

Freedom

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NOTES.

Labour M.P.s Want Freedom.

Trouble is brewing in the Labour Party. For some time there has been much dissatisfaction with the lack of vigour shown by the heads of the party in pressing the question of unemployment on the Government, and also in dealing with other questions. This came to a head on the discussion on the Locarno Pact, when a dozen or more Labour M.P.s insisted on voting against it, although the party as a whole had decided to vote for it. Some were in favour of turning the rebels out of the party, but the trouble was smoothed over. Now, however, a small group has been formed the members of which say they are determined to press their point, that the party should hold up Government business "until they deal with unemployment on lines likely to be satisfactory." Unless they have their way, four members—Messrs. Wheatley, Wedgwood, Lansbury, and Maxton—have decided to decline to accept nomination for the forthcoming election of the Parliamentary Labour Party Executive, as membership of the Executive would deprive them of their freedom to exercise pressure on the Government. We do not expect that many will follow their lead, as the majority of the Labour Members are dependent on the party "machine" for their election. The rebels' personal popularity in their own constituencies would probably ensure their re-election without the help of the machine, so they are free to act in a more independent manner. Ever since the Labour Party had any strength in the House it has been its constant boast that it is as "respectable" as any other party, and it has always respected the rules of procedure. As these rules were framed when the Irish Party under Parnell were obstructing business week after week, they are quite strong enough to suppress such bubbling spirits as Lansbury and Co. These people are trying to eat their cake and have it at the same time. If they believe in Government by Parliament, they must submit to majority rule, which is the essence of Parliament. If, however, they kick against majority rule, their place is not in Parliament. Michael Davitt resigned his seat when he found his party ties hindered his freedom of action, and the Labour rebels must follow his example if they want more freedom.

More Dictatorships?

The French papers are hinting that as a stable Government seems impossible the only way out is a Dictatorship. Winston Churchill also hinted at a Dictatorship during the mining crisis last summer. There are more unlikely things than a Dictatorship in both countries, although here it would only be adopted by our rulers as a "regrettable necessity." But if people believe in being governed we cannot see why they should object to a Dictatorship. France is in almost the same condition as Italy was when Mussolini seized power. Unstable and weak Governments, every petty group in Parliament offering its support to the highest bidder. There are almost as many groups as members in the Chamber of Deputies, and their groupings from week to week resemble a kaleidoscope. Cabinet making seems a permanent occupation, and finance the plaything of the politician. What wonder if in these circumstances the French people looked to "a man on horseback" to clean up the mess. In this country Parliament is a Board of Directors for the exploiting class of the British Empire. They settle their differences in sharing the plunder by counting the votes of their supporters at election time. Of recent years, however, a new party has arisen which, in theory at any rate, is opposed to exploitation, and prevents the Board of Directors functioning in the usual manner. So the exploiting class may look round for another method of carrying on their work. And as they got their system of law from old Rome, why not a system of government from the new Rome? To us the real issue is, Dictatorship or no Government—Anarchism. Which shall it be?

Lloyd George and the Land.

If Lloyd George can manage it, the land question will be boomed by the Liberal Party in opposition to the State Socialism of the Labour Party—and incidentally as a means of working himself into the leadership of his party, although he scorns the allegation. He is now busy denouncing land monopoly in the manner which made him famous in the days of the "Land Song." The woes of farmers and farm labourers, industrialists and workmen, shopkeepers and others provide material for his fiery speeches, which rouse the indignation of his audiences and bring the roar of cheering so dear to the heart of the politician. But the land owners have nothing to fear from the proposals put forward by the Liberal Land Committee, as all the land required to carry out the suggested plans will be paid for. It is surprising how timid politicians become when dealing with landlords. For many generations these parasites have lived on the fat of the land without rendering any service to the community in return. They legalised their own robberies, and used their power in Parliament to make virtual slaves of their tenants. They use the land for sport while half-starved men and women are forced to go to far-off lands to seek a living. All these evils of land monopoly are the stock-in-trade of Labour and Liberal speakers. But instead of taking a bold stand and saying this robbery must cease, they meekly propose to buy out the robbers on their own terms. The State is to collect the rents in future and hand them over to the late owners of the land, the only noticeable change to the tenant being that he will pay his rent to a State official instead of to the landlord's agent. Lloyd George's perorations may inspire hope in the breasts of his audiences but they certainly will not scare the monopolists. Something much more drastic is overdue, and the longer it is delayed the harsher will it be.

Locarno and Disarmament.

Does any sane person really believe that disarmament and peace will be the outcome of the Pact signed in London last month by the representatives of the Powers? Germany is supposed to have voluntarily signed this document by which she agrees to relinquish all attempts to recover the territory taken from her by the Versailles Treaty, that iniquitous document which handed over millions of Germans to the tender mercies of foreign rule, and levied tribute on generations of Germans at home. Is it likely that while that treaty stands Germany will ever be a friendly neighbour? Her army is strictly limited in numbers and equipment, while those of her neighbours are unlimited. Her navy is at the bottom of the sea, and her mercantile marine at the mercy of the navies of her conquerors. Her industrialists see the raw materials of the world shared out by their commercial rivals, who give them a small portion as a rich man gives a coin to a beggar. Germany, therefore, signed under pressure, and the Pact can only be regarded as a truce. If it is followed by a reduction of armaments it will be because the Allies have discovered that as Germany is no longer burdened with heavy naval and military expenditure she is in a better position to compete in the markets of the world than her conquerors! The Washington Disarmament Conference stopped the building of Dreadnoughts but transferred naval competition to the construction of cruisers and submarines. All talk about disarmament is waste of breath so long as we have exploitation at home and abroad. The capitalists need armies and navies to protect their interests, and it is like asking them to commit suicide when asking them to disarm. They may reduce the number of infantry and cavalry while increasing the air force and the production of poison gas, but they will never permit their profits to depend on peaceful persuasion. Disarmament must be the work of the workers. Trade Unionists talk of international action to prevent war, but we have not heard of them refusing to build warships or make munitions.

Recollections of W. Tcherkesoff.

(Continued.)

Tcherkesoff came to London from Eastern Europe in the summer of 1892 with the set purpose of raising the Georgian question, of bringing the grievances of Georgia against the Russian Empire before the world's public opinion and before diplomacy as well, if possible. He acted most probably as the representative of a group of Georgian notables, among whom were comrades of his early Russian days, Socialist revolutionists of the great trials of the 70's, who had returned to the Caucasus after many years of Russian prison and Siberian exile. They must have been like himself in the beginning, nationalists and internationalists at the same time; enemies of Tsarism, but devoted to the Russian people; autonomists, not separatists; lovers of their native language, customs, and local life, but not bent upon founding a new State, with closed frontiers, hostile to its neighbours, and in short a reproduction in miniature of Imperialist tyranny.

This, at least, was Tcherkesoff's ideal in the 90's, an autonomous Georgia within the large circle of a Free Russia, composed of the Russian-speaking and other autonomous territories. He was well aware that an independent Georgian State, a thorn in the side of Russia, separated from Russia by some superior force, would be the slave of that superior force, which could be only England, attracted by the mineral wealth of the Caucasus. He scorned such a solution, and was thoroughly friendly to all adjoining nationalities, whether Russians, Tartars, or Turks. He had only good words for the character of the Turks, and if he disagreed with any people in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus it was with the Armenians, or rather their political leaders, who broke the solidarity of Oriental peoples and were ready to throw themselves at the feet of European Powers.

The foundation of his claims for Georgia lay in the Treaty of 1783 and the cession of succession to the Tsars by the last King of Georgia in 1801; on both occasions Russia had agreed to respect Georgian local autonomy, the Georgian language, and the Georgian Christian Church organisation. But these conditions were no longer observed, and Tcherkesoff's effort consisted in telling Europe that Georgia was not a conquered, rightless country, forcibly resigned to Russian rule, but had been, and therefore still was, a contracting party, deprived by the stronger partner of treaty rights, and appealing for help to see her rights restored.

Tcherkesoff's article, "Georgian Treaties with Russia" (*Nineteenth Century*, May, 1895), explains his standpoint; whilst the action of the Russian Government against the Georgian Church is described in a pamphlet of 24 pages, printed in London in December, 1900, the author of which was a very well informed Georgian Church dignitary, the father of one of Tcherkesoff's young friends. There were few other publications, if any, as the question as put by Tcherkesoff seemed quite hopeless: Russia pretended long since the full incorporation of the Caucasus, and resented therefore all foreign interference; and these Georgians at least did not wish to buy English support by entering the English sphere of influence. By and by others took these matters up, and, though friendly with Tcherkesoff, were, I believe, more nationalist and very much less Socialist than he was. I refer to those who formed the "Socialist-Federalist-Revolutionary Georgian Party," who held a conference in Paris in 1904 (the report, in Georgian, fills 258 pages, 1905), and issued the papers *La Géorgie* (in French, from May 1, 1903) and *Sagharthvelo* (Georgia), both in Paris, and various pamphlets. The movement had, therefore, extended, and most likely strong nationalist feelings and local economic and other interests outweighed the sweet and touching love of Tcherkesoff for the beauties of his country, which he knew so well how to describe, and which at times transformed the Freedom Group, supposed to be busy with dark Anarchist schemes, into a small audience spellbound by Tcherkesoff's graphic descriptions of early Georgian customs, of Georgian fruit and wine, and fair Georgian women. He was so happy to talk of all this and we were happy to have a comrade right from the Arabian Nights, and yet in other respects a very up-to-date comrade, among us.

I cannot say to what extent Tcherkesoff's personal ideas found expression in Georgia when the Russian revolutionary movement of October, 1905, had temporarily and to a degree established free speech and a free press, and he himself (1906-7) visited Georgia, this time openly. A paper in Russian, *Grusinskaia Mysl* (Georgian

Thought), March 11, 1907, expressing his standpoint, was immediately suppressed. He left Georgia that year, being charged by his friends to lay the Georgian claims before the Hague Conference: "Petition of the Georgian People to the International Peace Conference at the Hague, 1907" (London, June 18, 1907). This fact led to his prosecution and made him an exile again until 1917.

If the Georgian cause was infinitely dear to him and its harassing vicissitudes gave him great pain, the same must be said of the Russian revolutionary cause and the international Anarchist cause. He loved all three, and lived to see the first two causes deviate, if not degenerate, whilst he isolated himself in later years to some extent from the prevailing currents in the Anarchist cause, though it remained not less dear to him.

The Russian revolutionary movement, unable to destroy Tsarism by the heroic terrorism of the late 70's and early 80's, nor by rousing the slumbering masses of the peasants in those years, was then based on working-class movements, a right and solid inspiration, but unfortunately a move made under the auspices of fanatical Marxism. This was begun in 1883 by Plechanoff's group, and ten years later a Russian Social Democracy led by Marxist doctrinaires was firmly established. Similar parties, still more dogmatically Marxist, Engelsian, and Kautskian, were on top in Rumania, Bulgaria, and not the least in Georgia, where after the 90's Kautsky was the highest Socialist authority. Tcherkesoff saw this sterile dogmatism in full swing where in the past he had seen Tchernychevsky, Bakunin, and the revolutionists of real action. He looked around when he returned to the West in 1922, and found Jules Guesde in France, Bebel, Kautsky, and Bernstein in Germany, Marxism and Social Democracy everywhere proclaiming themselves the only representatives of Socialism worth the name *scientific Socialists*, as they styled themselves, vastly superior to Utopian Socialists and mere Anarchists. Then Tcherkesoff, single-handed, took up the cudgels and began to fight the Marxian Moloch, which pretended to devour every other kind of Socialism.

This struggle had already been fought on the lines of practical criticism of Social Democratic politics by the German Independent Socialists of the early 90's, many of whom, like G. Landauer, W. Werner, and B. Kampffmayer, became right-out Anarchists; by Domela Nieuwenhuis, Cornelissen, and others in Holland, who underwent the same evolution; but Tcherkesoff added the special feature of scrutinising the principal Marxist theories, assertions, and hypotheses which in the eyes of the believers had become strict articles of faith, and moreover passed as original discoveries of Marx and Engels, who had raised Socialism from the misty dimness of Utopianism to the bright level of science. Here Tcherkesoff did eminently useful work in exposing the hollowness of most of these claims. He restated the forgotten ideas and results of the early Socialists, and pointed out what Marx and Engels owed to these forerunners, whom they, and still more their modern ignorant adulators, affected to consider as obsolete old fogies. He also examined in detail certain theories based on the economic situation and its trend in the 40's and 50's, and showed that later developments had taken another course and that Marx had not at all been able to abstract or even to foresee iron economic laws and economic developments, as his followers believed. Thus, the materialist conception of history and its supposed Marxian originality, the concentration of capital, and other cornerstones of Marxism were shaken, and the eyes of those exclusively fascinated by Marxism had a chance to be opened.

"Pages of Socialist History" and "Forerunners of the International" are booklets comprising the principal studies first published in *FREEDOM* and the *Temps Nouveaux* (Paris). During the London International Socialist Congress of 1896 "Let us be Just: An Open Letter to Liebknecht" was published. "Doctrines of Marxism: I. Is this Science?" is a Russian pamphlet (Geneva, 1903).

Tcherkesoff passed the 90's, from the summer of 1892, in London, in close friendship with Kropotkin, Malatesta, Stepniak, Paul Reclus, B. Kampffmayer, and others. I saw him first at Kropotkin's in 1892, and when I lived in Harlesden, from 1894 onward, he often walked across the fields from Acton to visit me, always full of anti-Marxist discoveries, interested as well in every feature of the Anarchist and the rising Syndicalist movements, in the Russian revolution, in the politics of the Near East, and in his beloved Georgia. He was both realist and idealist, seeing very clearly the real facts of complicated matters, the naked and often bitter truth, and yet being carried away by his wish to see things in

a better, a more social and hopeful light—through rose-coloured spectacles, as I used to tell him. It was cheering to pass some hours with him, and I admire still his patience with me, as I did not see most things as rose-coloured as he did and may have thrown cold water on some of his cherished fancies. Still, we never had a shadow of ill-feeling between us.

I have often thought since that it was a great pity that his criticism of Marxism was not more strongly supported and strengthened by the intellectual forces of Anarchism in those years. What he tried to prove appeared to us so very obvious and was generally accepted, but the Marxist infection required a much more thorough treatment. Tcherkesoff scratched and shook the thick wall of Marxist prejudice, but he did not overturn and shatter it; very much more well-directed effort and close study was required. Thus, instead of falling to pieces or being scattered by the wind like a dry toadstool, Marxism was patched up in two directions, both developments very disastrous to Socialism in general. I refer to the reformist movement of E. Bernstein, which finally emasculated Social Democracy, and to the brutalising movement of Lenin, which degraded Socialism into a system henceforth forced upon men by dictatorial terrorism, no longer joyfully accepted by mankind as the realisation of freedom and solidarity.

The fact that Marxism could be perverted at the end of the 90's in these two ways, connecting it with the present State and with an unblushing autocracy, seems to show that it had no firm basis; and an attack on Tcherkesoff's lines might have thrown it on its back and opened the field for revolutionary Syndicalism and anti-authoritarian Socialism on a large scale, preparing the ground for Anarchism—but this was not to be. It was not Tcherkesoff's fault; the fault lay in this, that his initiative was not seconded with greater efficiency and competence.

So he was left to himself, and here at times his imagination carried him further than sober studies would have warranted. I recognise the absurdity of magnifying the work of Marx and Engels, but it is also a mistake to belittle it overmuch. Tcherkesoff had the misfortune to make people doubt the seriousness of his other researches when he jumped to the conclusion that the "Communist Manifesto" of 1847-48 was sheer plagiarism on a "Manifesto" by Victor Considérant, published by the Paris Fourierists in 1841 and 1847. I remember the morning when Tcherkesoff, happy as a lark, just returned from Amsterdam, placed before me copies of the "Communist Manifesto" and of Considérant's "Principles of Socialism: the Manifesto of Democracy to the Nineteenth Century" (Paris, Libr. Phalanstérienne, 1847, 157 pp.). He had discovered the latter among Domela Nieuwenhuis' store of old pamphlets, and recognised it as a little book which he had read in Russia over thirty years ago, which the "Communist Manifesto" always recalled to his mind, though he had not been able to trace it during all those years. He placed before me many parallels in the descriptive and critical parts referring to capitalist society, and as Considérant's text, the revised edition of his "Bases of Positive Politics: Manifesto of the Societarian School founded by Fourier" (Paris, *La Phalange*, 1841, 119 pp.), was the earlier work, Tcherkesoff concluded that Marx and Engels were guilty of outrageous plagiarism, stealing ideas and even the words from Considérant.

I was not struck by this discovery; on the contrary, I felt that Tcherkesoff made a great mistake, and I told him so from the first moment; but all was in vain. With one single exception I never met a person who believed that Tcherkesoff was right in this supposition, but it was felt to be painful not to let him enjoy his discovery which made him so happy. So he published what he considered the proofs of this plagiarism, and later on hunted down Engels for a similar matter (Buret), overdoing this case considerably, and in general he was convinced that he had made out Marx and Engels to be literary rogues and scamps—in one word, thieves.

He had not made out this case; he had only diminished the value put on his other criticism of Marxism which touched very weak spots of that system, but which his Marxist opponents discredited by pointing to the lack of critical judgment shown by the unproven charge of plagiarism.

Those who had the leisure to examine the original publications of the early French, English, and German Socialists need not be told that Victor Considérant was an infinitely able social critic of the 30's and 40's, wonderfully apt in describing the effects of capitalism after seeing it at work in that eminently capitalist period, in France and England of that Louis Philippe and early Victorian age. They also

know—and can still add to their knowledge by manuscripts of Marx and early writings of Engels which have only quite recently come to light—that these two German Socialists, a decade younger than Considérant, had also since the beginning of the 40's worked harder than most others at philosophical, political, and economic studies, leading them to the outspoken Socialist conclusions which we know. Both they and Considérant were at their best in 1847, and as thoroughly competent Socialist thinkers both parties necessarily described and criticised capitalist society in similar appropriate terms, in the standard technical language of well-informed Socialist writers of that period. What else were they to do? If to-day two Anarchist authors were to write manifestos summing up Anarchist criticism of the State, their texts would necessarily more or less agree, provided each of them refrained from indulging in too personal a style—and from this personal style both Considérant and Marx and Engels refrained in 1847, the latter writing moreover on the basis of previous material, questions, etc., which are known at present in detail, but were not yet unearthed in Tcherkesoff's time. So our comrade's splendid fight against Marxism was somewhat marred by the idiosyncrasy here discussed.

M. N.

(To be concluded.)

UNDERGROUND GEORGIA.

(From a Correspondent.)

The Social-Democratic Workers Party of Georgia, which, under the present Bolshevik régime of the country can but exist illegally, held its third secret Conference recently. Since the August revolt in 1924 it is the first Conference of the Party. It was well attended by delegates from all the provinces of Georgia, as well as by the representatives of the illegal Trades Unions.

The current events commanded the main attention of the Conference. The delegates described in vivid pictures the burden of the Bolshevik régime in their respective provinces. A resolution concerning party tactics was carried unanimously, in which the question of restoration of the Independence of Georgia is strongly emphasized; it also deals with the methods to be employed in every-day opposition, and with the task of uniting the whole of Georgian labouring masses in the illegal party and Trades Union organisations, thus bringing them together under the standard of the Social-Democratic Workers Party.

The Conference approves the activities of the National Democratic Government of Georgia, now residing abroad, and instructs the representatives and organisations of the party to continue energetically to solicit assistance of the European Socialist parties for the liberation of Georgia from the yoke of occupation.

The Conference has expelled from the party all the members maintaining ambiguous policy towards the Bolsheviks. Resolutions concerning the carrying on of active work among the youth, and the relations with other parties were adopted. The Conference finally elected a new Central Committee.

The party possesses a paper, *Chveni Erthoba* (Our Party), the circulation of which exceeds several thousand copies. It is secretly distributed among the workers and peasantry by the illegal organisations.

The main evil [of party politics] is, that it destroys initiative, quenches the individual rebellious spirit, teaches people to rely on some one else to do for them what they should do for themselves, what they alone can do for themselves; finally renders organic the anomalous idea that by massing supineness together until a majority is acquired, then, through the peculiar magic of that majority, this supineness is to be transformed into energy. That is, people who have lost the habit of striking for themselves, who have submitted to every injustice while waiting for the majority to grow, are going to become metamorphosed into human high-explosives by a mere process of packing!—*Voltaire de Cleyre*.

MY DISILLUSIONMENT IN RUSSIA.

By EMMA GOLDMAN.

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The Trial of the Communists.

After a trial lasting eight days, ending on November 25, all the twelve Communists were found guilty of the charges of conspiring to publish and utter seditious words and libel, to incite persons to commit breaches of the Incitement to Mutiny Act, 1797, and to endeavour to seduce persons serving in His Majesty's forces and to incite them to mutiny. Five of them were sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment in the second division, the other seven getting six months each, after having refused the option of leaving the Communist party and being bound over.

The trial was conducted with the impartiality and fairness for which British justice is noted when it has victims in its grip who are certain not to escape. The jury, as usual in such cases, was drawn from a class which seldom has any sympathy with the aspirations of the workers. The Attorney-General, a master of the twists and turns of the law, played with great skill upon the prejudices of the jury, reciting the main events of the Russian Revolution. And the suave and impartial judge, an old Tory politician, in summing-up reviewed the evidence and the defence in such a manner as to suggest that the jury would hardly be doing their duty to their King and country unless they found all the prisoners guilty of all the charges. After devoting nearly twenty minutes to weighing thoroughly all that had been put before them by the prosecution, the defence, and the judge during eight days, these twelve good men and true gave their verdict as above. Thus was the majesty of the law vindicated and the Constitution and the British Empire safeguarded from the insidious attacks of those who would lay them in the dust.

The sentences have aroused much indignation in the Labour movement, as the trial is believed to be the forerunner of other attacks on the right of association and freedom of expression. Resolutions of protest are being passed by Trade Unions and branches of the Labour Party and the I.L.P., and demonstrations have been arranged all over the land. The Communist Party have issued a letter in which they say that the prosecution was undertaken as a result of the decisions of the Trades Union Congress at Scarborough, where, they say, "the most powerful sections of organised Labour had adopted a policy similar in many ways to that advocated by the Communist Party." This is nonsense, as is shown by the fact that at the Labour Party Conference at Liverpool a few weeks later the delegates from these Unions turned down the Communists and their policy by enormous majorities—"threw them to the wolves," as one of their friends said recently. The immediate cause of the prosecution was the desire of the Government to silence the Communists for a few months whilst wage negotiations were in progress in several big industries, especially the railways and the mines. But the main reason is the instinctive fear of the ruling class that in their present depressed condition the workers might be stampeded into an attempt to repeat the success of the workers and peasants of Russia in overthrowing the Tsarist regime. So they struck at the party which they thought might start the stampede.

We are opposed to all restrictions of freedom of association and of expression, but we cannot feel much sympathy for the convicted Communists as they have never shown any regard for freedom for others. Many times they have told us that freedom is a bourgeois idea, and that when they came into power they would shoot all the Anarchists. The *Sunday Worker*, a Communist paper, in its issue of December 6 prints a telegram from Moscow which says that the "outrageous sentences" have evoked profound indignation throughout Russia. "There is no such thing as justice in the capitalist world," says a Moscow evening paper. The Communists sadly lack a sense of humour, which would have prevented them from printing such a foolish telegram from such a source.

Let us make a comparison. The twelve Communists who have been on trial in this capitalist country were granted bail pending the trial, and were free to arrange their defence. At the trial some were defended by counsel, the others being allowed to speak for hours in their own behalf. Their own papers and the press in general gave much space to the details of the trial. Now they have been sentenced they know definitely when they will be released. In the meantime their friends are agitating for their release, and printing articles about the trial before "a bourgeois court and a petty-bourgeois jury," and about the "base, brutal, and bloody" bourgeoisie.

What happens in Communist Russia? If any one there dares to say—he has no means of printing—anything against the Bolsheviks he is secretly arrested by the Tcheka as a "counter-revolutionary" and thrown into prison. After months of imprisonment, he is tried *in his absence* and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, at the end of which he is probably sent into exile far from his home and family. If the Communist press notice the case, they will probably add insult to injury by calling him a brigand. Should his friends protest on his behalf, they would probably share his fate. These "outrageous sentences" by secret administrative order have been the fate of many thousands in the past, and are still being dealt out to Anarchists and Socialists, and even to Communists who thought the Revolution meant freedom. This is justice according to the Communists.

For years we have been trying to get the Labour and Socialist press of this country to publish the facts about some of the worst of these cases, but in vain. Details of the horrors of the Russian prisons and concentration camps, the tragedies of exile with its lack of food, clothing, and medical treatment—none of these things has moved these editors who write so eloquently of international brotherhood. But to-day these gentlemen are filling their columns with protests against the sentences on members of the Communist Party who have gloried in these persecutions in Russia and advocate a similar tyranny here. It is very easy for these editors to go with the tide. Is there not one with sufficient moral courage to speak out about these political persecutions in Russia? Or are we to understand that political expediency stands in the way?

FASCIST NIGHTS OF TERROR.

No argument is so powerful as an accomplished fact, and Mussolini can now snap his fingers at his critics, for on November 28 the Italian Parliament passed without discussion the Bill which makes him responsible only to the King. In other words, the legislators, incapable of even mustering up the courage to plead for their own lives, voted themselves out of existence. At the same session they passed a Bill for the punishment of those who "offend the Premier by words or deeds." Likewise, with all Members of the House standing, a one-minute silence in homage to fallen Fascisti was observed. What of those whose blood is on the heads of these same Fascisti and their Mussolini?

Our exchanges have been running over with detailed accounts of the night of horror Florence passed through on October 3. But although Florence has been for centuries a centre of all that is greatest in art and thought, her brutal rape by some five to six hundred armed degenerates has passed almost unnoticed by the general press. Yet here was a massacre deliberately planned by members of the Fascist Directory, connived at and actively supported by prominent officials, and instigated openly by the party's press. On October 3 *Batailles Fascistes* published an article by its editor, who was also a member of the local Fascist Directorate, which declared that, "In view of the small effect produced by cudgellings, action taken should be completed with the revolver, and with fire, the purifier."

This reference to the insufficient effect produced by cudgellings gives in a phrase the story of the preceding eleven days. On September 24, a number of well-known Freemasons, together with others who had been prominent in the anti-Fascist movement, were badly beaten. On the following day bands of Fascisti broke into various public, professional, and business offices, cudgelled employers, workers, and customers, and wrecked the premises. Acts of this character continued up to

September 27 without any interference on the part of the authorities. Meanwhile Fascist bands kept pouring into the city. On September 29, the Fascist Directorate held a Council at which were present Tamburini, the Consul, the Marquis Dino Perrone, and other prominent supporters of Mussolini. The following instructions were issued to the faithful:—"In order that reprisals may be effective it is necessary to give the adversary the impression that things are quiet. Meanwhile, it will be possible to identify more accurately those who belong to the Opposition, with a view to suppressing them decisively when action is taken." The decisive suppression began in earnest on the evening of October 3, when two motors left Fascist headquarters. They stopped first at the residence of Napoleon Bandinelli, a man sixty years of age, governor of the House of Correction, and highly esteemed. Bandinelli managed to escape, but Benciolini, State Secretary of Railways, who had come to his assistance, was captured, and shot within the next four hours. By midnight the centre of the city was lined with Fascist bands, who fired at random and quickly filled the hospitals with wounded. Hundreds of shops and offices were sacked.

Naturally, Gustave Console, editor of the well-known Socialist paper, *Avanti*, knew what was going on, and his friends urged him to flee. This he refused to do, and he paid for his temerity with his life, a band of Fascisti breaking into his private residence and shooting him. Perhaps, however, an even more terrible assassination was that of the ex-Deputy Pilati, a helpless cripple as the result of injuries suffered in the War. He was killed in his bed.

Our exchanges state further that it was impossible to find out how many had been killed and wounded, or had disappeared, for the hospitals would give out no information; but some put the known deaths at 18, and those in the hospitals at 40, apart from which hundreds were bludgeoned. What most impresses us, however, is the coldness with which the outrages were plotted, and the fact that the authorities did not stir a finger to protect the public. In conclusion, we quote once more from *Batailles Fascistes*, which, in its issue of October 1, "apologised" for this massacre in the following terms:—"But we, whose crime, or virtue, it is to take life seriously, and to wish to see Fascism a true reformer and creator—we say, openly and emphatically, that what has been done in Florence should have been done throughout Italy, and several years earlier. The law puts into concrete form a certain state of things, but the Revolution has need of deeds; it has need of the sanction, the personal sanction, of man against man."

Fascist supporters in this country—and in military and aristocratic circles they are quite numerous—laud Mussolini to the skies for having "tranquillised" Italy; but these people are always on the side of force, and care not a button about human rights so long as they themselves are left to sleep undisturbed. Nevertheless, history proves very conclusively that awakenings do come.

ON UNITY.

"Out of the idolatry of Unity we get only a confused composite photograph of muddled thought which leads finally to Dictatorship and the ruthless suppression of individual opinion. . . . To that collective ethic my own ethic of personal freedom stands utterly opposed."—W. C. O. in *FREEDOM*.

Most Socialists will be found to admit that Anarchy will finally supplant Socialism, and surely the time will come when it will be generally realised that personal freedom is a necessary condition of individual development, and that individual development is a necessary condition of social well-being. As yet, that time seems a long way off—which only makes the ideal of personal freedom more beautiful, more haunting, and therefore more aggressive. For the most beautiful ideal is always the most aggressive.

We know the spare-ribbed stuff that goes to make the mild dreamers, with their pensions for mothers and clinics for future exploited slaves—their dreams are accomplished at dawn and emasculated at sundown. But the dream of a worldwide Unity, a vast brotherhood, in no danger of fratricidal impact, is of sterner and

more lasting stuff, and of almost Nietzschean aggressiveness. It may even flaunt the scars of its sacrifice, but it is not the one to wear proudly on its head either the Phrygian cap or the thorns of the Nazarene.

"Out of the idolatry of Unity——"

Let us put the question on a wider field, for the field is wide—wide as it is riven.

Quite a small gang of plutocratic dictators impose themselves on the rest of the earth. It is inconceivable that they could do so were the peoples of the earth united in a common aim against such Dictatorship. Yet we are told that Unity would lead to Dictatorship. Does Unity of Anarchist with Anarchist destroy the personal freedom and therefore the personal development of Anarchists?

Perhaps I have not grasped what our comrade means by Unity. I can grasp this, however, that the Unity I have indicated would tend to destroy those superficial variations in individuals (not the variations which lie at the back or root of personality, but the superficial variations), such as nationality, which is made the excuse for universal fratricide; and sectional rivalry, which plays into the hands of the aforementioned dictators; and the appalling bitterness and littleness of the splitters of straws; whilst the poor ass that bears the lot of them feels to be breaking into a thousand impotent fragments.

It seems to me that personality can reach its fullest height, breadth, and depth only through the widest, deepest, and highest co-operation—with one's own fellows at least. Human genius always discloses some uncommon sympathy with something outside itself. Indeed, the attainment of individuality would seem to depend on the recognition by each of the right of all to vary so long as such variation is aiding and not hindering social evolution, which alone can make it possible that Man be free.

The capitalist is not of that category. He does not desire to be free. He cannot see that the power he wields over others is not Freedom but a chain that makes him infinitely more dark (or unprogressive) than the most muddled and broken of his plundered slaves.

But these slaves do desire to be free. There is not one in ten thousand but is conscious of serious limitations—and less of the belly than of the head. There is no muddleheadedness about that. The common goal is Freedom. And despite all individual variations—and they are as sharp-cleft in the so-called clods as in the cultured ones—organisations, industrial, political, and intellectual, have netted this country and all countries, all moving, at various and varying speeds, towards that goal. That is the general trend.

The Hindu, discontent beside his bowl of rice, is affined to the British worker, discontent beside his fish and chips. Their very variations deepen that affinity. It is a co-partnership based on identity of desire, identity of disgust, identity of determination. They have become closer brothers, and individual liberty comes nearer to attainment by reason of that identity. Their hands clasped, each would gain a wider identity, otherwise not possible, and only he is cosmopolitan whose ego has embraced the widest horizons.

Sectionalism in any mass movement is bound to confuse that movement, by frustrating the tendency towards Mutual Aid; and where it is a movement towards any brand of Freedom the individual suffers with the mass. Yet we go on making idols of ourselves, and fetishes of the variations in the social spectrum, within the plain hearing of the drums of an enemy which, with its common aim and, therefore, common policy, seeks to erect the most unprogressive dictatorship that has ever threatened suffering humanity.

It leads where we shall go down crying, "I am Myself. You are Yourself. I cannot aid You; I must aid Myself. Do not aid me; only I must save Myself."

And then, it may be that at last some scattered fragments of the earth's toilers will rise from the wreck with the full light of understanding in their eyes, stretching common hands to each other, and crying (that deepest cry of human individuality): "I have suffered. You have suffered. Our dreams are the same. We are one. Would that we had kicked out the 'ists' and the 'isms' that divided us! But the ruins are ours. Let us build anew."

ALFRED HOLDSWORTH.

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THROUGH SLAUGHTER TO PRESIDENCY.

Most astounding, and surely most thought-provoking, revelations were made recently in the trial of a case at Munich, in which General Groener, formerly German Minister of War, and subsequently Quartermaster-General, was the chief witness. The General was under examination for five hours, and his testimony flooded with decisive light two questions that have been the subjects of interminable debate ever since the conclusion of the War. The first of these questions is as to whether Germany's collapse was due to internal revolt. The second, and, to us, the most important, was the failure of the Revolution that followed the War. On both these questions General Groener was clarity itself, and we are able, thanks to the full reports published in German papers, to give a brief but accurate summary of his evidence. First, as regards the conclusion of the War.

The General testified to a conversation held with Ludendorff on September 24, 1918, in which the latter acknowledged frankly that Germany was beaten, being overmatched in tanks, and having no further reserves on which to draw. Further conversations with other German leaders were recited, in which the question debated was not whether surrender could be averted, but whether it would be possible to save the throne. On November 6 there was a consultation with the Socialist and Trade Union leaders, and here we meet for the first time the names of the late President Ebert, Scheidemann, Sudekum, David Bauer, and Legien. General Groener opposed abdication by the Kaiser, but Ebert declared it "inevitably necessary, if a Revolution was to be avoided." The General then related how, by agreement with Ebert, he sent ten divisions to Berlin for the suppression of the Revolution, and how, on November 10, he and Ebert came to a full understanding respecting further steps. A full military programme for the disarming of Berlin was formulated, and Field-Marshal Hindenburg, much against his will, was induced to co-operate with Ebert. In the General's own words:—"Everything was discussed with Ebert most precisely. Ebert and I had one common aim—the establishment of a strong Government."

There were a few anxious moments for these Socialist and Junker conspirators, inasmuch as the imported troops, whose enthusiasm had been somewhat dampened, insisted on scattering to their own homes for the celebration of Christmas. On that the General remarked: "To me it has always been a huge joke that Liebknecht and his troops also celebrated Christmas, and thereby lost the use of the few days in which they might have forced their way through." Meanwhile Ebert had appealed to Noske, and fresh soldiers were hurried to the scene. The General concluded his evidence with the remark: "I must say that Ebert handled the independent Social-Democrats with a skill that threw into the shade all my own performances as War Chancellor, and compelled me to form a high opinion of his political genius."

So that is the story as it has come out at last. Necessarily it has not surprised us; but we reflect sadly that, thanks to this "political genius," on which the Socialists set such store, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg are in their graves, and the German disinherited, having thrown away the one chance that fate for a century past had offered them, are sinking constantly more deeply into the mire, and are to-day worse off than ever. It is to be presumed, however, that they, in common with the poor and servile of other countries, will go on crucifying their would-be redeemers for many a long day to come.

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