

Freedom

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NOTES.

Money-Bags versus Stomachs.

The testing time for the miners has come with the passing of the Bill permitting the eight-hour day in the mines. The owners are posting the new terms for the longer day, and as in many cases wages will be little less—at present—than under the seven-hour day, they are hoping that many of the miners will be induced to resume work. The Miners' Federation officials say the men are still solid in their resistance to longer hours and will not agree to it under any circumstances; but the steady pressure of hunger is bound to tell in time, and no one would be surprised or could blame them if they gave way. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress has issued a manifesto in which it speaks of "the determined attacks which the Government and the employers continue to make upon the Trade Union Movement, along with the serious attempt they are making to reduce the workers' standards of life," and it asks the movement to concentrate upon resistance to the Government's proposals. This seems an eleventh-hour repentance of the General Council, for we know now that almost from the beginning some of its most prominent members tried hard to get the miners to accept a reduction of wages, which they considered inevitable. The Samuel Memorandum, which was its excuse for calling off the General Strike, involved a reduction of wages, and for that reason was rejected by the miners. So we cannot take the Council's manifesto seriously. The workers' vulnerable point in all these long-drawn-out struggles is their stomachs or the stomachs of their wives and children. It is no use appealing to the humanity of the Government or the capitalists, as starvation is a weapon they always rely on at home and abroad. Starvation of women and children in the concentration camps was their most effective weapon in the Boer War. In the last War the Allies forced Greece to come in on their side by means of a food blockade, and it was starvation rather than shells that broke down the resistance of Germany and Austria. In the present struggle the Government and the Federation of British Industries are determined to starve the miners into submission, no matter what the cost may be in loss of trade and revenue; and in a test of endurance between money-bags and stomachs the money-bags are certain to gain the day.

And the Remedy?

There is only one remedy. This power of life and death must be broken if we wish to live a decent and dignified life as self-respecting and self-governing men and women. We must break down the fences which prevent us gaining access to the means of life. If we have no alternative but to beg permission to work for bread from a landlord or an employer, we are slaves, however the fact may be cloaked by the wage system. When the great landed estates were parcelled out centuries ago, their holders did not attempt to hide their object. Everyone who lived on these estates had to pay toll to the feudal lord either in goods or services. The holding of the land gave them the power to extort wealth from the workers, a power they have used ever since. Parliament was their creation and they used it to "legalise" their robberies. With the coming of the Industrial Revolution they were forced to share their power with the new lords of industry; and although landlords and capitalists may quarrel occasionally as to the division of the plunder, they agree that the continuation of this plunder depends on their monopoly of the land and its resources. Of course, they like to have a contented working class, as it increases their profits; but if, as at present, trade is bad and somebody has to go short, it must be the workers. The monopolists will not surrender one jot or one tittle of their rights until they are forced to do so. They have Parliament, the Courts,

and all the armed forces at their command, and will use them ruthlessly if necessary. The strength of their position, however, lies not so much in these forces as in the halo of sanctity which they have cast over the institution of private property in land. If, therefore, we can break down the feeling of reverence for all the old Acts of Parliament and the musty parchments which constitute their title-deeds to the land of this country, the landlords will find their rifles useless. It is our task to-day to show the workers that monopoly of the land is the basic cause of their slavery, and that when they scratch one of the nice superior folk who condescend to rule them they will find a plain, vulgar robber. Once this idea gets into the heads of the masses the temple of power and privilege will collapse like a house of cards.

The Communist "Revelations."

There is nothing new in the Blue Book containing a selection of the Communist documents which were seized by the police during their raid on the party's headquarters last year. We all knew that the Communist Party of Great Britain was subsidised by Moscow, which was evidently suffering under the delusion that the party had great influence in this country and would soon bring about a revolution, a delusion shared by many of its youthful and vociferous members. We also knew that the party was under the control of Moscow, but we thought they had some shreds left of self-respect and independence. But in this correspondence we find they have none: Moscow decides everything. We hear them complaining that the money received had not reached the amount promised, and that they cannot deliver the revolution unless they get a few more roubles a week. We see Moscow sending them detailed instructions as to their programme at the General Election of 1924, including slogans, and advising the running of a candidate named Roy, who is probably unknown to anyone in England outside the ranks of the Communist Party. Some of these instructions are so elementary that one can only conclude that Moscow has a very poor opinion of the political intelligence of the party. Mr. Saklatvala in a letter dated October, 1925, proposes certain political tactics to his fellow-members, and says, "We must appeal to the C.C. at Moscow to let us work temporarily along the lines I am suggesting." How childish it all seems. This party, which according to one letter has a "historic mission," is here seen tied in leading strings to a small group of self-elected officials in Moscow, and cannot move hand or foot without their consent. Their tactics, their officials, and their wages are decided in Moscow—even the names of their papers are decided there. Why, instead of making the hated bourgeoisie tremble in their shoes these documents will only make them smile. We can never imagine this party as the "Dictators of the Proletariat" in England. It is a great disappointment, as we always hoped to find among them a few good revolutionists with ideas of their own.

Lloyd George's Hypocrisy.

Speaking at the Welsh Baptist Chapel in Eastcastle Street, W., on June 27, Lloyd George said the doctrines of equality, the right of the individual, and the brotherhood of man were preached by Christ in a world where the rights of man were unknown, and "thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions were just as much property as cattle"; and these doctrines were "like seeds dropped in the crevices of a great fortress, which gradually destroy by their growth the fortress itself and dismantle it." We can say without hesitation that the fortress of tyranny stands as strong to-day as ever, and the people still "just as much property as cattle." We need go back only a few years to find Lloyd George as Prime Minister sending millions as cattle to the slaughter, and in the Treaty of Versailles the peoples of Europe were regarded by him as "just as much property as cattle," pawns in the hands of the statesmen. The man's hypocrisy makes us feel sick.

The Lifting of the Veil.

Whatever else you may think of the General Strike, you must admit that it has forced the Labour problem to the front and precipitated a discussion that will become more searching and uncompromising as time goes on. At last some portion of the veil, if only a small one, has been drawn aside, and the nation, eternally humbugged by fine words, has started in to face its facts. There is now such a clear-cut division in politics as has not been known within living memory; and naturally, for on either side of the abyss that separates the Have-Nots from the Haves the forces are marshalling for a fierce struggle. Read the papers! The word "Revolution" is on everybody's lips.

Take the happenings of a single day—Saturday, June 19. Five leading politicians made profoundly suggestive speeches. Mr. Walter Runciman, addressing Liberals at Peterborough, warned them that "national interests are now in jeopardy," and that Mr. Lloyd George is not a "safe" man. Lord Cecil, speaking at a Conservative demonstration in the Clitheroe Division, urged the Liberals to make up their minds whether they stand "for the party of unity and safety, or the party of revolution and division"—represented, as he added, by the Labour Party! Lord Birkenhead, at Luton, declared bluntly that the moneys sent from Russia were for the purpose of "fomenting revolution in this country"; and, speaking as a Cabinet Minister, he added that the Government would have to consider the severing of relations unless there were "signs of a change, of which none at present is apparent." At the Alexandra Palace Mr. Winston Churchill anathematised the Russian Government with extraordinary vehemence, and declared that it singled out this country for attack because it regarded us as the main obstacle to its "plan of world revolution." And at the Kingsway Hall, London, the Prime Minister made a speech full of wise saws and loving sentiments, in which he told his audience that "in no other country is freedom treasured and regarded as it is in this country," and that "in the attainment of freedom there is no country in the world that has anything which in any circumstances it can teach us." After which a resolution was passed expressing admiration for the way in which Mr. Baldwin had "led the nation against the revolutionary attempts of the Socialist Party"!

We ask ourselves whether this distinguished statesman, this practical man of affairs, believes it; whether it is even possible that he can believe it. Does he not know, for example, that almost one-fifth of England and Wales is owned by 422 peers, and that more than thirty-seven millions of our people have no legal title to so much of their native country as will suffice to bury them? The figures are those of the latest Government survey. Does he not know—he who talks so unctuously of Trade Union tyrannies—that in our rural districts to offend the landlord is to incur the risk of being excommunicated and starved to death? Does he not know that in our overcrowded cities—overcrowded because the landless have been driven into them in search of that employment by the profit-maker that they, as landless, are compelled to get—thousands, hundreds of thousands, and even millions, are now continually out of work? Does he really believe that such a condition, which is actually the most extreme and most utterly heartless form of slavery, can be entitled "freedom" and posed as a model for the rest of a benighted world to copy? If he does believe it, he is an idiot. If he does not believe it, what is he?

Mr. Baldwin stated in the same speech that he "wanted to put that thought of freedom, personal liberty and individual freedom," into his audience's mind. That was an easy and a popular thing to say, for we English are notoriously a people given to strong personal opinions, and fond of expressing them. It is our strongest national trait, and Mr. Baldwin would do well to put that fact into his own mind and into those of the Bourbons whose mouthpiece he at present is; for those Bourbons are doing their utmost to strangle free speech and bring us under the yoke of a Dictatorship such as they admire so fulsomely in Italy, Spain, and other European countries, though they execrate it in Russia. But Bourbons never learn, and the fate of the French and Russian nobility has taught our privileged classes nothing. Nor has it occurred to them that since the conclusion of the War more than half of Europe has rejected that sham Democracy of which the Prime Minister is the eloquent exponent, and rejected it precisely because it is a sham and brazen unreality, utterly out of touch with facts.

The General Strike has had the supreme virtue of opening many

eyes to the humbug with which our rulers habitually delude us, and of making large sections put on their thinking-caps. That is not everything, but it takes us on the road to everything. It means that just as soon as we begin to see we shall step out of the prison in which aristocracy and plutocracy—twin vultures out of the same egg—still hold us fast, and into that individual freedom which Mr. Baldwin worships with his tongue while we have enshrined it in our heart of hearts. Stirring times are coming, and none knows it better than those who have now the upper hand. They mean to keep it. We mean to throw it off. And that is all there is about it.

For this reason "Revolution" is now on everybody's tongue, and it would seem to be only ordinary prudence for all friends of Freedom to get together, regardless of their labels. All they have to do is to talk, intelligently, frankly, and to the point. That is clearly necessary, and it will be found sufficiently dangerous to satisfy the most heroic.

SENEX.

LOVE LETTERS ON ANARCHISM.

These "Love Letters"* are of an unusual character, for they are mainly devoted to the discussion of social questions, especially the sex question. Now we will admit that Mr. Hope is very far from being an orthodox Socialist, but we deny his right to call himself an Anarchist. He is really a Guild Socialist, and thinks the State must exist to harmonise the conflicting interests of producers and consumers. On sex matters he speaks very frankly and sanely, and says that "the first practical step towards sexual sanity is not so much sexual reform as social reform." He will shock many of his readers by suggesting the possibility of group marriages, "for life in such a group must of necessity be infinitely more rich and varied than the solitary life of ordinary wedlock." For the present he advocates marriage contracts regulated and enforced by special laws, although on another page he admits that "a married couple who are happily mated would no more dream of separating than they would of murdering one another, and if all the marriage laws in existence were abolished they would still remain a model of matrimonial felicity." Then why does he think marriage contracts are necessary? Because he is afraid that too much freedom to the individual would "endanger the freedom of either the State or other individuals." The State seems to him to be a beneficent institution concerned only with the welfare of the people, whereas it has always been concerned only with safeguarding the interests of a privileged class. Marriage laws are based on property, not on morality.

We wish Mr. Hope had studied Anarchism before he undertook to explain it in his love letters. He says: "Anarchism . . . is the philosophy of perfection. It bids men and women be perfect. . . . When that perfection is achieved . . . then, and not till then, will the necessity for external law disappear." Anarchism does not bid men and women to be perfect if they would be rid of the external law. It says exactly the opposite. It says, if men and women are to reach the highest possible form of human development, they must have freedom to experiment in every way possible, and not be tied down to outworn conventions. To paraphrase Proudhon, "Liberty is the mother, not the daughter, of perfection."

Anarchists see nothing sacred in the origin of "external law" or of the State. Laws were not put on the Statute Book to protect us from robbers but to protect the big robbers. Nor were laws to safeguard morality. The Government which prosecutes prostitutes and brothel-keepers provides brothels and prostitutes for the use of its soldiers in India. It prosecutes bookmakers for street betting, and provides special facilities for betting telegrams. The State hangs men for committing murder, and trains men to commit murder. Politicians and lawyers make our laws, and these people are notoriously the most unprincipled and unscrupulous of mankind. How, then, does Mr. Hope expect us to reach perfection when we have to submit to such a State and such laws? Most of our so-called "crimes" are due to unjust social conditions, which are perpetuated by the State; and we must sweep away these conditions before we can ever hope for that freedom for which Anarchists are working, and which the State was specially designed to prevent us reaching.

* "The Love Letters of an Anarchist." By Richard Hope. 7s. 6d. London: Cecil Palmer, 49 Chandos Street, W.C.2.

Push the sale of "Freedom."

LETTERS FROM RUSSIAN PRISONS.*

If you do not want to be convinced that there is political persecution in Russia, do not read this book, for we are certain that no unbiassed person could read it and be unconvinced. The malice and the vindictiveness of the persecutions are clearly established by these letters, the genuineness of which is vouched for by those who know the writers. Everything we have printed in *FREEDOM* is proved up to the hilt. Before publication these letters were submitted to many well-known European and American authors, including Arnold Bennett, H. N. Brailsford, Georg Brandes, Gerhardt Hauptmann, Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells, and others; and their comments show the great impression the documents made on them. We print Bertrand Russell's letter, as it to a great extent reflects our own views on the matter:—

"I sincerely hope that the publication of the following documents will contribute towards the promotion of friendly relations between the Soviet Government and the Governments of Western Powers. Misled by Western Socialists, the statesmen of Great Britain, France and America regard the present holders of power in Russia as idealists and therefore dangerous. If they will read this book they will become convinced of their error. The holders of power in Russia, as elsewhere, are practical men, prepared to inflict torture upon idealists in order to retain their power. There can be no reason why Western imperialists should quarrel with these imperialists of the Northeast, or why Western friends of freedom should support them until there is a radical change in their treatment of political opponents.

"BERTRAND RUSSELL."

Mr. Upton Sinclair says he is "greatly shocked to discover that conditions of such prisoners in Russia are about the same as the condition of political prisoners in the state of California, of which I am a citizen." We deny it, and these letters contradict him. But even if it were so we should expect him to condemn his Socialist friends for persecuting and torturing those who in many instances helped to bring about the Revolution in Russia. Some time ago he said the British Committee for the Defence of Political Prisoners in Russia was a counter-revolutionary organisation, but he dare not hurl that ridiculous charge against the International Committee for Political Prisoners, the American organisation that published this book. The damning facts in it have shamed even him into silence.

We regret the high price of the book, as it will prevent its wide circulation; but those desirous of spreading the truth about these terrible persecutions in Russia, which still continue, should put their money together for a copy and pass it round. Publicity is the best weapon with which to fight these atrocities.

Fiftieth Anniversary of Bakunin's Death.

The fiftieth anniversary of the death of Michael Bakunin, which took place at Berne on July 1, 1876, has been worthily commemorated by a special issue of *Der Syndikalist* (Berlin), compiled mostly by our old friend Max Nettlau, whose writings on Bakunin are so well known. It contains an article on Bakunin's youth, and Bakunin's views on the State and on religion. Appreciations of his work are contributed by comrades. On the front page is a splendid enlarged photograph, and portraits of Bakunin as a youth and of his father and mother are also reproduced. The price is only Mk.0.25.

All this and much additional matter has been reprinted on art paper in a booklet of 56 pages, under the title of "Unser Bakunin" (Our Bakunin). Two pages are photographic reproductions of his manuscript, with his signature. The price of this booklet is Mk.1.20. Both publications are splendidly printed, and those responsible are to be congratulated. Even to those who do not read German they should appeal as mementoes of one of the greatest fighters in the Anarchist movement. The publisher's address is Fritz Kater, Kopernikusstr. 25, Berlin O 34.

* "Letters from Russian Prisons." Consisting of Reprints of Documents by Political Prisoners in Soviet Prisons, Prison Camps and Exile, and Reprints of Affidavits Concerning Political Persecution in Soviet Russia, Official Statements by Soviet Authorities, Excerpts from Soviet Laws Pertaining to Civil Liberties, and other Documents. With Introductory Letters by Twenty-Two Well-Known European and American Authors. 10s. 6d. Published for the International Committee for Political Prisoners (New York). London: The C. W. Daniel Company, Graham House, Tudor Street, E.C.4.

SACCO AND VANZETTI.

The last legal move has failed in the long-drawn-out struggle to save these two victims of one of the vilest of police conspiracies, the Massachusetts Supreme Court having turned down the appeal for a new trial, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the hollowness of the case for the prosecution. However, there is still a faint hope of rescuing them from the electric chair. A man named Madeiros, now awaiting the death sentence for the killing of a bank cashier at Wrentham, has confessed that he and some other men committed the murder at South Braintree in 1920 for which Sacco and Vanzetti were convicted. If these two comrades are executed it will be because they were active in the workers' movement, the charge of murder being merely an excuse. The conviction was obtained by means of wholesale perjury, which is only too common a feature in the United States when known rebels are on trial. The release of these men would be a condemnation of the police authorities who faked the evidence; consequently they will stick at nothing to send them to the executioner.

Enormous protest meetings have been held in the big cities, and the American Federation of Labour has called the trial "a ghastly miscarriage of justice." There is hardly another country in the world where men could have been sentenced to death on such flimsy evidence, and the frequency of such cases is a striking commentary on the value of the democratic institutions Americans boast about.

THE AVENGER.

The Jews of the Ukraine, who suffered many pogroms at the hands of the White Russians during the civil war, have been avenged. Petlura, one of the most notorious of these Jew-baiters, was shot dead in a Paris café on May 25. The man who killed him, Sholem Schwartzbard, was the last man one would have expected to commit such a deed. In a letter we have received from Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman they say that he is one of the most lovable of characters, of a cheerful disposition, devoted and generous to the last degree. For some years he lived in London, but went to Russia during the Revolution, later on returning to Paris, where his little watchmaker's shop was a gathering-place for refugees from many countries, including Russia. Though Schwartzbard was never very well off, no needy comrade ever left his house without a meal and a more cheerful heart. But the sufferings of the many thousands of the men, women, and children of his race must have burnt into his brain, and when the opportunity came to avenge them, his hatred of their torturers burst into a fierce flame, and he struck hard and with unerring aim.

Now he is in prison, awaiting trial. His comrades and friends are sparing no effort to provide him with the best legal advocate to defend him, and when the trial takes place the pogromist Petlura and his fellow-torturers will be the accused and not the man who will stand in the prisoners' dock. Similar trials in France in recent years have been turned into political demonstrations and the guilty person acquitted, and there is a possibility that when the jury hear the ghastly story of the pogroms Sholem Schwartzbard may also be acquitted.

THE MEN AT PLAY.

The golf links lie so near the mill
That almost every day
The labouring children can look out
And see the men at play.

SARAH N. CLEGHORN.

(From "Portraits and Protests.")

Those who cavalierly reject the theory of evolution, as not adequately supported by facts, seem quite to forget that their own theory is supported by no facts at all. Like the majority of men who are born to a given belief, they demand the most rigorous proof of any adverse belief, but assume that their own needs none.

—Herbert Spencer.

ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM.

By WM. C. OWEN.

32 pages, with Wrapper. Price, Threepence.

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Labour's Next Step.

Undoubtedly the masses sympathised with the General Strike, and they are showing by generous financial support their admiration of the tenacity with which the miners are continuing the fight. This would seem to point to a decision which, although it has been a long time coming, is of the first importance, for it means that in this country there will be an increasing insistence that things shall be so changed as that Labour will be at all times able to earn a decent living. As to the measures to be adopted for putting into practice that ideal, the masses evidently regarded the General Strike as a quick way of getting what they wanted, and cared nothing for the fact that lawyers might declare the method unconstitutional and the ruling class denounce it as treason. In a word, it seems to me that the General Strike crystallised into a fixed policy which will dominate the future what had been previously vague sentiment. Should that conclusion be correct, we have travelled far within the last few weeks; and the next united effort, which cannot be long delayed, will force to the front issues that are truly revolutionary, and nail them there.

If a general vote were taken on the question of whether the surrender made by the Trade Union leaders should or should not be approved, there would be no doubt as to the result. I should say without hesitation that the surrender caused nothing but disgust among the masses, and excited supreme contempt among the aristocracy and their middle-class flunkys. It is not for nothing that we are a sporting nation, and for the quitter we never have the slightest use. The masses are not at all afraid of a fight, but they are sick to death of the eternal chatter of the Parliamentarians, which never gets them anywhere.

It is extraordinary that Labour leaders and allegedly revolutionary politicians of the Ramsay MacDonald type do not recognise this, for it is dinned into their ears unceasingly. These people are constantly attending public meetings, and it must be their invariable experience that the surest way of capturing applause is to promise decisive action. In truth, they recognise this so clearly that they are always promising it; but can they not understand that enthusiasm becomes bitter resentment when the promise is proved to have been a fraud? No, this they cannot understand. With them promising has become a habit, and from their own elevated position they look down on the masses, whom they regard as food for lies. No one holds the common people in more cynical contempt than does the politician, for his own insincerity necessarily makes him sceptical as to the sincerity of others.

The General Strike, despite the promptness with which its official leaders squelched it, drew aside the veil for a moment and showed us that the people at large really mean that this shall be transformed into a country in which Labour shall be assured of a good living. It showed us further a people in revolt against the insufferable delays and cowardly evasions with which Parliamentarism systematically fobs it off. The mental development thus registered is enormous. We are too apt, as the result of over sanguine hopes having been shattered repeatedly, to underrate the influence of the persistent revolutionary propaganda carried on year after year by all the advanced parties. An enormous amount of seed has been sown, and sooner or later there is certain to be a corresponding harvest.

Indeed, the progress made within the last fifty years along the line of shattering popular belief in the sanctity of existing institutions has been prodigious. Half a century ago hardly anyone in this country dared to poke fun at the Church or express that contempt for the law which is so common to-day. Hardly anyone questioned the right of the land monopolist to do what he chose with that which he is pleased to call his own. Seats in the House of

Commons were still largely the privilege of the upper class, and the Member of Parliament was held in high social esteem. Labour problems were rarely noticed by the press, and such alarmist articles as those now published daily by papers of the *Morning Post* type would have seemed absurd. Observe, however, that as yet the development has been merely mental. It has not as yet translated itself into action, but that translation is bound to come.

A long step has been taken, and taken doubtless in the only possible way; for if the settlement of these vital bread-and-butter questions is to be left to the politicians and that detestably conceited element which fancies it has a mission to regulate the lives of others, they will drag on from generation to generation, and the present deplorable economic condition of the masses will remain unchanged. That is precisely what has been happening throughout the lifetime of the oldest among us. There has been incessant agitation, usually conducted at great self-sacrifice and personal loss; there has been never-ending makeshift legislation; as the result there has been a great mental unsettlement, which is invaluable, but the great bulk of the people has had no material relief. I care nothing about the increased wages in certain specially favoured trades, to which Labour leaders naturally call attention, since it justifies their existence; and I care nothing because I notice that even these aristocrats of Labour are still looked down on as an inferior class, are seldom secure of their positions, and live for the most part on the ragged edge. What I insist on is that when the condition of the masses is viewed as a whole, it is probably more precarious and unsatisfactory than at any time in British history. All this despite the fact that the productivity of labour has been increased in many instances a hundredfold, and in some more than a thousandfold.

Now, therefore, we have to take another step, one that should be much longer and is certain to prove more difficult. We have reached the point at which it has become generally agreed that Labour must have full assurance that it will at all times be able to make a decent living, and now we have to establish the firm conviction that Labour alone shall be able to get any living at all. Until we take that further step the previous one amounts to nothing. It cannot. It is simply unthinkable that Labour will ever be secure, will ever be justly remunerated, will ever be able to take out of the general pool of wealth what it has contributed, so long as thousands of idle parasites are allowed to dip their buckets into that pool. It is impossible, for example, for the miner to reap the full reward of his toil while every lump of coal has to pay tribute to royalty owners, way-leave owners, right-of-way owners, and the whole army of land monopolists who tax it from the moment when the miner's pick digs it out of the seam to the hour when it is delivered to the final purchaser and consumed in grate or furnace. And what is true of the miner is true of every other worker, from the skilled mechanic to the humblest roadmender. None escapes from the workings of economic law, and what, as educators, we have now to do is to explain to the masses the operations of that law and their inevitability.

Fifty years ago this may well have seemed an almost hopeless task, because fifty years ago it was really believed that the landlord kept the land in cultivation, as indeed Tories still argue; that without the capitalist Labour would have to stand idle, as all the employing class still argue; that without the existence of a ruling class, whose sole industry is the issuing of orders, the entire framework of society would fall to pieces and we should revert to barbarism. These myths, of course, still linger, but they have been largely exploded, and their explosion has cleared the way for another step forward.

It is in the final destruction of these myths that there will come the most arduous work and hottest fighting. The work will be most arduous because feeling is far easier than thinking; and the fighting will be hot because the privileged class understand quite clearly that with the disappearance of these myths their reign comes to an end. It is vital to the squire that his villagers shall believe it incumbent on them to "do their duty in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call them." It is of the first importance to employers that the employed continue to regard them as benefactors who furnish work; and in the last analysis our entire scheme of rulership, with all its wars and countless other cruelties, rests on the delusion that the masses are incapable of taking care of their own lives. Whoever attacks these superstitions is assaulting the central citadel of Power, and he must expect to be repulsed by the use of every weapon the defenders can command. How absurd for him to

plead that his attack was "Constitutional"! After all, what is the British Constitution to the factory hand? What does he get out of military pomp and Court display, which exist solely for the upholding of a caste that considers itself exempt from the necessity of working for a living, despises Labour, and means, at all costs, to keep its servants in their proper place?

Self-evidently no great change is possible until the masses have become completely disillusioned with existing social arrangements. Self-evidently also they can bring about a change only when they have made up their minds determinedly as to what they want. The first part of this two-fold movement, the disillusionment part, seems to me to have been largely completed, and may be left safely to the care of those who are satisfied with carrying on the propaganda of general discontent—a task made infinitely easier by the pressure of the times and the fact that all the political and reform parties, terrified at the thought of attacking vested interests, are quite incapable of giving the masses substantial relief. It is the second part of the movement that is at once so imperative and difficult, and our immediate business is to bring the masses down to realities.

Here, as everywhere, the masses must get back possession of their own country, for which, although it had been cornered by the few, they were compelled, twelve years ago, to spill their blood. They must get back possession of the means by which alone life can be sustained; and, boiled down, it comes to a question of abolishing the parasite and securing equal opportunity for every worker. That faces us with a terrific struggle, but the more directly we plunge into it the sooner it will be ended and victory won.

W. C. O.

GOVERNMENT BY SCIENTISTS.

The liberty of man consists solely in this: that he obeys natural laws because he has *himself* recognized them as such, and not because they have been externally imposed upon him by any extrinsic will whatever, divine or human, collective or individual.

Suppose a learned academy, composed of the most illustrious representatives of science; suppose this academy charged with legislation for and the organization of society, and that, inspired only by the purest love of truth, it frames none but laws in absolute harmony with the latest discoveries of science. Well, I maintain, for my part, that such legislation and such organization would be a monstrosity, and that for two reasons: first, that human science is always and necessarily imperfect, and that, comparing what it has discovered with what remains to be discovered, we may say that it is still in its cradle. So that were we to try to force the practical life of men, collective as well as individual, into strict and exclusive conformity with the latest data of science, we should condemn society as well as individuals to suffer martyrdom on a bed of Procrustes, which would soon end by dislocating and stifling them, life ever remaining an infinitely greater thing than science.

The second reason is this: a society which should obey legislation emanating from a scientific academy, not because it understood itself the rational character of this legislation (in which case the existence of the academy would become useless), but because this legislation, emanating from the academy, was imposed in the name of a science which it venerated without comprehending—such a society would be a society, not of men, but of brutes. It would be a second edition of those missions in Paraguay which submitted so long to the government of the Jesuits. It would surely and rapidly descend to the lowest stage of idiocy.

But there is still a third reason which would render such a government impossible—namely that a scientific academy invested with a sovereignty, so to speak, absolute, even if it were composed of the most illustrious men, would infallibly and soon end in its own moral and intellectual corruption. Even to-day, with the few privileges allowed them, such is the history of all academies. The greatest scientific genius, from the moment that he becomes an academician, an officially licensed *savant*, inevitably lapses into sluggishness. He loses his spontaneity, his revolutionary hardihood, and that troublesome and savage energy characteristic of the grandest geniuses, ever called to destroy old

tottering worlds and lay the foundations of new. He undoubtedly gains in politeness, in utilitarian and practical wisdom, what he loses in power of thought. In a word, he becomes corrupted.

It is the characteristic of privilege and of every privileged position to kill the mind and heart of men. The privileged man, whether politically or economically, is a man depraved in mind and heart. That is a social law which admits of no exception, and is as applicable to entire nations as to classes, corporations, and individuals. It is the law of equality, the supreme condition of liberty and humanity. The principal object of this treatise is precisely to demonstrate this truth in all the manifestations of human life.

A scientific body to which had been confided the government of society would soon end by devoting itself no longer to science at all, but to quite another affair; and that affair, as in the case of all established powers, would be its own eternal perpetuation by rendering the society confided to its care ever more stupid and consequently more in need of its government and direction.

But that which is true of scientific academies is also true of all constituent and legislative assemblies, even those chosen by universal suffrage. In the latter case they may renew their composition, it is true, but this does not prevent the formation in a few years' time of a body of politicians, privileged in fact though not in law, who, devoting themselves exclusively to the direction of the public affairs of a country, finally form a sort of political aristocracy or oligarchy. Witness the United States of America and Switzerland.

Consequently, no external legislation and no authority—one, for that matter, being inseparable from the other, and both tending to the servitude of society and the degradation of the legislators themselves.

MICHAEL BAKUNIN ("God and the State").

RICH AND POOR.

Poor man (I call thee as the world of criminals call thee), between ourselves, when in the winter thou art not called to labour, and thou consumest the few potatoes thou broughtest home in the autumn days; when thy window is broken by the frost, and thou stoppest up the opening with an old hat, with straw, or with rags; when thy naked children go shivering about the house, and thou seekest out thy old summer-jacket, and askest thy wife to make with it something warm to cover them; when thy wife stirrest the moist wood in the grate and weeps, and thou knowest not whether her tears come from the smoke or from other things—then, poor man, be not ashamed! The enemies with whom thou fightest are mightier than the enemies of the king, and thou yieldest not to thine enemies! But when thou, before a rich man (I call him before whom thou pullest off thy hat as the world of criminals call him), takest off thy hat, and sayest to him, "Sir, I ask you for work" (he who says, "Sir, take away the work from such a one, and give it to me," may not come into the holy book of mankind), then blush, poor man, blush! Thou knowest not what thou art, and what the rich man is!

Who hath told thee, poor man, that he who hath little is poor, and he who hath much is rich? Hell hath told thee that, and hell is a liar! Who is rich—he who giveth or he who receiveth most? He who giveth most is the rich! Let the rich man withdraw his hand from the poor man, and the poor man, if he do not smite the rich man in the face, and take from him ALL that he hath given him, will take only a bit of earth, which belongeth equally to all men, and then he will be hungry no more. But let the poor man withhold his hand from the rich man, and the palaces of the rich will fall to pieces, their soft garments become tattered, and themselves, unused to labour, putrify alive. Poor man, thou givest most; thou art the rich! If the sun should abandon the earth only for one day the world would look frightfully. The goods of the earth come from the hands of the poor. Poor man, should thou withhold thy hand from the rich but for one day only, the rich would look frightfully. Poor man, he who taught thee to beseech the heartless rich no more—taught thee well. Take, poor man, the earth, and share it with thy poor brethren; and when the rich man comes and asks thee for bread then have compassion on him!

—J. C. BLUMENFELD ("The New Ecce Homo," 1839).

THE PROFIT MANIACS.

"Thus England asked for profits and received profits. Everything turned to profit. The towns had their profitable dirt, their profitable smoke, their profitable slums, their profitable disorder, their profitable ignorance, their profitable despair. The curse of Midas was on this society; on its corporate life, on its common mind, on the decisive and impatient step it had taken from the peasant to the industrial age. For the new town was not a home where man could find beauty, happiness, leisure, learning, religion, the influences that civilise outlook and habit, but a bare and desolate place, without colour, air, or laughter, where man, woman, and child worked, ate, and slept. This was to be the lot of the mass of mankind; this the sullen rhythm of their lives. The new factories and the new furnaces were like the Pyramids, telling of man's enslavement rather than of his power, casting their long shadow over the society that took such pride in them."

The quotation is from "The Rise of Modern Industry," by J. L. and Barbara Hammond, and Mr. Stuart Chase concludes his review of it in the *Nation*, of New York, with these words: "The physical degradation abates a little, but the spiritual degradation of the machine grows more remorseless with the years." And that is the main point, for what does it profit a man if he adds a few pennies to his daily wage at the expense of making his whole working life one never-ending round of maddeningly monotonous drudgery? What sort of an existence is it to be a cog in the huge wheel that grinds out Mr. Ford's preposterous fortune; to stand hour after hour punching the same kind of hole in the iron or other material fed to you by the moving platforms that make it possible to turn out a motor every few minutes? No slavery could be more galling; no degradation of man to the level of the clod baser or more humiliating. No man ought to stand it, and no man of virility of character and awakened intelligence can stand it. It is small wonder that, although Ford notoriously pays high wages, his workers are always leaving. He regards them as machinery that he has bought, and their every movement is recorded as one measures an engine's beats. This is the system, and only thus can it be worked.

The Hammonds add, and the point is worth thinking over, that our factory system would never have been accepted had not the ground been well prepared by our active participation in the slave trade. We organised that trade on a businesslike and profitable basis, with the object of furnishing our already scattered possessions with a supply of cheap, mobile, and abject labour. It was the prerequisite for mass production, and it created the morality needed for it. There developed necessarily the view that the masses were cattle, predestined for use by the superior few; because naturally when the African negro was regarded as so much merchandise, the next step, that of including in the same category the poor of one's own country, became fatally easy. Thus evil propagates itself, and the slavery against which we rebel to-day has its roots in those savageries of the past by which British capitalism laid the foundations of its power.

Our Trade Unionists, our Socialists, our Radical reformers still think only in terms of factory production, their aim being to organise it more scientifically, to centralise it, to increase its power capacity for mass production. To us Anarchists, on the other hand, the factory, the factory system, and the straightjacket life that goes with them, are accursed things. From first to last they stand for an utterly distorted view of life, and, in our opinion, any revolution which fails to abolish them will have missed its mark.

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