

# Freedom

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## NOTES.

### The Economy Stunt.

The Committee which has been sitting for some time to consider the best means of cutting down public expenditure has issued its report, which has been received with a discordant chorus from the Press and the various Departments affected. The Committee suggests cutting down the Army and Navy, cuts in education and health administration, the abolition of Labour exchanges, the selling of houses built by municipalities, and many smaller economies. All the limpets in Whitehall feel their last hour has come, and their squeals (do limpets squeal?) rend the air. The generals and admirals unite in declaring that, while economies are undoubtedly necessary in other departments, not a man nor a penny must be taken from the Army or Navy. India is in revolt, Egypt is in revolt, the Near East and the Middle East and the Far East are in a turmoil, and the Empire is in danger. At all costs the Army and Navy (damn Washington!) must be maintained at full strength. So it looks as though the Government will have a hard job to economise and satisfy its critics at the same time. Of course, "one never eats soup so hot as it's served," and the chances are that the Government has made allowances in advance for this outcry, and is prepared to forego some of the "cuts." But all this clamour shows what a powerfully organised force the State machine has become, and how difficult it is to curtail the vested interests of the parasitic host of which it is composed. During the war a writer in the Press said it would be easier to demobilise the Army than to demobilise Whitehall, and he was right. There is one direction, it will be noted, in which the Committee has not dared to suggest economy—the National Debt. This is draining from the productive class nearly £500,000,000 a year. A reduction of 1 per cent. in the interest paid on the Debt would save about £100,000,000 a year. But the Government is in the grip of the financiers, and it would be broken immediately if it touched the sacred Debt without their consent. This question of economy, however, is only a capitalists' squabble; we merely look on and point the moral.

### Men of Principle.

When politicians and Labour leaders begin to talk about principles it is time to take special note of their practices. The Powers in Conference at Washington recognised the principle of Chinese sovereignty, but their practices in China tell a very different tale. The British Government recognises the principle of Egyptian independence, but in practice they have crushed out every symptom of it. They have also recognised the principle of self-government for the Indians ever since Queen Victoria promised it over fifty years ago, but recent events in India are a flat contradiction of that principle. So when Labour leaders who are also politicians talk about the principle of a thing we know what to expect. Just recently the National Wages Board met to deal with conditions of labour on the railways. The companies demanded lower wages and increased hours, which the men quite naturally opposed. Mr. Cramp, the industrial secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, made a great fighting speech. Never, never, never must the principle of the eight-hour day be given up. He would fight to the last railwayman for that principle. And the representatives of the companies looked glum. Then up spake the Right Hon. J. H. Thomas, Privy Councillor, the £1,000-a-year general secretary of the N.U.R. "Could not the 48-hour week," he asked Cramp, "be maintained by an agreed spreadover, in some cases, say, of twelve hours?" And Cramp said he thought it could. So now the members of the N.U.R. will have the pleasure of knowing that although their duties are in some cases spread over from nine to twelve hours, the blessed principle of the eight-hour day is safe! Oh, those Labour leaders!

### Ireland after the "Peace" Treaty.

The situation in Ireland reminds one of the old saying, "Peace, peace, but there is no peace." In fact, the Treaty has but served to mix things up more than ever, and civil war may break out at any moment. Whereas previously there were but two parties—Sinn Feiners and Unionists—now there are three, if not four. The fight for power is more bitter than ever, and it is possible we may soon see the strange spectacle of Michael Collins and Ulstermen fighting side by side against De Valera and the Republicans. It is certain that Ireland is in for a further period of strife and bloodshed. The common people will again be drawn into the fight, without any prospect of gain to themselves no matter who may be the victors. One would think they had had their fill of fighting for many years to come. But the worker is a strange animal. He may be sweated and robbed by his exploiter, and yet never dream of taking up arms on his own behalf; but as soon as his master beats the drum he will rush into the fray and fight like a demon. Collins is playing a part similar to that of General Botha at the end of the Boer War. Botha persuaded his comrades-in-arms to make peace, and then became Prime Minister of South Africa, working with the British capitalists in maintaining the new régime. Now that Griffiths and Collins have got their hands on the governing machine, they will accept help from any quarter to keep themselves in power. But it is about time the Irish workers asked themselves what benefit they are likely to get from all this fighting.

### The Labour Party's Modesty.

It seems as though the Labour Party are not so sure of a victory at the next General Election as they were a few months ago, when we remember Arthur Henderson talking about being on "the eve of power." Now Mr. Clynes says they are not "anxious to enter now into the turmoil of an election merely to reap party advantage." The fox has discovered that the grapes are sour. We know that if Mr. Clynes and his friends thought that power and its seductive emoluments were within their reach they would grasp them with both hands. He really gave his party away in his speech on February 10, when he said: "The most noteworthy part of the King's Speech might have been written by the secretary of the Labour Party." That sentence is enough to damn the whole policy of the Labour Members. They are so weak-kneed and timid that there is practically little difference between their social schemes and those of the Coalition they condemn. These pink Socialists have been so scared by the foolish charge of "Bolshevik" thrown at them by their opponents that they go to the other extreme to show how constitutional they are. During a debate in the House of Commons a Minister said the Labour Party had a policy of exterminating the landlord. Immediately a Labour Member contradicted him and said, "No; only regenerating him." So they do not believe in the abolition of landlordism. With two million out of work, something drastic in the way of social legislation would be demanded of a Labour Government by the workers, and their first demand would be for the sweeping away of the iniquitous system of land ownership which is the root cause of most of our social ills. But the thoughtful workers have realised at last that neither the Labour Party nor any other Parliamentary party has any remedy for their miseries, and they are now seeking other means of escape from a system which brings them war and starvation.

## INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CONGRESS.

We regret to say that owing to our delegate's manuscript having gone astray in the post, we are unable to publish his report this month. We will publish a report in our next issue.

# ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM.

By WM. C. OWEN.

(Continued from last month.)

What is the course that the Socialists are pursuing in the political campaigns to which their entire movement has dwindled? In private they will tell you that they are rebels against the existing unnatural disorder as truly as are we Anarchists, but in the actual conduct of their movement they are autocrats, bent on the suppression of all individuality, whipping, drilling, and disciplining their recruits into absolute conformity with the ironclad requirements of the party. They declare themselves occupied with a campaign of education. They are not. In such a contest as this, wherein the lines are drawn so sharply; where on the one side are ranged the natural laws of life, and on the other an insanely artificial system that ignores all the fundamental laws of life, there can be no such thing as compromise; and he who for the sake of getting votes attempts to make black appear white is not an educator but a confidence man. We are aware that there are many confidence men who grow into the belief that theirs is a highly honourable profession, but they are confidence men all the same.

The truth is that the Socialists have become the helpless victims of their own political tactics. We speak correctly of political "campaigns," for politics is warfare. Its object is to get power, by gathering to its side the majority, and reduce the minority to submission. In politics, as in every other branch of war, the entire armoury of spies, treachery, stratagem, and deceit of every kind is utilised to gain the one important end—victory in the fight. And it is precisely because our modern democracy is engaged, year in and year out, in this most unscrupulous warfare that the basic and all-essential virtues of truth, honesty, and the spirit of fair play have almost disappeared.

We realise further that if politics could, by any miracle, be purified, it would mean, if possible, a still more detestable consummation, for there would not remain a single individual right that was not helplessly at the mercy of the triumphant majority. It is imperative, and especially for the weaker—those who are now poor and uneducated—that the "inalienable" rights of man be recognised; and that, while he is now "supposed" to be guaranteed absolute right of free speech and assemblage, and the right to think on religious matters as he pleases, in the future he shall be really guaranteed full opportunities of supporting and developing his life—a right that cannot be taken away from him by a dominant party that may have chanced to secure, for the time being, the majority of votes.

This is the rock on which Socialism everlastingly goes to pieces. It mocks at the basic laws of life. It denies, both openly and tacitly, that there are such things as individual rights; and while it asserts that assuredly, as civilised beings, the majorities of the future will grant the minority far greater freedom and opportunity than it has at present, it has to admit that all this will be a "grant," a "concession" from those in power. There probably never has been a despot that waded through slaughter to a throne who has not made similar promises.

The way in which a man looks at a subject determines his treatment of it. If he thinks, with the Socialists, that the collectivity is everything and the individual an insignificant cipher, he will fall in willingly with all those movements that profess to be working for the good of the majority, and sacrifice the individual remorselessly for this supposed good. For example: Although he may admit, in theory, as the Socialists generally do, that men should be permitted to govern their own lives, his belief in legislating for the majority, and the scant value he puts on the individual life, will lead him to support such movements as Prohibition, which, in the name of the good of the majority, takes away from the individual, absolutely and in a most important matter—as in the question of what he shall and shall not drink—the command of his own life.

Such a man will readily be brought to think, by the arguments of those who are seeking their own advantage, that for the good of the majority it is necessary that all should be taxed to support a large standing army and navy, which will defend the fatherland; and it will not be difficult to take him a step farther and convert him into a warm advocate of military conscription. He will be easily persuaded that our barbaric treatment of criminals is necessary and highly desirable, by reason of the deterrent influence it exercises, for the protection and welfare of the majority. He will persuade himself that

religion is a necessity, for the good of the masses, and should be accorded all the special privileges it now enjoys. Shortly you will find him with the crowd that clamours for the closing of all places of amusement on Sunday—for the good of the community. In economic matters you will find him endorsing a protective tariff policy, which, in the name of the good of the majority, takes from the individual his natural right of spending his earnings where he can do the best with them, taxes the great masses for the enrichment of the privileged few, and necessarily has resulted in the accumulation of those gigantic fortunes against which the whole world is in revolt to-day.

Apparently Socialists cannot conceive of a society run on other than the most strictly centralised principles. This seems to us a profound error.

The most important and powerful factor in production and every form of activity is the human factor. This factor, longing more and more for the opportunity of individual expression, is in constant rebellion against all efforts to reduce it to the level of a mere cog in a machine, economic or political. Being by far the strongest element it inevitably will win its way, sooner or later, no matter how adverse the conditions for the moment may seem to be.

It may have appeared within recent times as if the tide were setting in permanently toward centralisation; but, in reality, the forces of decentralisation, that make for the man becoming—as he should be—the master instead of the slave of the machine, are sweeping irresistibly forward. The excessive and unnatural centralisation, due entirely to the artificial laws of special privilege, which has resulted, for example, in the modern Trust, has had the effect of releasing a vast army of skilled and highly ingenious mechanics whose wits have been industriously at work devising simpler and simpler machinery which it will be possible for the individual to own and operate.

Locomotion is the industry of all others that seemed, by its very nature, doomed to centralisation; yet even in this department the tide of decentralisation has set in with extraordinary rapidity. With the advent of the bicycle came the first break, the individual machine becoming at once a formidable competitor of the street car companies. The tendency received a further and enormous impetus with the introduction of the motor, which throws every highway open to the individual owner of the machine and does away with the immense advantage previously enjoyed by those who had acquired the monopoly of the comparatively few routes along which it is possible to lay down rails and operate trains. It is obvious that the motor, both as a passenger and freight carrier, is as yet only in its infancy; and when the flying machine comes, as eventually it will come, into general use the individualisation of locomotion will be complete.

In short, the philosophy that bases its conclusions on the conditions that happen to prevail at any given moment in the machine industry is necessarily building on quicksand, since the machine itself is undergoing a veritable revolution along the individualistic lines we have indicated.

This delusion respecting machinery has led the Socialists into ridiculous assumptions on the subject of centralisation in general, committing them for a couple of generations past to the pipe-dream that under the régime of Capitalism the middle class is doomed, by the natural development of the economic system, to speedy extinction. The fallacy of this position has been shown over and over again by irrefutable statistics taken from governmental income tax and similar returns; but it is unnecessary even to quote figures in this matter. Any one who will take the trouble to put on his observation cap can see clearly for himself that in such countries as Mexico and Russia, where the capitalistic system was in its infancy, the middle class has been small in numbers and insignificant in power. On the other hand, in proportion as the capitalistic system develops the numbers and influence of the middle class increase, until in America—the country in which Capitalism has attained its greatest growth—it is well-nigh omnipotent.

The same tendency—the rebellion of the individual against the centralising influences that seek to convert him into a mere cog in a machine—is equally apparent in the political field. Necessarily, as education progresses, the individual voter becomes more and more desirous of relying on his own judgment; he is less willing to vote the old ticket because his father and grandfather did so; he takes other papers and attends other meetings than those in which only one creed is preached; he becomes more independent.

On a still larger scale the same tendency for individual

expression is manifest in the affairs of nations, the frantic struggles of the weaker nationalities to break away from the crushing, intolerable centralised domination of great and despotic empires being one of the most pronounced developments of modern times. With all these efforts we Anarchists sympathise profoundly, and to them we lend all the aid in our power, recognising the claims of individual life that is struggling desperately for expression. But, whatever they may say here and there and from time to time for the purpose of catching votes, the Socialists do not truly and whole-heartedly sympathise with such efforts, and they cannot, because they are wedded to the doctrine of centralisation of power and the suppression of the individual for the supposed good of the larger collective body.

Such a pamphlet as this is no place for scholastic disquisitions, but those who have studied the works of such profound writers as Herbert Spencer, Buckle, Sir Henry Maine, and others too numerous to mention are well aware that the history taught the Socialists through Marx and Engels is partisan history, and that the real movement of humanity has been to get away from the military régime of authority to the domain of individual freedom. It is this movement with which we have allied ourselves, convinced that there is nothing too fine for man, and that it is only under conditions of freedom that man has the opportunity of being fine. The tendency must be toward a finer, which means a freer, more self-governing life.

It is for you, the individual reader of this treatise, to decide with which of these two conflicting forces you will align yourself, for between freedom—of thought, speech, and action—and authority there can be no compromise. The battle is to the finish and is to-day on as never before in the world's history.

(To be continued.)

## The Red Trade Union Congress and the Anarchist Prisoners.

DEAR COMRADE—We are out of the great prison—Russia—five weeks. But I still find it most difficult to adjust myself to the outside world. All prisoners who have been confined for a long time feel that way. To be sure we were in Russia only two years. But the events which crowded in upon me during that period made each day a long, painful time of hope and despair during which one could not write the things one felt, or read the things one wanted to know. One could only be a mute observer of the greatest tragedy in human history—the slow and torturous death of the Russian Revolution. I hope soon to have gotten hold of myself sufficiently to write about that catastrophe.

Since our arrival here I saw for the first time in many years some copies of FREEDOM—the file of 1921. I congratulate you on the splendid work you are doing—especially on your stand against the persecution of our comrades in Russia. I am enclosing a copy of a statement on the subject. From Riga we sent a similar article to Rocker. Perhaps you have received a copy of that too. If you have not already published that one, please publish the one enclosed. This statement should silence once for all the foolish denials of the Communists outside of Russia of the doings of their Holy Church. Not that I blame them. I know from personal experience how difficult it is to throw off the hold of the delusion that the Russian Revolution and the Bolsheviki are synonymous. I fought bitterly and desperately many months before I could realise the terrific falsehood foisted upon the world. And I was close enough to see the working of the Jesuit Order. So I do not blame the enthusiasts who so strenuously resent any criticism of the Bolsheviki. A lie dies hard. Think of how long the Christian lie has been dying. Let us hope it will not take so long for the lie to die which confuses the spirit of the Russian Revolution with the State machine which has crushed that spirit. No, I do not blame the sincere enthusiasts who see from afar the glamour of the Russian Government. But no words can express my contempt for those who have been in Russia, have had the opportunity to see things as they are, and who either did not want to see, or, seeing, continue silent after they go out of Russia. No wonder the hosts of delegates who swarm into Russia to be royally entertained by the Government and at the expense of the Russian people are so hated by the people. They justly see in them the blind dupes of the Government who eagerly lap up every official statement as gospel truth. Later I mean to pay my respects to these men and women who so shamefully betray both the workers in Russia and in their own countries. Now I wish to reply to the letter in FREEDOM of October last: "Anarchist Prisoners in Russia."

I do not know who Mr. Harry Pollitt is. He was certainly not very conspicuous at the Red Trade Union Congress. I do not know whether he was actually shown "a letter purporting to come direct from the Anarchists, glorying in the fact of aiding the counter-revolutionaries, and also claiming credit for throwing this particular bomb." I only know that if he was actually shown such a letter he was shown a dastardly forgery. The henchmen of the Bolshevik Government—the Tche-ka—have shot and still are shooting people for less than

throwing bombs. Is it likely the Tche-ka would have spared the Anarchists who were supposed to have thrown the bomb in 1919, and that it would go on keeping them in prison until Mr. Pollitt's and Mr. Tom Mann's arrival two years later? Right here it is well to point out that though the bomb was thrown after the most brutal repressions on the part of the Bolsheviki, most of our comrades in Moscow and Petrograd came out in a strong protest against such methods. Why were Messrs. Pollitt and Mann not told of that protest?

The comrades in prison at the time of the Congress could certainly not have written a letter glorying in having helped counter-revolutionaries or taking credit for that particular bomb. Granted, however, that Messrs. Pollitt, Mann, etc., were impressed by that "letter," should they not have asked to see the imprisoned men? Even in capitalist countries it is customary to investigate both sides—to listen to the accused and not only the accusers. Yet here are so-called revolutionists, Messrs. Pollitt and Mann—Mann, who has on more than one occasion stood in the dock for his opinions; Mann, the arch-enemy of politics and politicians. What do they do? They read "a letter purporting to come direct from the Anarchists" and "are absolutely satisfied as to the guilt of the Anarchists." What a monstrous outrage! But, then, Moscow has become the procurer of many so-called revolutionists. Why not Messrs. Pollitt and Mann?

One might be charitable to Mr. Pollitt's lack of fairness but not to his lack of accuracy. He states that "he, Tom Mann, and others were elected as a visiting committee to the Anarchists, with full power to grant a free pardon to all those who promised to refrain from helping the counter-revolutionaries in future. Some promised and were granted their freedom." Not one word of this is true, except that Tom Mann was one of a Committee which never visited any prison.

The episode that happened in Moscow during the Red Trade Union Congress was, I believe, reported in some of our European papers. For the benefit of the readers of FREEDOM, however, I will give a short *résumé*. Our imprisoned comrades, driven to desperation by long imprisonment and starvation, decided upon a hunger-strike. The French, Spanish, and Italian Anarcho-Syndicalists, when informed of the decision, promised to raise the question at an early session of the Congress. Some, however, suggested that the Government might be approached first. Thereupon a Committee was chosen, with Tom Mann as one of its members, to call upon the Little Father in the Kremlin. In passing be it said that Tom Mann had to be shamed into taking part in the matter. As to Mr. Pollitt, nobody knew of his existence. The Committee called on Lenin. It was told that the Anarchists would not be released as they were too dangerous, but that they would be given a chance to leave Russia. Should any one of them return, he would be shot. The next day Lenin's statement was substantiated by a letter from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and signed by Trotsky, reiterating what Lenin had said. Naturally the threat of being shot was omitted in the official letter.

Our comrades accepted the offer of deportation. They, who had fought and bled for the Revolution, preferred to become the Ahasuerus of foreign lands to the slow mental and physical death in the Communist prisons. Thereupon two of our comrades, A. Shapiro and Alexander Berkman, were added to the Committee of foreign delegates whose duty it was to negotiate with the Government about the release and deportation of our comrades. It is interesting to note here that neither the elusive Mr. Pollitt nor Tom Mann showed further interest or concern in the fate of our imprisoned comrades. It is not judicious to show interest in Anarchists when one is the guest of a Government—especially a Communist Government.

The negotiations went on, and the idea of a public protest at the Congress was abandoned. Fancy, then, the amazement of every one concerned when at the eleventh hour of the Congress, shortly before its closure, Bukharin, in the name of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, launched into a scurrilous attack upon the Anarchists. Naturally, the French, Spanish, and Italian delegates, supported by many others, demanded the chance to reply. That demand was granted to Sirolle only after every possible political trick on the part of the chairman, Losovsky, was used to sidetrack the demand. However, the sentiment for fairplay was so great—supported even by some of the Communist sheep representing the very great Labour movements of Palestine and other such industrial centres—that Sirolle was finally permitted to speak. I wonder why Mr. Pollitt failed to say something about this very interesting incident. It might have thrown some light on the famous letter he was supposed to have seen.

Lest your readers think that the Government hastened to fulfil its promise of a speedy settlement of the case of our comrades, I wish to say that they were released only at the end of September, that some of them were dumped upon the tender mercies of European Governments only in November, and that some of them are still waiting to be deported, while their vacant places in prison were quickly filled by other comrades. Strange, is it not? Even reactionary America does not dare to deport her native sons. The Russian Government dares to do such an outrageous thing because the enemies of the Russian Revolution and the friends of the Bolsheviki have confused the whole world about the Russian situation.

With kindest regards to all the comrades.—Fraternally,  
Stockholm, January 9.

EMMA GOLDMAN.

# FREEDOM.

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## LIFTING THE VEIL.

We think that very few students of the Russian Revolution are now under any illusions as to the situation in Russia. The Bolsheviks and their supporters at home and abroad raised a smoke screen so dense that for some time it was almost impossible to get any really reliable news of happenings in that country; but the drastic change in the economic policy of the Bolsheviks, and the necessity of explaining the reason for the change, have thrown a flood of light on the situation. We can now see that the phrases "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," "Workers' and Peasants' Republic," and "Soviet Republic" had no real meaning in fact. It was a Dictatorship of the Communist Party, pure and simple. The workers and peasants had no more influence on the Bolshevik Government than they have on the Government in any other country. They may have voted for the Communists, but that is explained by the fact that the Communist Party controlled the few papers in existence and thereby controlled the political education of the people; the principal reason, however, was that owing to the persecution of political opponents, very few dared to stand against members of the Communist Party. The compulsory labour in industry, the compulsory service in the army, and the compulsory food levies from the peasants are sufficient proof that the support of the workers and peasants was obtained by force.

Speaking in October, 1921 (a speech printed verbatim in the *Labour Monthly* of December last), Lenin admitted that compulsion had failed and that the peasants had inflicted a severe defeat on him and his party; consequently they had been compelled to alter their economic policy, which is now full steam ahead for State Capitalism. Side by side with this goes private Capitalism—free trade in the peasants' surplus, concessions to foreign capitalists, and leases to private capitalists—and Lenin says the struggle of the future will be between State Capitalism and private Capitalism, a struggle that "will be even more desperate and bitter than the struggle with Koltchak or Denikin." And in our opinion the workers will be used as pawns by both sides as mercilessly as they were used in the war, with no relief from their slavery whatever the result of the struggle may be. Thus is closed another chapter in the Russian workers' struggle for freedom.

The most extraordinary feature of this great change in the situation in Russia is the way in which it is practically ignored by the Communist press. Their readers know nothing about it. To them Russia is still the "Workers' and Peasants' Republic" formed in the autumn of 1917. From the very first they have painted a picture of an incorruptible and self-sacrificing Communist Party leading the way in the world-revolution. Now Lenin says that the Communist Party is full of bribe-takers and other hangers-on, and that probably 200,000 (a third of its membership) will be driven out of the party. But you may look in vain in the Communist papers for items like that. Again, the activities of the so-called Extraordinary Commission (the "Tche-ka") and its persecution of political opponents are never alluded to by these papers. Last month copies of *FREEDOM*, with the article "Bolsheviks Shooting Anarchists" specially marked, were sent to nearly every Labour, Socialist, and Communist paper, besides the leading capitalist dailies and weeklies; but with the exception of the *Worker* (Huddersfield) and the *Morning Post* we have seen no reference to the article.

In this issue we are publishing further news on Russia, and hope to continue to do so. We must trust to our readers to spread *FREEDOM* as broadcast as possible, so that the workers may know what the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" really means in practice.

## In the Prisons of Russia.

Having but recently left Russia, we feel that our first and most urgent words must be spoken in behalf of our political prisoners in Russia.

It is a sad, heartbreaking commentary upon the situation in Russia to speak of political prisoners in the land of the Social Revolution! Yet such is the fact, unfortunately. Nor do we refer to counter-revolutionists who might be, conceivably, prisoners of the Revolution. Incredible as it may seem, the jails and prisons of Russia are to day densely populated by the best revolutionary elements of the country, by men and women of the highest social ideals and aspirations. Throughout the whole vast country, in Russia proper as in Siberia, in the prisons of the old régime and in those of the new, in the *incommunicado* dungeons of the Tche-ka's Ossoby Otdell (Special Section), there languish revolutionaries of every party and movement: Social Revolutionists of the Left, Maximalists, Communist followers of the "Labour Opposition," Anarchists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, and Universalists—adherents of various schools of social philosophy, but all of them true revolutionists, and most of them enthusiastic participants in the November Revolution of 1917.

The position of these political prisoners is pitiable in the extreme. Not to speak of their mental anguish and suffering, the purely physical side of their existence is unspeakably miserable. Owing to the general conditions in Russia, the lack of building material and skilled labour, the repair of prisons is practically out of the question. The hygienic conditions are, therefore, in the great majority of cases, of the most primitive character. But worst of all is the food problem. At no time during its existence has the Bolshevik Government been able to supply sufficient food for its prisoners. Their rations did not cover the lowest possible minimum of bare existence. The actual support of the prisoners fell upon the shoulders of their friends, relatives, and comrades. But now the situation has grown still worse. With only 52 per cent. of the food-tax collected and practically no prospects of collecting more, with the terrific famine in the Volga provinces, and with the general breakdown of the economic machinery of the Government, the situation of the prison population is indeed a hopeless one.

The needs of the political prisoners in Russia are ministered to, to the extent of its naturally very limited possibilities, by the Political Red Cross of Russia, a very devoted and efficient organisation, of which the famous old revolutionist Vera Figner is an active member. This organisation, depending entirely on voluntary co-operation, has been eminently successful in its mission, considering how difficult it is for any one in Russia to spare donations from his own very scanty rations. On the whole, however, the Political Red Cross has been able to supply the most absolute necessities of the political prisoners.

Of all, excepting the Anarchists. Not that the Red Cross wishes to discriminate. On the contrary, that organisation is quite non-partisan, although sharply tinged with Right Wing elements. For political reasons, therefore, the Anarchists of Russia had long ago initiated the policy of themselves ministering to the wants of their imprisoned comrades, and it has for years been the established custom for the Anarchist Red Cross (later known as the Black Cross) to take care of all Anarchists in Russian prisons. All along it has been a herculean task for the Russian Anarchists that were at liberty to look after the needs of their arrested comrades. Many of the most active spirits had laid down their lives in the Revolution, great numbers had died at the front defending the Revolution, while others had been shot or were languishing in Bolshevik prisons. Most of those that still remained alive and out of prison were themselves constantly on the verge of starvation: the Black Cross had to exert veritably super-human efforts to keep its incarcerated comrades from actually starving to death. It has accomplished most self-sacrificing, noble work.

But if its task till now has been hard and difficult, it has now become immeasurably so. The new policy of the Bolsheviks of systematic persecution of Anarchists is proving a fearful handicap on the work of the Black Cross. Most of its own members being in prison, the organisation was recently reorganised and is now known as the SOCIETY FOR THE RELIEF OF ANARCHISTS IN RUSSIAN PRISONS. It is heroically continuing the work of giving what material aid it can muster to the imprisoned comrades. Unfortunately, its possibilities in that direction are most limited. The comrades at liberty are depriving themselves even of some necessities of life, in order to send a few more pounds of bread and of potatoes to the prisoners. They are willing, aye, glad, to share their very last. But they have so little, and their comrades in prison are so many and their need so great! From the prisons of Moscow, of Petrograd, from Orel and Vladimir, from the distant provinces in the East, and from the comrades exiled to the frozen North comes terrible news. The fearful scourge of starvation, the dreaded *tzinga* (scurvy), is attacking them! Their hands and feet are swelling, their gums loosening, teeth falling out, decay setting in in the living body!

Will the comrades at large give ear to the cry for help? The Anarchists of Russia are now utterly unable to supply even the most elementary wants of their prisoners without the assistance of the comrades and friends abroad. In the name of the Society for the

Relief of Anarchists in Russian Prisons, in the name of our martyred comrades now freezing and starving in the Bolshevik prisons, suffering for their loyalty to high ideals, we make this appeal to you, comrades and friends everywhere. Only your generous and immediate help can save our imprisoned comrades from death by starvation.

Fraternally,

ALEXANDER BERKMAN,  
Delegate-at-large,  
Society for the Relief of Anarchists  
in Russian Prisons.

A. SCHAPIRO,  
Secretary, Anarcho-Syndicalist  
Union, "Golos Truda," Moscow.

P.S.—Only money donations are requested. Because of the low level of the Russian valuta, even the smallest amounts sent by friends from Europe or America will be very helpful. Send contributions to: Redaction, *Brand*, R.A.R.P., Olandsgatan 48, Stockholm 4, Sweden.

NOTE.—All Anarchist and Syndicalist publications are requested to publish this appeal.

Stockholm, January 12, 1922.

[We hope that comrades in every land will respond to this appeal with great generosity. This story of the sufferings of our Russian comrades should move all of us to help to relieve them and thus show our solidarity with them. We will be glad to receive donations and send them on to Stockholm. We know that times are hard just now, but if we try to imagine the awful situation of our comrades in those terrible prisons in Russia, even the poorest of us will be stirred into giving something. Let us all give, and give quickly. Send your donations to the Manager, Freedom Press, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W. 1.]

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

### Switzerland.

FREEDOM has an exchange list that covers pretty thoroughly the Labour and revolutionary movement throughout the world. The exchanges are read carefully, and the staff receives and answers letters from many countries. It has, therefore, somewhat exceptional aids to the formation of its judgment, and on one subject it finds itself unanimous. In its view the workers have not been for years so completely at the mercy of their masters as they are to-day. Tacitly or with outspoken frankness all our most esteemed exchanges acknowledge this.

Switzerland is typical of the situation as a whole. She was a neutral in the War; she did not suffer invasion; there was reason to suppose that her industries would profit by the prostration of her rivals. On the contrary, trade has been anything but prosperous, and the state of her Labour movement seems to us simply deplorable. She has two excellent papers, *Le Réveil* and *Il Risveglio*, edited most capably by Bertoni; and through them we get many reliable facts. Switzerland is a small and somewhat cosmopolitan country, but perhaps on that account a specially faithful mirror of the world at large. She has a long Socialist tradition, and was the first to adopt such measures as the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, regarded some forty years ago as most advanced. For many years she had a great reputation as the asylum to which flocked political refugees from every country. How do things stand with her to-day?

Long ago the authorities decided that the country should not offer its hospitality to those who had deserted from any of the other countries during the War, or had fled from military service. Italy has amnestied these alleged offenders, who were, indeed, so numerous that her gaols could not accommodate them; and Italy herself has been compelled to remonstrate against the increasing frequency with which Switzerland is expelling and forcing on her Italians who had become domiciled there long before the War. And all this is done under a nauseatingly hypocritical mask; with a pretence of humanity that makes it doubly barbarous. The Swiss authorities explain carefully that the victim of expulsion is not handed over to the police of his native country; but any one who understands the vigilance with which the frontiers are now guarded can see what that amounts to. In reality, the victim, torn from his business or bread-winning occupation, is left stranded on a hostile frontier; is examined and cross-examined by the custom house officials, and, if not pounced on by the police immediately, is marked as a suspect and branded for arrest on the first pretext that presents itself.

This condition, now common to many European countries, involves the real martyrdom of countless workers. In this case the Italians suffer most, and one looks to see how the Swiss workers, for the most part professedly either Socialists, Syndicalists, or Red Internationalists in avowed sympathy with Moscow, have given proof of that solidarity of which they talk so ardently at Congresses. Bertoni brokenheartedly records the fact that, utterly demoralised by the prevalence of unemployment, they have done nothing whatever. "Sometimes

even," he adds, "in their jealousy of foreigners who are still able to obtain employment, they have assisted, with the most complete indifference, at these expulsions."

Happily this demoralisation is not universal. If it were we should give up Switzerland as lost. In March last a number of Trade Unionists attached to the Swiss Syndicalist Union met at Zurich and drew up a resolution calling on the Syndicalist Commission to take steps looking toward a united struggle against the common foe. The resolution was turned down, and the Commission put itself on record as declining all relations with the Communist Party. Thereupon the latter held a new conference at Trimbach, which was attended by delegates from various bodies belonging to the Syndicalist Union. Having secured a sufficient number of adherents to meet the requirements of Article 5 of the Union's statutes (these never-ending statutes!) it was able to compel the Commission to consider its demands, but the Commission played for time by insisting on the presentation of "precise and concrete propositions." Accordingly another conference was held, at Olten; and finally the Commission, after a heated discussion, resolved by 45 votes to 17 that an Extraordinary Congress should be held at Berne on January 13, 1922.

Observe! It takes ten months to get this simple matter through, the Commission interposing obstacles repeatedly on the plea that it "was conscious of its responsibilities." We ask ourselves how under such officialdom any struggle could be waged successfully.

Meanwhile the Federation of Metal Workers and Watchmakers had held its Congress. It declared that all economic struggles in which the Federation might become involved must be conducted in accordance with its statutes and must be under the direction of its own special organs. It placed a ban on the formation of individual groups and on all individual action, whether political or Syndicalist. All such activities it denounced as destructive of unity. Whoever might venture to disregard these edicts was to be punished by expulsion, which, as *Le Réveil* properly remarks, would be often tantamount to depriving him of opportunity to earn a living. In other words guillotine rule, imposed for the benefit of the permanent official.

The comic feature in all this is that these Inquisitors, more autocratic than the Roman Catholic Church, are now protesting, in the name of liberty of opinion, against the passage recently of what is known as the Haberlin law; and that these purists, who reject the Communist Party, are showing themselves even more dictatorial than Lenin or Trotsky. In our view, however, the tragedy of it all throws the comedy into total eclipse. Here we have idolatry *in excelsis*, with the sacred organisation as the god. Unity at any cost, clutched at despairingly, as the drowning clutch at every passing straw. A servile and most cowardly philosophy, leading straight to Dictatorship and the never-ending perpetuation of a race of slaves. Bertoni and his papers have heroic work ahead of them.

### France.

Here also there appears to be general depression accompanied by disorganisation and clamour of conflicting creeds. These two latter features we are far from deploring, for we believe that opinion will become clarified and gather strength. The recent International Socialist Conference in Paris seems to have been a disappointment. Out of it, as we understand, another International was expected to spring, one in which elements now at loggerheads might come to terms. The Communists, however, boycotted the Conference, and delegates from only three countries attended. Those expected from Germany were stopped by the railway strike, and those from Italy by the political crisis at home.

We find *Le Libertaire* admitting bitterly that the campaign it has conducted on behalf of our Spanish comrades has met with but little response, but it is still continuing that work in the hope that their cruel persecution, and the courage with which they have faced it, will arouse the French workers' interest. The Young Anarchists are keeping up their agitation on behalf of Cottin, Clemenceau's assailant—an agitation that has brought imprisonment to several of them. The case of G. Rolland, condemned to fifteen years' hard labour for having sheltered a deserter, who came to him starving and penniless, is also being agitated. It was for a similar crime that our admirable and highly gifted comrade, Armand, received a heavy sentence that has excited general indignation.

On the question of the Congress recently held at Marseilles by the Communist Party, Sebastien Faure writes strongly, quoting from the orders issued by Moscow and showing how impossible it is for Anarchists to acquiesce in so dictatorial a policy. "The directing of the Party," say the instructions, "must be a much firmer directing. It must become a real political directing, which shall control the thought and inspiration, and direct"—this word is repeated constantly—"the Parliamentary work. . . . It is necessary to develop in the Party a spirit of the strictest discipline." The capture and control of the Syndicalist movement is urged by Moscow as imperative. These tactics are apparently splitting the whole organised Labour movement in France, and probably that is well. It had become almost helpless in the straitjacket of reactionary officialdom, and needed stirring into new thought and life.

## THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN AMERICA.

The statement is often made that there is no class struggle in this country. All classes are supposed to be alike before the laws of the land, and also have equal opportunities. The truth of this statement could have been challenged at any time, but more especially to-day. Occurrences could be cited that take place day by day, wherein workers are murdered, crippled, and imprisoned in almost every strike, thus proving the existence of the class struggle. But no more effective proof of its existence in this country is needed than is furnished by the bloody battles waged against the brave miners of West Virginia during the last few years.

The history of the Labour movement in this country, like the history of the Labour movement in other lands, is written in letters of blood, with the miners of West Virginia now bearing the brunt of the fight. Who could truly picture all the sufferings that finally forced these miners to rebel? Exploited daily by the coal barons, the miner came home to "live" in the huts erected, owned, and rented to him by the coal barons. The need of food or clothes found the miner in the stores owned by the coal barons. Was not this sufficient evidence of economic slavery? Could human beings be expected to submit for ever to such a condition of things? The miners would not, and they began to organise themselves in order to resist this oppression. As a result, organisers of the Union were kidnapped, deported, jailed, and even murdered. Then the miners began to go on strike. The coal barons brought gunmen and swore them in as deputy-sheriffs; they also appointed and elected constables, sheriffs, judges, State legislators, and even the Governor of the State. The local and State government obeyed every order of its masters. Whenever the coal barons wanted martial law declared, it was done. If they wanted State troops, forthwith they came. When they ordered the shooting down of miners, it was promptly carried out. They wanted miners jailed and sentenced, and their judges fulfilled the wish. They wanted foreign workers to be deported, and the Federal Government granted their request.

In such circumstances did any one need to tell the miners about the existence of a class struggle? Were they not actually facing it?

Seeing themselves exploited in the mine, home, and store; their attempt to gain better conditions repulsed by every agency of the Government; maligned by the press and church, at the behest of the coal barons; the miners decided to make a last attempt to save their manhood. They began to arm themselves. The coal barons then got busy and demanded that the President of their (and every other exploiter's) Government should send Federal troops with which to subdue the workers. President Harding obeyed his masters' orders. Federal troops were sent against the miners, who were bloodily defeated. Quiet reigns for the time being. The coal barons are victorious and the miners are back in servitude as before.

Whilst this costly class struggle was on, what has the organised Labour movement done in defence of these brave men? The Labour movement has done nothing. Whatever its spokesmen have done is but a disgrace and a crime. Mr. Lewis, of the Miners' Federation, and Mr. Gompers, of the American Federation of Labour, have "protested," called for an investigation, and appealed for "justice for the miners." But to whom did they protest? Who did they ask for an investigation, and to whom did they appeal for justice? To the coal barons' tools—the Government officials! What a treacherous action! What a damnable betrayal of the workers' interests!

It is such betrayals that clearly show to the toilers of this country that they cannot hope for or expect any better action from the Lewises and Gomperses. These and all leaders will ever betray them as in the past. The toilers must learn this lesson: that whenever such class struggles as the one in West Virginia arise, it is to the interest of every organised and unorganised worker to rally to its defence, just as State and Capitalism are rallying all the forces of government in order to keep the workers enslaved.

The class struggle affecting any section of the workers must immediately become the class struggle of every toiler in the country. When the Labour movement begins to act by declaring general strikes and by seizing factories, food and clothing establishments, then class struggles will begin to end in victories instead of defeats. Such victories will in the end be victories not of a part but of the whole proletariat of America, and the same could truly be said of almost every other country.

Struggles like that in West Virginia are brave attempts of toilers to break the chains of slavery, and ought to be greeted as daring, courageous fights that will finally turn the class struggle of a section of the toiling masses into a general class struggle of the entire proletariat of the country—the class struggle of the Social Revolution!

U.S.A.

FRED S. GRAHAM.

### Reminiscences of Peter Kropotkin.

In our next issue we will publish the first part of an article by Alexander Berkman, describing two visits to Peter Kropotkin in March and July, 1920. Berkman also gives details of the terrible methods adopted by the Bolsheviks when requisitioning food from the peasants.

## FOR THE BENEFIT OF "FREEDOM."

The next Social Evening for the benefit of FREEDOM will be held at the "Workers' Friend" Club, 62 Fieldgate Street, Whitechapel, E. (back of St. Mary's Station), on Saturday evening, March 4.

### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

- The Lesson of Black Friday.* By Gerald Gould. 1s.—*Towards a Postal Guild.* By W. Milne Bailey. 6d.—*The Proletarian Gospel of Galilee.* By F. Herbert Stead, M.A. 2s.—*The Way Out; or, The Road to the New World.* By Wilfred Wellock. 1s. London: Labour Publishing Company, 6 Tavistock Square, W.C.1.
- I.L.P. Study Courses. No. 1: The History of the I.L.P.* By J. Ramsay MacDonald. 6d.—*No. 2: The Principles of Socialism.* By Mary Agnes Hamilton. 6d.—London: I.L.P. Information Committee, 5 York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.
- Might is Right.* By Ragnar Redbeard. Melbourne: Ross's Book Service, 184 Exhibition Street.
- Die Russische Revolution und die Kommunistische Partei.* Mit Vorwort von Rudolf Rocker. 1 mark.—*Der Bankrott des Russischen Staats-Kommunismus.* Von Rudolf Rocker. Berlin: *Der Syndikalist*, Fritz Kater, Kopenikusstrasse 25, O. 34.
- Worte eines Rebellen.* Von Peter Kropotkin. K.450.—*Wenn der Glorienschein Verbleicht.* Von Danton. K.60.—*Militarismus, Kommunismus, und Antimilitarismus.* Von Pierre Ramus. K.12. Klosterneuburg (bei Wien): *Erkenntnis und Befreiung*, Schiessstättegraben 237.
- A Propos de la Révolution qui Vient? 3fr.—Berangers.* Par Georges David. 3fr. Paris: *Les Humbles*, 4 Rue Descartes.

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JOHNSON YUAN.—Please send address. It appeared only on your envelope, which has been destroyed.

### CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

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