

Freedom

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NOTES.

Premier's Plea for Peace.

Mr. Baldwin's speech in the House of Commons on the Trade Union (Political Fund) Bill has been hailed by the Press as a statesmanlike gesture for peace in the industrial world. He said he would not use the great majority at his command to attack the Trade Unions, as the one thing needed now was to remove the atmosphere of suspicion prevalent in the ranks of Labour and Capital, and to work for a close partnership between them. It looks to us like a case of "When the Devil was ill the Devil a saint would be." The chronic dislocation of foreign trade has forced the capitalists to put on their thinking caps, and, having found that drastic cuts in wages have not improved matters, they are now considering some form of co-partnership, which will persuade the exploited workers that they are partners in the firm and thus induce them to work harder and produce more. Some of the men's leaders are naturally suspicious, but those who aspire to be reckoned statesmen are willing to accept the olive branch held out by the wily Premier. Thus, Mr. Clynes says that Mr. Baldwin should be taken at his word. "Industrial harmony is even more important than fairness and equity in politics. . . . Peace in industry can easily be procured if a fair price is paid for it. That price must surely include a standard of living and a security in work which will justly reward the wage-earning classes of the country." In other words, Mr. Clynes is willing to continue the present system of exploiters and exploited, if the former will but be kind to their slaves. And this gentleman is one of the leaders of the Labour Party, which has frequently stated as its object the abolition of Capitalism!

A Corrupt Society.

The Law Courts have been busy for some time exposing the rottenness of our so-called upper class, whose members toil not, neither do they spin, but who have at their disposal enormous incomes squeezed from the workers. First, there was the case of the blackmailing of an Indian nobleman, who was trapped into an intrigue with a married woman, and who paid £150,000 to prevent an exposure in the Courts. For days the papers were full of the details of this disgusting case, most of these details being rehashed for public consumption, when one of the conspirators turned King's evidence in the trial of a confederate. Now we have the Dennistoun case, in which a colonel in the Guards admits that he received appointments from a superior officer with whom he knew his wife was committing adultery. Again, columns of the Press are occupied with the examination and cross-examination of the principals. On top of this comes the charge against a society lady of blackmailing a rich man with whom she had had sexual relations. The judge who had to try the latter case evidently thought enough harm had been done already by the previous cases, as he tried to persuade the parties concerned to settle the case out of Court, without avail. We can quite understand the judge's concern. Nowadays the privileges of the wealthy class are being challenged as they never were before, and such exposures as we have mentioned are more dangerous than all the orations of agitators. The history of Rome before its fall is a striking example of the disintegrating effect on that Empire of easily gained wealth, and its effect on society to-day can be seen by all those who watch events. We do not say the citadel of Privilege will fall of its own corruption just yet, but a combined attack by all those whom it oppresses would soon bring it crashing to the ground. The disunion in the attacking force is due to the fact that some of them wish to seize for themselves the privileges and power of the class they are anxious to overthrow.

The Prince and the Land.

One can hardly imagine the Prince of Wales reading Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," and we are not aware that he subscribes to that aggressive little paper, the *Commonweal*; but it appears that he is getting rather worried about the land question. Speaking to the members of the Surveyors' Institution, on March 17, he said that a few hours previously he had attended one of the periodical meetings of the Duchy of Cornwall Council, which administers his estates (he is also Duke of Cornwall). "It struck me very forcibly what a tremendous number of different problems—in the old country and in the new countries—all of us who have any connection with the land are called upon to face nowadays. These problems are not only varied, but they are, in many cases, extremely urgent." What a discovery! Why, agitators of all kinds—except the Labour Party—discovered the urgency of the land question long ago. But we are afraid the Prince and his friends look at the problem from a very different point of view to that we occupy. They are only concerned with the question as to how much rent they can squeeze out of their tenants, whilst we are anxious to stop them drawing rents any longer. Of course, the question is urgent. We have more than a million men out of work, many of whom could get a good living by cultivating land now laying idle. Besides, we have an overcrowded population crying out for houses, which cannot be built at reasonable prices owing to the extortionate charges which landlords demand for the land on which to build them, and for the materials in and on the land of which the houses must be built. These land problems, however, are not quite so varied as the Prince would have us believe. They are contained in one simple question—Have Englishmen a right to the soil of their native land, and if so, when will they abolish Landlordism, which blocks the way?

Where is Heaven?

This question is forced on us by the consideration of a few figures concerning the distance from the earth of the Great Nebula in Andromeda, published in a recent issue of "Popular Astronomy." An American astronomer has measured the distance, and, according to him, the nebula is probably at least 950,000 light years from the earth. A "light year"—the distance light moves in one year—is 5,880,348,500,000 miles, so that the distance of the Andromeda Nebula is 5,586,000,000,000,000,000 miles. Some idea of the vastness of this distance can be obtained when we remember that light passes from the moon to the earth in one second, and from the sun to the earth in eight and a half minutes. Now, as none of the astronomers has seen in all that vast distance any signs of the heaven the clergy promise some of us, we ask in all seriousness, where is it? And when spiritualists, like Conan Doyle, claim to speak to the "dear departed" on the "other side," what do they mean? Where is the "other side"? Is it beyond Andromeda? And when people die and "go to heaven," how long does the journey take? We must say these astronomers are setting religious folk some serious problems, but as the results of their researches are published in Christian journals, we suppose they know the answers. Speaking for ourselves, however, we cannot imagine any answer that would hold water, and we often think that if Freethinkers would concentrate on spreading the simple facts of astronomy, geology, biology, and other sciences, they would do far more effective work than they have done up to now. When the Roman Catholic Church put Galileo to death they recognised that his astronomical investigations were a great danger to their claim to hold the keys of heaven and hell, and his murder was an act of self-preservation on their part.

Militarism and the Social Revolution.

The following article was written for *De Wapens Neder* on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Dutch section of the International Antimilitarist Union.

The contention that experience is the best school of life was certainly not borne out by the world war. After years of slaughter, terrific loss of life, devastation of entire countries, and untold misery to the people everywhere, militarism is again raising its sinister head. Again the cry for a large army is heard, for new implements of war and destruction. The military clique is again at its old job, forgetful of the lie it has imposed upon the masses that the world war was to be "the last war, the war to end war, the war for peace and democracy." Now the dreadful war and the equally dreadful peace have turned the whole world into a huge prison, where democracy lies chained and the peoples are more than ever at the mercy of their slave-drivers. In the face of such an heritage from the ghastly moloch War, one would think that the workers at least would never again lend themselves to do the bidding of their masters, that they would turn their backs for all time against militarism and its inevitable result, war and human slaughter. But the memory of the human race is short and fleeting.

The greater the merit of the work carried on by *De Wapens Neder*, a work so heroically kept up for so many years and against all odds. It is with deep appreciation that I send a few thoughts on the nature and effect of militarism to the anniversary number of the brave fighter, *De Wapens Neder*.

Long before anyone in America thought of war the military clique clamoured for military preparedness. I then pointed out the dangers to the masses of militarism. I believe the same ideas expressed in my essay on "Preparedness" hold good to-day. I will therefore quote one or two of the most salient points. I wrote: "Militarism destroys the most productive elements of society, it consumes the largest part of the national revenue which might otherwise be used for more constructive purposes, beneficial to all of society. As it is, almost nothing is being spent on education, art, literature, and science compared with the amount devoted to militarism in time of peace. In time of war the situation is even more appalling, for everything is set aside on behalf of militarism. All civic life stagnates, all effort is curtailed, everybody and everything is sacrificed to the insatiable needs of militarism and war. In such circumstances militarism must become sufficient unto itself, drunk with power, arrogant with its own importance. If for no other reason it is out of surplus energy that militarism must fight, seek its enemies, or create them artificially. In this pursuit, militarism is whipped on by the State, encouraged by the Press, pampered and hailed as a liberating force by the school and the home. In short, it is the deity before whom everybody lies prostrate."

There are people who tell us that while these charges are only too true, they apply only to militarism in capitalist countries. With great pride they point to Russia, to the Red Army, the military force of the Workers' and Peasants' Republic. Alas for the new superstition that has been foisted upon credulous humanity.

It is true that the Red Army was created to defend the Russian Revolution. But, like all armies, it has become the tool in the hands of a privileged class, used to protect its interests. For that is really the dominant trait of militarism, that it creates group interests, which are always at work to increase its military power and at any given moment to create a war hysteria without which the peoples could never be rushed into war. The same hysteria which made millions of youths go to their death for "democracy, freedom, and universal peace," was at work in Russia, which sent thousands of heroic men to their doom. Only in Russia the slogan was "the defence of the Revolution, the achievements of the Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Republic, the sanctity of the Proletarian Dictatorship." In reality the masses of capitalist countries and the people of Russia were sacrificed for a delusion and a snare. Everywhere they fought, bled,

and died for the clique in power, for their age-long enemy, a crushing State machine which in Russia has destroyed the Revolution and has established the most formidable autocracy in the world.

The day will come when the world will learn that even in the defence of the Revolution the Red Army, as an organised force, has played but a secondary part. The heroic defence was really carried on by the workers of Petrograd, the peasants of the Ukraine and Siberia, the Povstantzy led by Machno. They drove back the Yudenitchs, the Denikins, the Koltchacks, and the rest. By this I do not mean to say that the Red Army has not had its share in the great struggle. I do, however, mean to say that without the burning faith of the Russian people in the Revolution, without their heroism in its defence, the Red Army would have failed utterly. Because the aim of the Revolution was the liberation of Russia from political and economic bondage, the aim of the army as interpreted by its commanders, its Tsarist generals, its political commissars, was the supremacy of power in the hands of a small minority, the Communist Party. The two forces were diametrically opposed to each other. So, while the Red Army was organised in defence of the Revolution, it gradually became the dominant force which helped to crush the Revolution. At the same time it has become a terrific burden upon the Russian people, whose labour, even as in capitalist countries, must go to feed, not their families, but the ever-growing appetite of the army.

The proof of that is to be found in the fact that Soviet Russia finds itself compelled to close hundreds of schools and institutions of higher learning, that it has not the means to minister to the needs of thousands of destitute children, that it cannot employ its hosts of able-bodied workers, thus increasing the number of unemployed. But it has the means to maintain its army, to give it the best of everything. Naturally an army must be humoured and fed to be held together. Certainly it is not love of army life or the faith in its idealism which keeps millions of men in its ranks. It is the life of ease and parasitism during peace and the so-called glory during war which hold masses of soldiers together. Added to this is the element of compulsion, as conditioned in conscription. But with it all there is hatred and desertion in the Red Army, because the Russians always loathed army life, and do so now more than ever.

It was precisely this innate hatred of militarism which was the strongest incentive for the Russian soldiers and sailors to help make the Revolution. Had they been permitted to remain close to the people, to help in the development of the Revolution, the rebuilding of life, the millions of Russian men now put into the straight-jacket of militarism would have been a tremendous constructive force. As it is, they have been turned into a class apart, a rigid military machine, an organisation of automatons who must obey the command of Russian generals and commissars, against the lives and interests of the common people. It was with gun in hand that Tsarist generals drove the Russian soldiers against Kronstadt, against rebellious peasants and workers.

If nothing else, the Russian tragic example alone should teach the masses everywhere the danger of militarism. Should teach them the lesson that the safety of the Social Revolution depends much less on the gun, as it does on the economic efficiency of the workers, their organised skill, and their revolutionary fervour. The success of the Social Revolution can be assured, not by the production of implements of slaughter, but by the production of the necessities of life. If the workers will know how to feed the country the day after the Revolution, to clothe and shelter the people, to bring joy and beauty into their lives, they will not need to fear the enemies of the Revolution, whether without or within.

And even the actual armed defence of the Revolution can be better assured by the active participation of all the people than by a separate and distinct military organisation, whose main characteristic is destruction, never the creation or the furtherance of well-being, harmony, and peace.

The war which is of interest to the masses should be directed against false values, against the evil institutions, against all social wrongs. Those who realise this kind of war must be against militarism which is imposed by Capitalism and the State,

and must organise for the overthrow of both Capitalism and the State. Industrial and spiritual preparedness is what the exploited masses need to bring forth a new ideal of brotherhood, to strengthen the Revolution, and to reorganise society in well-being, liberty, and harmony.

EMMA GOLDMAN.

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT.

Let us draw in rough outline a history of the *Social Contract*, more truthful than Rousseau's; let us reproduce in broad lines the establishment of political and civil administration.

A roystering blade, a fellow with a clear head and a heavy hand, espies a rock commanding a defile between two fertile valleys; there he takes up his position and fortifies it. This man in possession falls upon the passers by, assassinates some, pillages and despoils the greater number. Having the power, he has the right. The travellers who object to being maltreated remain at home, or go round another way. Being left to himself, the brigand reflects that unless he can come to some arrangement, he must die of hunger. Let the pedestrians recognise his rights upon the highway, and they shall pass the dangerous spot on payment of a toll. The pact is concluded, and the lord grows rich.

But, lo and behold, another hero, finding the trade a goodly one, takes up his station on the rock opposite. He too slays and plunders, and establishes his rights. He thus curtails the perquisites of his colleague, who scowls and grumbles in his donjon, but remembers that the new-comer has a sturdy fist. Corsair against Corsair is not business. He resigns himself to what he cannot prevent, and enters into negotiations; the first was paid, something must be paid to the second; every one must live.

Thereupon another rogue turns up, and installs himself at another turn in the road; and he too announces, from the height of his watch-tower, that he shall levy his share. His pretensions clash with those of his seniors, who very plainly perceive that if three halfpence are to be demanded of a traveller who has only two to give, he will stay at home rather than imperil his person and baggage. Our economists fall, Dick Turpin fashion, upon the intruder, drag him forth, abuse him, force him to take himself off. Then they claim two half-farthings in addition, as a just reward for the trouble they have taken in chasing away the spoiler, a legitimate recompense for the pains they are taking to prevent his return. Henceforth these two gentlemen become richer and more powerful than ever, and entitle themselves "Masters of the Defiles," "Overseers of the National Highways," "Defenders of Industry," "Sponsors of Agriculture," all appellations repeated with delight by the simple people; for it pleases them to be imposed upon under the mask of protection and to pay a large tribute to well-bred highwaymen.

It is thus—how admirable is human ingenuity!—it is thus that brigandage becomes orderly, extends, develops, is transformed into the mechanism of public order. The institution of robbery, which is not at all what a vain folk have imagined, gives birth to property and the police. Political authority, which was quite recently given out to be an emanation of Divine Right, and a good gift of Providence, was constructed little by little by the care of licensed highwaymen, by the systematic efforts of brigands who were men of influence. The police were formed and educated by ruffians who prowled about the outskirts of the forest, armed with a knotted cudgel, and shouted to the trader, "Your money or your life!" Taxes were the subscription, the premium paid by the robbed to the robbers. Joyous and grateful, the plundered placed themselves behind the knights of the highway, and proclaimed them the supporters of order, of religion, of the family, of property, of morals; consecrated them a legitimate government. It was a touching contract!

ELIE RECLUS ("Primitive Folk").

Were a historian like Tacitus to write a history of the best of our kings, giving an exact account of all the tyrannical acts and abuses of authority, the majority of which lie buried in the profoundest obscurity, there would be few reigns which would not inspire us with the same horror as that of Tiberius.—*Chamfort*.

STRONGLY ANTI-MOSCOW.

Evidently we have been misled respecting the attitude toward Moscow of *La Protesta*, the well-known Anarchist daily of Buenos Aires. It takes us severely to task for the article on that subject in the November-December issue of *FREEDOM*, and writes:—"We were the first to denounce the farce Moscow, with its solid front and calls for order, was staging, and we opposed the agents of the Third International, who were endeavouring to bring the Regional Federation of Argentine Workers (F.O.R.A.) under the control of the Russian Communist Party." Furthermore, over its own seal *La Protesta* writes us:—"We beseech you not to confound us with that tyrannic power, which is the old bourgeois chaos powerfully aggravated. The worst is that they are bleeding the Russian peasantry, and persecuting revolutionary ideas and their standard-bearers more ferociously than did the Tsars."

All this we are overjoyed to read, for the confusion that has reigned in many Anarchist camps—and more particularly, perhaps, among those belonging to the Latin races—has been appalling, and it has been necessary to take most energetic steps toward clearing it away. That, happily, has been already largely done, and to us it is most encouraging to learn that *La Protesta* and its following occupy a position that leaves no room for doubt. That is the all-important thing; and if, in a genuine effort to arrive at actual facts, we have misrepresented *La Protesta*, we can only say that we are sincerely sorry, but that we appeared to have excellent reasons for reporting as we did.

Here is what happened. Under date of October 17th, 1924, *La Antorcha* published a signed protest against the alleged pro-Moscow activities of *La Protesta* and the F.O.R.A. This protest was accompanied by a long list—set out faithfully in our article—of Anarchist papers, groups, and institutions represented as having been attacked and excommunicated because of their pronounced anti-Moscow position. Accompanying documents in confirmation of this protest had numerous official seals attached. The article in question occupied nearly six columns, and contained, among many other matters, criticisms on Fabbri and Malatesta, which are said to have appeared in *La Protesta*. To all students of the revolutionary movement the comrades just named are well-known as bitter opponents of the Russian Dictatorship, and *La Protesta's* alleged criticism of their activities seemed certainly to call for explanation.

Such are the facts, and it is difficult for us to see how *Freedom* could have acted otherwise than it did. Ambiguous positions need clearing up. Detailed charges on grave matters have to be reported, and chiefly in order that their falsity, when they are false, may be exposed. That is the invaluable service free discussion renders. It brings out the truth. As for ourselves, we report to the best of our ability on a huge and most complicated movement, whose activities are recorded in many languages. It is not a dully peaceful movement. On the contrary, it throbs incessantly with heated discussions, and, far too often, with personal feuds. On the merits or demerits of the combatants it would be ridiculous for us to sit in judgment, for we do not know them, and they are frequently thousands of miles away. We simply report—to the best of our ability, and with such time and energy as we can spare.

It is wicked to break the laws, we are told: it is very wrong to disobey the authorities. Why? What drivelling impertinence is this? Your very House of Commons was born in sedition. De Montfort was a rebel, a traitor. Your glorious Magna Charta was illegally forced from the supreme authority. What of John Hampden, who dared to refuse the ship-money demanded by God's anointed? What of the 'Mayflower'? Even New England cannot boast of a more law-abiding parentage than the Old Country. The Pilgrim Fathers were law-breakers and sedition-mongers. . . . If brave men had not resisted authority even to the blazing faggots, the black pall of superstition would still lie on the face of this land as it lies on the face of Spain.—*Wordsworth Donisthorpe*.

FREEDOM.

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Back to Capitalism.

We were no admirers of the late Samuel Gompers, but from the standpoint of Trade Unionism, and of its satellite, the Labour Party, Gompers' attitude was fully justified. After all, he did not beat about the bush. He did not pretend, as do our pseudo-Socialists and Communists, that he was out to destroy the capitalist system. He frankly told his followers in the American Federation of Labour to make the best of it, and drive the hardest bargains possible with the politicians of both parties. "If you want better wages or working conditions," he said in substance, "set the Democrats bidding against the Republicans, and sell your votes to those who bid the highest." In our opinion, a narrowly class-conscious policy; a selling of the magnificent heritage into which Labour can enter, the moment it chooses to do so, for a miserable but immediate dish of potage. On the other hand, it had the merit of being frank.

Comparatively worthless though it is, the great American Unions have, for the time being, their dish of potage. It is true that Monopoly wrings from them greater profits than are possible in any other country, or have been possible in any previous age. It is true also that they are scourged periodically by financial panics, and are then thrown out of employment by the millions. Nevertheless the great Unions have, when times are good, far better conditions than British Labour commands. And with that they are content. Year after year the American Socialists fought tooth and nail for the establishment of a Labour Party, and year after year the great Unions defeated them. Last year there was a breakaway, and the railwaymen's representatives consented to support a separate political movement. It failed, and they have now published their intention of returning to the Gompers' policy, already described.

Nothing could be more natural. Self-evidently men who do not believe that it is possible to change the existing system will try to make the best of it. They will not seek to oust their masters; they will bargain with them, as Mr. Baldwin and all our rulers urge so strongly. In this they will be entirely logical, and it is greatly to the credit of the American Trade Unionists that they are candid about it. Our own Trade Unionists, unfortunately, are not. Under the influence of its Socialist wing the Labour Party wobbles on two stools and contradicts itself incessantly with each side of its mouth.

Of the truth of this there cannot be the slightest doubt, and almost every debate in the House of Commons proves it conclusively. There you will find Labour Members declaring flamboyantly from time to time that they are out for a complete overthrow of the existing system, and there also you will find them working all the time for an increase of its strength and the consequent prolongation of its life. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and his coterie prate perpetually of peace, which means, in plain terms, that the class in power, whose rule is founded on the exploitation of the workers of the world, shall be troubled no longer by revolt against their rule. On the one hand, the Labour Party has just declared succinctly that "the interests of British workmen and of Trade Unionism cannot be helped by tariffs"; but, on the other hand, every time a subsidy Bill, or a fresh grant to capitalists under the Trade Facilities Act, is proposed, Trade Unionists and Socialists alike support it eagerly. What is that but a bolstering-up of the present system? What is that but Protection

under another name—a fresh granting of those special privileges which add to the strength of the system and prolong its life?

Take an issue of the very greatest importance, inasmuch as it concerns the international movement. (The Russian Dictatorship is in the market, bidding for the support of the leading capitalist Powers, in order to cement its rule. In payment it offers, at the expense of its own helpless people, concessions of incalculable value; and this cut-throat piracy the Labour Party endorses unanimously! Examine, for example, the pamphlet by Mr. Purcell, on the possibilities of trade with Russia, just published by the Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, on which various Socialist dignitaries figure. It urges additional money grants to the Dictatorship—necessarily out of the pockets of our own workers—and quotes, in approbation of that policy, the celebrated Mr. Urquhart! That gentleman was probably the heaviest plunger of all those who speculated so freely in Russian concessions under the Tsarist régime. He has been Chairman of the Board which has been pulling every string imaginable in the hope of recovering their losses.

We know well that the average Socialist is not in sympathy with these compromising tactics; for, if he has any sense at all, he must see that they serve to vitalise the very system he wishes to destroy. Unhappily, however, he still looks to the Labour Party for its destruction, and that party is tied hand and foot to the big Unions which supply the funds. On them every paid speaker and writer and organiser in the party is dependent for his livelihood, and the Socialists, from MacDonald downwards, all find themselves in economic bondage to organisations which do not hold their creed. The Trade Unionists, like their brothers in the United States, do not believe in the overthrow of the existing system. What they actually favour, as does the Russian Dictatorship, is a mongrel State Capitalism, under which High Finance will develop its own private enterprises at the public's cost. This the Labour Party attempts to justify by the plea that it will furnish work, but to us no more unjust or enslaving policy is thinkable.

Such is the position, as we see it. For the Labour Party itself, the position is most pitiful, but for the Revolutionary Movement it is almost tantamount to death. Yet few things appear to be more certain than that here and in the United States, as the two great capitalist countries, will come the final struggle between the old order and the new.

That Russian Report!

What nonsense it is! Seven working men, whose time and energies for many years have been absorbed in Trade Union affairs, are sent, as delegates of the British Trades Union Congress, to Russia. They go straight to Moscow, which they reach November 11th, 1924. They travel thousands of miles through that enormous country, halting repeatedly to receive and respond to addresses of welcome. They speak at official banquets, and, in their turn, listen to the verbose oratory for which Russia is notorious. They function at Trade Union demonstrations, go to the opera, attend concerts, inspect the Kremlin and other famous buildings; visit factories, mines, oil fields, prisons, art clubs, rest rooms, and what-not; and have, to say the least of it, a hustling time. They leave Leningrad, their last place of call, December 15th, 1924, their stay in Russia and Georgia having covered exactly 34 days. After this they render their report. It is a volume of 257 large and closely printed pages, illustrated profusely and with a glossary and copious index. Almost an encyclopædia, and all as the result of 34 days!

It was, of course, somewhat unfortunate that these industrious gentlemen could not speak, or read, or understand the language; but they had three interpreters, and they acknowledge handsomely the value of their help. The interpreters have to their credit long and distinguished careers in connection with our Admiralty and Diplomatic Services, and the preface tells us that they are responsible for the reports on the Red Army, the Soviet Governmental System, the Soviet Social System, Labour Conditions, and Transcaucasia, 143 pages in all. These cover the whole

field of Russian finance, taxation, industry, transport and agriculture, foreign commerce, the judicial system, social and religious conditions, education, the Press, art, public health, housing, and a number of other similarly light and airy topics, with accompanying charts and tables of statistics. To the delegates it must have been a relief indeed to have had more than half of this prodigious labour taken off their hands, but we confess ourselves somewhat astonished that they did not reserve "Labour Conditions" as their own special task. There, if anywhere, they might have been expected to have found themselves at home.

We say, at once, and with the greatest bluntness, that this Report is a disgusting fake. It has been got up to boost the policies of the Labour Party, which has committed itself to the support of the Dictatorship and is deluding our workers into the idea that a big trade with Russia will develop the moment our Government recognises her officially. We say it is a fake because it purports to be the result of the personal investigations of the visiting delegates, which it obviously is not. It could not be. No seven men could have even begun to cover so vast a subject in so short a time. By no possibility could the most skilful experts in existence have weighed and sifted this huge mass of highly complicated evidence, as they profess to have weighed and sifted it. They were absolutely at the mercy of their interpreters, and what they have actually done is to foist on an all too trustful public the glowing figures and carefully got up information that the Dictatorship saw fit to give them. The statistics with which this report is garnished so lavishly are not worth the paper they are written on, and for the following conclusive reasons:—

As everyone knows, Russia is ruled by a Dictatorship. As the delegates themselves are forced to admit, the matter being so notorious that it cannot be denied, the Dictatorship admits no discussion of its acts or utterances. For example, on page 121 of the Report we read: "No attack on the Communist Party is permitted. The authority of the existing Government is in all cases strongly upheld." And again, on page 118, under the heading, "Press Censorship," we are told that "a Government inspector from the Censor Office reads through the proofs before each edition goes to press," to which is added the following innocent remark: "The organisation and control on certain definite lines of the printed word is considered to be one of the greatest trusts and responsibilities of the present rulers of Russia."

Free speech in Russia is non-existent. For nearly eight years it has been suppressed with the most hideous cruelty; and with unmitigated rigour it is still suppressed. No one, under penalty of death—and the Penal Code now in operation contains section after section to this effect—dare criticise the Government's decrees. No one dare call into question the figures and alleged facts it chooses to publish. No check on its accounts is possible. The facts are to be accepted as the Government sees fit to declare them, and whoever ventures to cavil at them is guilty of treason. In all this there is nothing to be wondered at, for the first business of a Dictatorship is to dictate, and to enforce unfaltering obedience to its dictates. What is to be wondered at is the credulity of those who swallow greedily statements issued by a Government which treats investigation as a heinous crime. What is to be regretted most profoundly is the fact that leading Trade Union officials are content to impose on the public, as being the result of their own impartial investigation, statistics and other information emanating from a source so self-evidently tainted.

It is not a little peculiar that one of the delegates, Mr. John Turner, has been busy since his return in denouncing what he, as one of the signers of this Report, saw fit to praise so highly. Not many weeks ago he moved, at a largely attended public meeting, a resolution condemning in the strongest terms the Dictatorship's treatment of political prisoners. In the March issue of *Foreign Affairs* he sets out in crushing detail the Dictatorship's suppression of free speech. In the *New Leader*, of New York City, there has appeared recently the report of an interview given by him to the representative of a New York Jewish paper, and no avowed enemy of Russia's present rulers could have written in harsher terms. All this seems to us most strange.

What seems even stranger is the review of this Report given

in the March issue of the *Labour Magazine*, which is an official organ of the Labour Party. It asserts that "in practice there is complete control not only of the Press and platform and the political machinery, but of the schools, universities and army." To this it adds the reflection that "it is obvious that a political system based on the assumption of such governmental authority by a minority can only justify itself by results." To us, on the other hand, it seems most obvious that such a system implies necessarily a tyranny unbridled and a nation virtually dead—conditions from which no good can possibly result. However, this official organ is of the opinion that the state of things it describes so graphically cannot be regarded as constituting a "reign of terror," and its judgment of the delegates' Report is that "it is certainly the most searching, impartial and comprehensive survey of the Soviet system that has yet been made."

Amid the chorus of partisan subserviency we catch one strong dissenting voice. It is that of Mr. Brailsford, editor of the *New Leader*. His powerful article of February 27 ends with these words: "Without freedom no people can create; no nation can develop its mind, or put forth its best energies even in the material world. The new Russia may be a marvellous nursery for industrial children; it is not a Republic for grown men." It will be good for the Socialist and Trade Union movement to peruse thoughtfully that sober statement of an exceedingly grave fact. On the other hand, the circulation of this preposterous Report, even at the modest sum of 5s. a copy, is sure to do it ultimately a world of harm. To the rascalities of politicians the public is habitually lenient, but transparent stupidities it seldom pardons. When the fake is too palpable it feels insulted.

WM. C. OWEN.

YOURS AND MINE.

Distinguish carefully between these two:
This thing is yours, that other thing is mine.
You have a shirt, a brimless hat, a shoe,
And half a coat. I am the Lord benign
Of fifty hundred acres of fat land
To which I have a right. You understand?

I have a right because I have, because,
Because I have—because I have a right.
Now be quite calm and good, obey the laws,
Remember your low station, do not fight
Against the goad, because, you know, it pricks
Whenever the uncleanly Demos kicks.

I do not envy you your hat, your shoe.
Why should you envy me my small estate?
It's fearfully illogical in you
To fight with economic force and fate.
Moreover, I have got the upper hand,
And mean to keep it. Do you understand?

HILAIRE BELLOC.

The labourer who consumes his wages is a machine which destroys and reproduces; the proprietor who consumes his income is a bottomless gulf—sand which we water, a stone which we sow. So true is this, that the proprietor—neither wishing nor knowing how to produce, and perceiving that as fast as he uses his property he destroys it for ever—has taken the precautions to make some one produce in his place. That is what political economy, speaking in the name of eternal justice, calls *producing by his capital—producing by his tools*. And that is what ought to be called *producing by a slave—producing as a thief, and as a tyrant*. He, the proprietor, produce! . . . The robber might say, as well: "I produce."—Proudhon.

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By PETER KROPOTKIN.

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By WM. C. OWEN.

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THE RIGHT OF SECESSION.

Great States are formed by a continuous process of impositions and encroachments, thanks to which their boundaries are constantly enlarged. Hence the multitude and intensity of the revolts made by those whom the great Empires have incorporated by violence. The acts of violence committed by modern States against independent peoples may be ignored or forgotten by the men of our generation, but those who have suffered by them do not ignore or forget, and from the spirit thus created come those Nationalist movements which within the last few years have caused so much surprise.

We Anarchists have declared over and over again that we are Federalists in the fullest meaning of the term. We have repeated *ad nauseam* that we stand for the most complete liberty, and proclaim, in every sense, the independence of the individual, the commune, the city, or the district; their right to be absolute masters of themselves and to determine freely how they will live. From this point of view, therefore, we betray our principles when we oppose a separatist movement springing from the will of those who desire a separate political existence. Still less can we oppose such movements when we have before our eyes a picture of the historic acts of violence inflicted on the subjugated, and the bloody repressions they have experienced throughout the ages.

In a study on the historic State, Kropotkin shows that every State disappears from the scene when it becomes an Empire, that is to say, when the excessive violence with which it treats its people provokes the forced downfall of its despotic rule. We Anarchists ought to rejoice when we see one of these political monstrosities in danger; when we see it falling, undermined by the discontent and craving for independence of the groups of which it is composed. In no case ought we, in the name of Anarchy, to oppose the decomposition of these centralising Empires, unless we are willing to fall into flagrant self-contradiction. Our Federalism ought to be not merely economic, but also moral. It ought to follow our selected line of thought to its last consequences, and to recognise that if individuals and collectivities are free to unite, they are also free to separate, where, when, and how they please.

Sometimes, on behalf of a so-called working-class interest which transcends frontiers, we are urged to oppose separatist movements. I do not know how far, as regards certain of our propagandists, this appeal is sincere; but I do know that Anarchy, as such, cannot oppose any of these movements toward liberty, whatever may be its politics, or the so-called interests invoked. Anarchism is not Marxism. Similarly it would be possible, in the name of the interests of the working class, to combat Anarchism—that is to say, the sentiment of liberty for which Anarchists stand. The experience of these last few years has shown clearly the degree of tyranny we may reach by invoking the interests of the proletariat without conveying to it any sense of Anarchism's concept of liberty.

As compared with the political ideals of the centralising States, all separatist movements are characterised by a spirit radically advanced. Their partisans, from the very fact of their being continually hunted down and in conflict with the authorities, acquire a large-mindedness which inclines them to advanced solutions of the social problem. Nearly all Separatists are revolutionary in their methods. In the ends at which they aim they seek always something far ahead of the political structure accepted by the people that rules them. It is significant that among the new nationalities that have sprung up since the War not one has adopted the monarchical form of government; and that, as we see it, means much.

If Ireland has momentarily accepted a régime of autonomy, under the English monarchy, it has not been without strong resistance on the part of the Republicans, who desired to go the whole way. In Spain the Catalanian Separatists have made public their Republican declarations of faith. In the heart of Catalanian Nationalism there is a nucleus of free spirits which does not consider the Separatist movement a mere question of government, but is for pushing the movement on toward radically libertarian conclusions; towards the acceptance, in a liberated Catalonia, of Anarchic Federalism as the ultimate form of social organisation.

ENRIQUE NIDO, in *La Protesta*.

DECLINED WITH THANKS.

Among the invitations to lecture received by Emma Goldman was one from the Paisley branch of the Women's Guild of Empire. As the name of the organisation sounded rather ominous, she wrote asking for particulars of its aims and objects. In reply, the secretary sent a letter and some leaflets explaining that it was a patriotic body devoted to God and King and Empire. Emma Goldman thereupon sent the following letter declining the invitation:—

January 30, 1925.

DEAR MADAM,—Thank you for your letter of explanation of the 21st inst. I regret deeply not to be able to accept your invitation. All my life I have been against the iniquitous arrangements in society which raise one man to a king, while compelling others to remain paupers for life. In other words, the conditions which make for difference among human beings.

I do not happen to belong to the kind of revolutionists who proclaim that all the good is the heritage of the poor, and all the bad represents the characteristics of the rich. Indeed not. To me all human beings are alike in the sense that I want to reach their minds and their hearts. But, on the other hand, the economic conditions of society of to-day, unfortunately, create barriers between those who produce the wealth of the world and those who make use of that wealth; and since my sympathies are with those who toil, as against those who lead idle lives, I cannot very well speak under the auspices of any society which upholds the forces that make for social and economic inequality.

Perhaps if it were any other subject but Russia—say, Literature or the Drama or Women's Rights or Education—it would be less difficult for me to speak under the auspices of any organisation, no matter how remote from my social philosophy. But the Russian situation is so involved that one cannot be too careful in presenting the various phases. I mean by that, that while I am opposed to Bolshevism and fight it with all my abilities, I am yet in deep sympathy with the Russian Revolution and the Russian people; it is because I feel that there is an abyss between the Revolution and Bolshevism that I have taken my stand against the latter.

Having read your programme, I am quite certain that your opposition to Bolshevism includes also your opposition to any theory which stands for fundamental changes of a social and economic nature. Am I right? While I concede that you are entitled to your standpoint, I feel that I cannot discuss Russia under the auspices of a group of people who have no point of contact whatever with the ideals of the exploited and oppressed masses.

For this reason I am compelled to decline your kind invitation. I have no desire to hurt your feelings or the feelings of the members of your organisation, but I believe frankness is always the best policy; I should not like to come to you under false flags. I therefore wish you to know that I am an Anarchist, though not, of course, in the sense that you may have conceived Anarchism to be. I stand for the ideals of such eminent spirits as Shelley, Tolstoy, Kropotkin, and many others of the world's greatest minds. You see, then, dear Madam, that we are far apart in our outlook upon social affairs.—Sincerely yours,

EMMA GOLDMAN.

"OPEN VISTAS."

This "Bi-monthly of Life and Letters" is edited by Hippolyte Havel and Joseph Ishill, who say it is their intention to offer to their readers "the views of some of the great iconoclasts on social life: views subversive of the present order and emphasising the necessity for a complete social transformation." The first number (Jan.-Feb.) contains "A School of the Renaissance," by Elisée Reclus; "Work of the Artist and Savant," by Leonardo da Vinci; and "Oscar Wilde," by D. Anghel. An artistic production such as we might expect from Joseph Ishill, whose "Peter Kropotkin" we noticed in our columns some time ago, it should have a ready sale among those who regard Art and Revolution as inseparable twins. The price is 25 cents per copy; annual subscription, \$1.50. Address: "Open Vistas," P.O. Box 65, Stelton, N.J., U.S.A.

Nature has not said to me: Be not poor; still less: Be rich, But she cries out to me: Be independent.—*Chamfort*.

IN AN AMERICAN MINING CAMP.

We hung, staring, from the open windows of the train. Here eighty men had greeted Death in the dim, dank caverns of the mine—greeted him and struggled with a grim instinctiveness evolved through aeons of the human race. Some bodies had been found, scattered in the long, dark tunnels of the mine. Some lay alone in remote, still cells where, in infinite loneliness, the dreams of earth, the sunshine, and the spring became but mocking memories.

The bodies which lay in heaps spoke of the ancient human hope. Here they had rushed and clung together, believing that each would help the other. Questioning, encouraging, touching in the darkness, calling to each other that help would soon be coming; together they huddled in that last moment, welded in a human unity, flamed with fierce defiance by the urge which is Creation: believing until the end that Death was but a name; until, smothered by flame and smoke and gas, they lost that consciousness which leads Man to the door of Death, and then, without explaining, deserts him.

A scene, unfit for life, we stared upon as we hung gawking from the open windows of the train: a dirty, dingy railway station against a turgid sky; beyond, the cavernous mouth of the mine, belching thin, sinister gulps of smoke; the reeking, charred body of a mule lying at the base of a slag dump; crowds of pushing, seething, desperate women, bare of head and wrapped in shawls from Europe—women turned animal from horror, uncertainty, and grief. Squalling brats clinging to their skirts patched beyond description.

A giant truck-driver, of godly mien, with open shirt and smeared, hairy chest, watched the scene in grim silence and bitter contemplation: for all things die, and he, too, must die with them; but such a death! To have never lived: to have breathed a few short years without even the dreams of beauty, knowledge, and ordinary comforts; to have tasted only the miseries of life,—the daily dullness, uncertainty, and frustration; to have known only the defeat of desire and aspiration; to feel the hope of youth give way to tired approaching years. His eyes, filled with a thousand racial memories, stared in one direction: into the baggage car men were heaving newly made pine boxes—six feet long and two feet wide. In these lay miners in the cold horror of their last long solitude. For such is the end of Man, his dreamings of magnificence, his strivings and defiances; his songs of joy, his loves, his taunting merrymaking.

Impatiently the mine authorities watched the loading. An angrily weeping mother clung to a coffin, her son's name, in blue pencil, scrawled across the top. A fraud, that name—for no one knew what name that pile of black, charred flesh once bore. From the payroll they only knew so many suffered from an "accident"—certainly not of the Company's making!

The mother stood, beating her breasts that had suckled life, to still the consciousness of her ultimate impotence. Beyond her in black profile against the murky sky crouched and belched the gaping mine—a grim primeval Fafner guarding the stolen treasures of his masters, guarding the broken bodies of their slaves.

AGNES SMEDLEY.

THE HORRORS OF PRISON LIFE.

*The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison-air;
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there.*

—"The Ballad of Reading Gaol."

"What would you do with criminals under Anarchism?" is one of the stock questions of our opponents. Let us see what happens to them under the present system. Mr. Gandhi, on his release after two and a half years' imprisonment, wrote an article on the moral condition of Indian jails, which was published in *Young India* (May 1, 1924). He says:—

"I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the jails may be described as well or ill-managed cattle farms. . . . The prisoners do not become better for their life in them. In most cases they become worse than before.

"One would have thought that in the jail where every prisoner is under surveillance night and day, and can never be out of sight of the warders, crime will not be possible. But unfortunately every conceivable crime against morality is not only possible, but is committed with impunity. I need not mention small pilferings, deceptions,

petty and even serious assault. But I wish to refer to *unnatural crimes*. I will not shock the reader with any details. In spite of my many jail experiences, I did not think that such crimes were possible in jails. But *yerawada* experience gave me more than one painful shock. The discovery of the existence of *unnatural crimes* produced one of the greatest of shocks. All the officials who spoke to me about them said that under the existing system it was impossible to prevent them. Let the reader understand that in a majority of cases *the consent of the victim is lacking*. It is my deliberate opinion that it is possible to prevent such crimes, if the administration of jails is humanised and can be made a matter of public concern.

"By far the worst part of the system is the appointment of convict-officers. These men are necessarily long-term prisoners. They are therefore men who have committed the most serious crimes. Generally the bullies are chosen as warders. They succeed in pushing themselves to the front. They are the instruments for the commission of almost all the crimes that take place in the jails. A free fight resulting in one death once took place, because two such warders were concerned in the same prisoner who was a victim of their unnatural lust. Everyone knew what was happening in the jail."

Conditions in American prisons are quite as bad. Alexander Berkman's "Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist" is a terrible record of the brutality and vice rampant in the prison where he served most of his long sentence. And now we have official confirmation in "Crucibles of Crime," a book written by Joseph H. Fishman, "for many years the only inspector of prisons for the United States Government in territory embracing the United States, Alaska, and Porto Rico." He has visited 1,500 jails during the past sixteen years, and few of them are excluded from his condemnation. He writes:—

"As they stand at present the jails of the United States, generally speaking, are giant crucibles of crime. Into them are thrown helter-skelter the old, the young, the guilty, the innocent, the diseased, the healthy, the hardened, and the susceptible, there to be mixed with further ingredients of filth, vermin, cold, darkness, stagnant air, bad plumbing, and all brought to a boil by the fires of complete idleness. Only the strongest material can resist such fusion."

It almost seems as though these poor victims of society are deliberately brutalised in order that they may ensure continual employment for those who administer these degrading institutions.

FRIENDS OF ITALIAN FREEDOM.

SIR,—The suppression by the Fascisti of all freedom calls for sympathy with the persecuted workers of Italy from all in England who love liberty. The time has gone by when we can pass by in silence and leave the crime without protest, on the ground that we have no right to interfere with the affairs of another country. When the Italian middle classes suffered under King Bomba, the British people, led by Gladstone, denounced the tyrant. British Labour must do no less now that the Italian worker is under the Black Terror of Fascism.

The Italian terrorists, growing desperate as their black record mounts upwards, have now added the ex-service men and Freemasons to their list of victims. But for long, and principally, their aim has been to destroy the Co-operative societies and Labour organisations. They have burnt their halls, broken up their presses, dissolved their Unions, and murdered their members. Justice and freedom of speech and press have vanished from the land of Garibaldi and Mazzini.

A protest from British Labour is overdue. We want to publish the facts, rouse public opinion, denounce the oppression, and carry on the best of the traditions of that old freedom-loving public spirit to which Labour is heir. For that purpose we wish to form a body of Friends of Italian Freedom, and to collect funds for the agitation. "The Friends of Italian Freedom" will consist of (a) individual members; (b) affiliated organisations, which are invited to affiliate on a minimum subscription of 2s. 6d. a year.

It is proposed to organise: (1) A representative national conference at an early date, from which a committee will be elected to carry on the work; (2) provincial conferences; (3) a series of great

demonstrations. Also to publish literature and to furnish information and speakers to all desirous of promoting the movement.

Any man or woman prepared to join in the formation of such a body should send their donation to Colonel Wedgwood, M.P., 12 Beaufort House, Beaufort Street, S.W. 3, and their name to the acting honorary secretaries, Miss Smyth and Mr. F. A. Bagnari, 1 Pemberton Row, E.C. 4, by whom the receipts will be acknowledged and invitations to the conference be issued.

This letter is signed by Josiah C. Wedgwood, Robert Smillie, H. G. Wells, E. Sylvia Pankhurst, H. W. Nevinston, T. H. Keell, and many others.

An Appeal for "Freedom."

COMRADES AND FRIENDS,—Urgent necessity compels us to appeal to you for financial assistance for FREEDOM. We have been reluctant to do so, always hoping our position would take a turn for the better; but as it has not done so, we now ask you to send whatever money you can spare, as soon as possible. Our printers are pressing us for cash long overdue, and we have to give them something substantial before another issue can appear. We hope we can rely on a prompt and generous response. Donations should be sent to the Manager, Freedom Press, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.1.

The following sums have been received to date (March 21) since our last issue:—M. A. Cohn £2 1s. 1d., C. Hansen 4s., G. P. 4s., G. Wheatley 2s. 6d., J. Scarceriaux 4s. 2d., G. Teltsch 2s., San Francisco Comrades (per V. Ferrero) £2, L. G. Wolfe (2 months) £2.

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Emma Goldman's Meetings.

Under the auspices of the South Wales Freedom Group.

GARNANT.—Palais-de-Danse, Wednesday, March 25, at 7.30 p.m.
Subject: "Heroic Women of the Russian Revolution."

AMMANFORD.—Ivorites' Hall, Friday, March 27, at 7.30 p.m.
Subject: "The Bolshevik Myth."

GWAUN-CAE-GURWEN.—The Public Hall, Sunday, March 29, 8 p.m. Subject: "The Bolshevik Myth."

*Admission to all Meetings by Silver Collection to defray expenses.
Questions invited.*

Under the auspices of the Norwich Freedom Group.

ELECTRIC THEATRE, PRINCE OF WALES ROAD, NORWICH.

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, AT 7.30 P.M.

Subject: "Lessons of the Russian Revolution."

Admission free. Reserved seats, 1s. and 6d.

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Under the auspices of the British Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners in Russia.

ALBERT HALL, COOKRIDGE STREET, LEEDS.

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, AT 8 P.M.

Subject: "Labour under the Dictatorship in Russia."

Admission by Ticket only, One Shilling.

To be obtained from—JOHN HEY, 41 Queen's Road, Hyde Park; GEORGE FROST, 31 Windsor Street, York Road; SAM. CROOK, 32 Camp Road; MR. LIPMANN, 11 Brunswick Terrace, North Street; B. GOLDBERG, 14 Millright Street, Mabgate; MR. GOODWIN, 111 Burley Lodge Road; MR. B. KAUFFMAN, Boot Repairer, West Street; also at the door on the night of the Meeting.

A RECEPTION FOR EMMA GOLDMAN

Will be given by Leeds Comrades and Friends at the YORK CAFE, BOAR LANE, on WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, at 7.30 p.m.
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—WM. C. OWEN, in FREEDOM.

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