exuberate us. Apparently the Parisian Anarchists have been used as catspaws by politicians, and loud is the outcry against Monmousseau and the Communist Party. "These adventurers are poisoning the Labour movement with politics. They wish us to submit to their party's dictatorship. But that we will not tolerate. By trickery they have forced their way into the proletariat's house, that they may undermine its foundations and bring it tumbling down." The quotation is from a long appeal to the Confederated National Committee, which is headed: "Proletarian Violence. Triumph of Political Dictatorship."

This trouble seems to have been growing ever since the Saint-Etienne Congress, a year ago. The revolting Syndicalists protest against taking orders from Moscow, but at a recent meeting Monmousseau carried the day by a vote of 38 to 37, the barest majority possible. Evidently also the trouble is not confined to Paris, for *Le Libertaire* reproduces a circular issued from Bordeaux by the Federal Secretary of the Communist Party, Syndicalist Commission, Federation of the Gironde. It reminds each member of the Party that he is required, by virtue of the Party's statutes, to be present at all Syndicalist meetings in his district, and continues: "You are not to allow any reunion to take place without bringing forward and defending your own point of view, which must be necessarily (*forcément*) that of the Syndicalist Red International." In our judgment, if a thing is to be done

it should be done thoroughly; and if the Syndicalists want Dictatorship they had better have the real article. They will get sick of it the sooner.

The Swiss Anarchist Union presented to the International Congress a report which is reprinted in this same issue of *Le Libertaire*. It reveals a similarly miserable failure of all efforts to establish a united front. "Three years ago," it says, "we formed in Geneva, from among the different Syndicalist groups, a Committee of Action. It was the moment when Bolshevism was all the rage, and the Socialists, wishing to keep their voters in line, did not dare to oppose it, although they were determined to repudiate it at the first opportunity. The New Communists dreamed of the Dictatorship and of making all the world submit to Moscow's voice. We ourselves thought quite simply that, under the enthusiasm of the moment, direct action by the masses was becoming possible, and we sought to bring it to bear on different issues—the eight-hour day, rents, strikes, high prices, etc. What happened? From the very first, and how we do not know, this Committee found itself called together under the high direction of the Socialist Party. Thenceforth it confined itself to applications to the communal, cantonal, and federal authorities, and to the renewal of useless appeals to those in power. When a public demonstration was decided on, the masses made no response. Delays, deceptions, the rivalries of politicians had left them cold."

The report goes on to say that the Workers' Federation in Switzerland, "abandoning the Federalism and Syndicalism which characterised it twenty years ago, has become a centralised and political workers' union; and that, instead of the predominating influence being in the hands of the trades it is now in those of the Syndicalist Union's functionaries and employees." The conclusions reached in this report are that Anarchists, being only parts of the collective whole, cannot withdraw from Syndicalist activity, but that they must not compromise on principles. Opposition to the State being the corner-stone of their philosophy and movement, they cannot engage in parliamentary politics, look to the State for aid, or do anything that will increase or bolster up its power.

For his part, the present translator is gratified to think that the Swiss Anarchists, like those of many other countries, are beginning to understand that they and the Socialists have opposed philosophies, are pursuing utterly different aims, and cannot by any possibility travel the same road. This truth is being learned, at last, by experience; but if Anarchists had taken the trouble to master their own literature they would have saved themselves much wasted time and many heart-breaking failures. Apparently, however, they still do not understand that eight-hour laws, and similar stop-gaps, have no place in Anarchism's programme. They are Socialist and Trade Union subterfuges and opportunisms; and they are so obviously inadequate to present necessities that, even if they had at one time some element of worth, that element evaporated long ago. The masses, in this writer's opinion, act wisely when they refuse to rally to the tin-whistle of an eight-hour call. In itself valueless, the workers cannot hold it when they have won it. Of this Switzerland herself has given conclusive proof.

W. C. O.

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