

Freedom

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NOTES.

Slashing Workers' Wages.

The employers are ruthless in enforcing wage reductions in all directions, and most of the Trade Unions are realising the hopelessness of their position. In the cotton trade the employers proposed a reduction of 6s. 1d. in the £, which the men refused; but the usual negotiations took place, and the men have agreed to a "compromise" in the shape of a reduction of 4s. 1d. in the £. The shipbuilders have been on strike for a month against a reduction of 16s. 6d. per week in two instalments of 10s. 6d. and 6s. Fresh negotiations have taken place, and the men are to ballot on a "compromise" of an immediate reduction of 10s. 6d. and two subsequent reductions of 3s. each, which their officials advise them to accept. In the printing trade most of the Unions have agreed to advise their members to accept big reductions, those that are putting up a fight only doing so on the question of the size of the cut. And so it goes all along the line. The present reductions are certain not to be the last, the employers saying that wages must fall much lower before they will reach what they are pleased to call "an economic level." British workers have seen the wages of Continental workers forced down almost to starvation point, and always imagined that they themselves were in a privileged position; but economic laws ignore frontiers, and unless trade soon improves wages here will drop to the Continental level. There is no damned sentiment about Capitalism—profits it must and will have. It is no use the workers saying that they and their families are entitled to a decent living. Capitalism does not admit it. It holds the land and the instruments of production in a vice-like grip, and the workers must accept its terms or starve. If, however, they are determined to live a free and decent life, they must find ways and means of forcing the monopolists to release their hold on the means of life. Until then they will remain the slaves of Capitalism.

The Bombshell at Genoa.

The announcement that a treaty had been signed by the Russian and German Governments was a tremendous shock to the Allies. They had invited the two countries to send delegates to Genoa, where they were to be treated as naughty boys who had come up for punishment. And these two naughty boys suddenly grew into very big boys, too big for the cane. Poincaré had a fit, and Lloyd George almost wept to think that after all his kind words to them they should have played such a nasty trick on him. This incident has brought to a head the differences between the French and British Governments. Poincaré and the French press talk of occupying the Ruhr Valley if the Germans do not pay the full amount of reparations due on May 31, but we are certain that no British troops would accompany them on that errand. Such a policy would but add to the existing chaos in Europe, and British capitalists are determined to get trade going again, even if they have to "shake hands with murder," as Northcliffe terms it. From our point of view, whilst we are pleased to see Russia and Germany throwing off the chains of the Entente, we cannot find any reason for liberty-lovers to rejoice at the linking-up of the dictators of Moscow with the reactionary Government of Germany. The repressive methods of the latter Government during the last general strike prove that the workers have little to hope for from that quarter, and recent articles in *FREEDOM* have shown the true character of the Dictatorship in Russia. We can but hope that the workers of both countries will some day free themselves from their oppressors and thus pave the way for a real treaty of friendship that will embrace the peoples of the world.

The Workers and Education.

The economies in education proposed by the Government are meeting with strong opposition from the Labour Party and the Teachers' Associations, who in reply are demanding greater facilities for education for the children of the workers. At a recent Labour meeting at Manchester a Member of Parliament said: "The workers would not be content until the door to the secondary school and the university and other higher educational institutions should be as open to the child of the poor as to the child of the rich." Now this is sheer nonsense. As long as there are rich and poor the rich will always have the advantage. The conditions at universities and other higher educational institutions are a reflection of capitalist society and will continue as long as that form of society exists. Equality in education presupposes equality in other directions. Not only do the wealthy gain advantages for their own children, but their economic position gives them the political power by means of which they can control the education of the poorer children. To-day the whole curriculum of the schools is dictated by the wealthy class in their own interests. They force the children into the elementary schools at their most impressionable age, and instead of helping the children to express themselves freely and thus draw out the best that is in them, they dope them and warp their minds, and keep them within educational fences which they are not allowed even to look over. With the result that, though they are very useful as industrial slaves, their outlook on life is narrow, and they are the easy prey of politicians and priests. We do not expect equal treatment for the children of rich and poor. We want to abolish all classes in society and to treat all children as equals, with a right to develop their own individualities to the fullest.

The "Communist" on Russian Anarchists.

We feel very sorry for Mr. Postgate, the editor of the *Communist*. Our articles on the Russian Dictatorship have caused much searching of heart in the Communist Party, and many inquiries as to the truth of our charges have reached the official editor. Instead of dealing with the charges he threw mud at Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. But this did not satisfy his questioners, who next asked him if Berkman's terrible story of Kronstadt was true. Now no good Communist editor writes anything without first consulting Moscow, so he passed on the inquiries to his masters. Well, the good folk at Moscow politely ignored the questions about Kronstadt, but they sent him a blood-curdling yarn from the *Izvestia* about the Anarchists and the Social Revolutionists in Russia. How they had been working with criminals and murderers and sneak-thieves in a game of expropriation; how they had murdered people for their money, and otherwise proved themselves "counter-revolutionists" of the deepest die. And the editor of the *Communist* published these fairy tales from the Tcheka, as the *Morning Post* used to print the fairy tales about the Communists by Basil Thompson. We smiled when we read the article, because poor Postgate evidently thought it was a "scoop," as journalists say when they get exclusive information. Now the truth is, that the whole story appeared in the Moscow *Izvestia* last September, and our East End comrades published a translation of it last February in the *Arbeiter Freund*, exposing the obvious falsity of the charges which had been published by the Tcheka as an excuse for the shooting of ten of our comrades. If Moscow thinks Anarchists and Social Revolutionists are such scoundrels, how comes it that it orders the Communists to form a "Unity Front" with them? Do tell us, Mr. Postgate.

Push the sale of "Freedom."

BAKUNIN'S "CONFESSION" TO TSAR NICHOLAS I. (1851).

The complete Russian text of Bakunin's so-called "Confession" to Nicholas I. (1851) is now before me, as published by V. Polonski, for the review *Istoricheski Arkhiv*, at the Government Printing Office, Moscow, 1921, 92 pages. This book has not been translated, as far as I know, and its exportation from Russia, at least for Anarchist and independent historical research, seems to be difficult, if not impossible. A full translation is required, and I believe that a German edition is preparing. Next to this an exhaustive summary and translated extracts would be useful, and I am beginning to give these in papers of several countries. I am very sorry that a detailed discussion of the long text, based on historical and documentary evidence, would trespass on the limited space of FREEDOM as well as on the patience of its readers who are not specialists in revolutionary and Anarchist history. So if in what I am going to say here I may appear to some to be affirmative, I am so not from self-assertion and carelessness of proof, but from the reasons just given, which prevent a detailed historical disquisition of the subject in this paper.

I am glad to be able to say that very little in the "Confession" really surprised or astonished me and that I have nothing to withdraw from the defence made in my articles in *Umanità Nova* (written October, 1921) and in FREEDOM (December, 1921). These articles repudiated the slurs cast on Bakunin by an article in the *Berlin Forum* by the ex-Anarchist Kibaltchitch and other articles deriving from it. It has since been published (*Bulletin Communiste*, Paris, December 22, 1921), first that Kibaltchitch wrote his article in November, 1920, *without knowing the "Confession,"* basing himself upon extracts and hearsay evidence; second, that the *Forum* translation of this article gives a garbled text, deformed, denatured, adulterated—all these are expressions of Kibaltchitch's Communist friend, Boris Souvarine—and that this remarkable text appeared without the knowledge even of Kibaltchitch, who, some six months or so later, when he had been made to feel the contempt which his article drew upon him, published a correct text in the *Bulletin Communiste* of December 22. On these careless and sloven productions the detractors of Bakunin based their campaign, which extends from Italian papers to the *New York Call*, and crawls along from one Communist paper to the other. But let us return to the main subject, the full original text, which is presented in a careful edition, reproducing also the marginal notes of the Emperor Nicholas I., for whose perusal a special copy of the "Confession" was made.

When after six days and nights passed almost without sleep, in a revolutionary turmoil where he alone kept his head cool and insisted on fighting to the bitter end, Bakunin was arrested, his fate was indifferent to him and he expected quick execution by court-martial. Then a long trial seemed also to end in death, which was commuted to penal servitude, solitary confinement, for life. Then all this happened all over again, only this time in dreadful Austrian dungeon cells. Extradition to Russia seemed to mean a fall still lower and all hope was gone. Then the unexpected happened: in Russia, from the first moment, he was very decently treated, as a State prisoner of rank, and then the Emperor asked for his "Confession."

This was about the kindest act which this proud tyrant could devise; he conversed with a rebellious subject not on terms based on monarchical or judicial prerogatives, but on those of the fictitious equality before "God" and the personal confidence and benevolence which are supposed to characterise the relations between a confessor and a penitent sinner.

We can see from the document that Bakunin did not reject this only chance to lay his case before Nicholas, whom he knew to be prejudiced against him not only by his uncontested revolutionary attitude and action, but also by many slanders and lies. One of Bakunin's young Russian comrades (A. Ross) twenty years later remembers that Bakunin told him how under these unexpected circumstances hope and the will to live and to become free again got hold of him, and made him from that hour prepare his liberation; to this exclusive aim the text of the "Confession" and all his attitude during ten long years—until he succeeded in 1861—were subordinated. This is borne out by the document before us. But it also bears out that Bakunin was determined to win his liberation by honourable means. He might have had it at any time by a real recantation—which he never dreamed of doing. He intended to deceive the tyrant who was the master of his destiny in a more subtle way, by minimising his own importance and yet fully taking the responsibility for all he had done or ever intended to do. I often wonder that Nicholas did not see through it, for Bakunin just

tells him what he wants to tell him, often very boldly, and the thin varnish of constantly admitted personal criminality, sin, foolishness, repentance, ought to deceive nobody. Nor need any one be shocked by the submissive style of many passages, for it was known that the Tsar would not look at a document where these forms were neglected. On the other hand, Bakunin sometimes jokes and makes the Tsar look foolish—as when he gives a very intimate description of some revolutionists of repute, and then says: I should not tell you, Tsar, of all this or their names if I did not know that they are safe in America, or so. On the whole, he played the game to bluff the Tsar by apparent sincerity, telling the truth, but not the *whole* truth by far, and he lost the game, since Nicholas's character was lower than he had expected, namely, in the following way.

Bakunin pointed out in the beginning of the "Confession" that he accepted the Tsar's humane offer and would tell the truth, but only as far as he himself was concerned. He would not violate any trust placed in him, nor be a traitor to his friends; his honour was all he had saved in his complete shipwreck, and he would prefer to be in the eyes of the Tsar the greatest criminal than a low scoundrel.

Nicholas I., however, was no gentleman and wrote the words: "By this he destroys already all confidence; if he feels the full weight of his sins, then only a *clean, full* confession, not a *conditional* one, can be considered a confession." In other words, he expected to find a recanting traitor, and was disappointed. So probably from this second page he made up his mind to leave Bakunin to his fate, unmitigated solitary confinement, which he did. Is it fair to reproach Bakunin that he did not foresee this absolute meanness of the Tsar and abstain from writing at all? I think that he was quite free to do what he thought best, and only "unctuous righteousness" will find fault with him.

The contents of the "Confession" accordingly are of very different historical and biographical value. Sometimes Bakunin feels unfettered and gives a lively and bold account, as when he describes the first weeks of boundless revolutionary enthusiasm after the Parisian revolution of February, 1848; or when he indulges in a scathing account of Russian misrule, official thieving, the inevitable state of things in a society where public opinion is ruthlessly silenced. He analyses his own mind at different junctures with great care, and unfolds in detail revolutionary plans, those of a Russian revolution and of a Slavonic rebellion, beginning by a thorough revolution in Bohemia (1849). He takes an intellectual pleasure in working out again these schemes, which only existed in his head, and in debating their chances. At intervals he remembers his present situation and throws to the Tsar a few sops on sinning, foolishness, Quixotism, and the like, which are mere by-play, to keep up the fiction agreed upon of a "confession." But those who know the biographical material otherwise available will observe how many things he silently passes over or it may suit him to reduce in importance, to let the Tsar see them in a very imperfect way; in short, he takes every care, so far as I can see, to do no harm to either persons or ideas. He pleads for those who are prisoners and claims for himself the main part of their guilt; he talks freely of those whom he knew to be out of the reach of the Continental Governments; in fact, his own description of the "Confession" in his letter to Herzen (1860) as a sort of *Wahrheit und Dichtung* (alluding to Goethe's title for his biography, "Truth and Fiction") is quite confirmed.

Some, to whom the full text was inaccessible, as to all of us, the comrades within present Russia excepted, laid stress on the fact that Bakunin in 1851 was not a declared Anarchist, and are disposed to ascribe what to us appears strange, if not simply ugly, in the document to his undeveloped state of mind on Socialism and Anarchism at that period. This I believe to be a mistake. From documents, his own letters, beginning at the age of nineteen, we know that he always aspired towards the very best, the greatest state of perfection for himself and those whom he loved around him and all mankind. The words: "Absolute freedom and absolute love—this is our goal; the emancipation of mankind and of the whole world—this is our task," were written by him at the age of twenty-one (August 10, 1836); and it matters nothing whatever that by education and surroundings he was led to look for the means to realise these aims first in religion, then in the highest types of philosophy, and that he learned to know political Radicalism and Socialism only in 1842, or, rather, that not until 1842 was his deep-rooted faith in the efficacy of philosophy definitely shattered. From that time until 1848 he had the fullest opportunity to examine all advanced ideas in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, and France; he was in intimate, intellectual contact, sometimes in close friendly relations, with the very best men of Continental Socialism and Radicalism—Ruge, Herwegh, Weitling, Marx, Louis Blanc, Considérant, Lamennais, Proudhon, and many others. Hence evidently he knew the ins and outs and the extremest limits which Socialist and Anarchist thought had then reached, better than anybody at that time, perhaps. The only thing which he did not do was to take sides, to join a party or a leading man; he was neither Marxist nor Proudhonist; all one-sided developments were too imperfect to him. He was, I take it, on the look-out for that synthesis of "absolute freedom and absolute love" (of 1836) which Anarchism and Socialism, welded together, will give, and which was the leading idea of his Collectivist Anarchism of the "sixties," as it is that of modern Anarchism. He had been too long the blind believer in *one* set of ideas, those of Fichte, those of Hegel,

and he did *not* repeat that mistake after 1842, but thought for himself from that time and chose the best wherever he met with it. Thus, to believe that in 1851 he was undeveloped or indifferent in this respect is an error of judgment.

What was undeveloped then above all were Socialist tactics, because the workers themselves had not stirred; the Chartist movement had no Continental counterpart; all was restricted to a few propagandist groups or conspirative centres. This explains why the idea of dictatorship was freely handled then, meaning before all benevolent education as opposed to reactionary constraint and parliamentary inefficiency, for the workers *themselves* had not yet stirred. Therefore neither was Bakunin a convinced authoritarian, because he would use this as a means in default of other means; nor can this primitive state of things in the infancy of the movement be an argument in our own times—or those who use it in this way imply that in their opinion the workers are always, in 1922 as in 1848, infants requiring leading-strings! Then let them proclaim this openly.

There is quite another reason for the ugly parts of the "Confession," and that is *nationalism*, coarse and brutal nationalism. This made Bakunin in 1848 forget Western democracy and plunge headlong into schemes of Slavonic federation, implying racial wars. He began by implanting into these schemes his ideas of freedom and social solidarity, but his idealist nationalism was powerless against the practical nationalist schemers then, as always, at work. Hence, in opposition of course to his own ideas, very strongly expressed before, isolation and nationalist fury and despair at the inaction of the Slavs themselves impelled him to write an appeal to the Tsar Nicholas I., regretting his past sins, demanding pardon, and exhorting the Tsar to take all the oppressed Slavs under his protection, to be their saviour and their father, and to raise the Slavonic banner in the West of Europe, to the discomfiture of the Germans and all other oppressors and enemies of Slavs. He did not complete this letter and burned it (June-July, 1848). This shows where *nationalism* logically leads even the very best of men; it drove Bakunin in 1848, at least in spirit and intention, into the arms of Nicholas I.; it drove others in 1914 into the arms of Nicholas II.; and when there may be a Nicholas III., others, possessed by that demon, will fall into his arms again. I do not wish to enter upon this subject any further; I feel that Bakunin's "Confession" is the most powerful warning cry against nationalism which—unknown to himself—could have been raised. For he was not free of this nationalist overgrowth, covering and stifling his finer feelings, until about 1864, and even after this the demon slumbered in him, only cowed by the hopeful aspects of the *international working-class movement* which then began.

The "Confession" remained unheeded, though it had thus touched upon the nationalist feelings of the Tsar, and it marks, I repeat, no defection, no recanting of Bakunin, but was the strictly logical outcome of a nationalist conception. Others pleaded in this way before Napoleon III. or Bismarck or the "man in the street" in London—it is virtually all the same; nationalism of the strong is directly realised as imperialism, nationalism of the small and weak naturally throws itself at the head of a stronger as a suppliant, and is supported, as a tool, if this is profitable to the stronger.

Bakunin, at the end of the "Confession," pleaded hard against the intolerable sufferings of solitary confinement, which he had already undergone for two years, and asked for another kind of punishment, however severe it might be. This eminently social man who had always lived in wide and intimate circles had to remain in a solitary prison for five and a half years longer, until his health was ruined and he was on the verge of suicide. Then his old mother pleaded for him before the Tsar Alexander II., and was rebuffed; but Prince Gortchakoff hinted to her that the Tsar would give way to a personal appeal written by Bakunin himself. So the caprice of the Tsar placed before the prisoner the alternative of hopeless lingering in solitary confinement until his death or writing that appeal, and he chose the latter. The meanness of that Tsar is characterised by the fact that it was advisable or necessary for Bakunin to use about ten times as much submissive phraseology in addressing that man as he used in 1851 to address the dreaded Nicholas I. himself. He submitted to this ceremony, and drew up a pathetic and memorable description of the torture of slow decay, imposed by solitary confinement (February 14, 1857).

Five days later the Tsar wrote: "I see no other way for him than to be sent to Siberia to settle there," and he was accordingly sent to Tomsk (Western Siberia), later on to Irkutsk (Eastern Siberia, 1859), from where in the summer of 1861 he at last made his escape, by Japan and America, to London (December, 1862).

These remarks must suffice to put comrades on their guard against further articles of the Kibaltchich type, but also against the unwonted and startling impression which the text or translation of the 1851 "Confession" and the 1857 letter to Alexander II. will make upon a reader familiar with Bakunin's later writings and ideas, and who has not examined the story of his early life, which is, however, known from innumerable sources, though very little has been written on it in English. To be fair and to reason on the basis of proper historic knowledge is all that is required, and then also this "Confession" will meet full understanding as a human document of fact and fiction, boldness and ruse, the product of its *milieu*, as it could not help to be otherwise.

March 11, 1922.

M. NETLAU.

IDLE MEN AND IDLE LAND.

At present I am living in an industrial centre in the North of England—in Yorkshire, to be precise. It is a district which is studded with mills and factories, from working in which, usually, the working people obtain their means of livelihood. Now the mills are silent and empty; there is nothing doing, and the work-people are "playing," which is a euphonious term for being out-of-work. A large number of them are in receipt of the Government dole, upon which, with their scanty savings, they manage to maintain a precarious existence. Many more of them are obtaining out-door relief from the Board of Guardians, which is calculated on a basis of keeping them alive until "trade turns round," whatever that may be. There is an organisation of unemployed, which is as useless and absurd as anything of the kind could be imagined to be; its leaders supplied the police with the names of two Communists who had been elected to the committee of the organisation, only a day or two ago. There have been some processions of unemployed to the offices of the Guardians, but after a window had been broken the Chief Constable made an order, on his own authority, prohibiting any further processions or demonstrations in the future.

I have had the opportunity of discussing the situation with all sorts of people, and I find that the only remedy conceivable, in the minds of employer and employee alike, is reduction in working costs, which always means reductions in wages. The Textile Workers have already taken three, if not four, reductions in their wages, and their plight to-day is considerably worse than it was before the reductions began. They have surely evidence enough to convince them that the mere tightening of their belts is a futile and idiotic remedy.

Four miles away from the Market Place is the beginning of a beautiful valley, which extends for a distance of four miles or so away to the moors which are on the border line of Yorkshire and Lancashire. A hundred years ago it was cultivated by men and women who were their own masters, inasmuch as they were getting a good share of their living directly from Mother Earth. To-day the valley is neglected and desolate. The farmsteads are falling to ruin, and twitch and heather is slowly encroaching on the fields that once sustained the men who worked them and made them fertile. And this valley is not a sportsman's paradise. It was depopulated in the days of the Industrial Revolution, and it remains depopulated still. All that it lacks are good roads, and it surely is not beyond man's power to make them.

In the town the unemployed men and women are loafing about the streets, in the public reading-room, everywhere they are slinking about as though they were ashamed to be on the earth, ashamed to look one another in the face, pimping and cringing about for the crumbs of charity which very, very occasionally fall from the rich men's table. In the valley four miles away there are ten thousand acres of unemployed land, wasted and desolate for the labour which would make it a garden of fruitfulness.

And both unemployed men and unemployed land are waiting for a miracle to happen—a miracle to be worked only by Parliamentary wizards, if we will only wait long enough.

There is only one word in the English language which entirely fits the situation, and that word is, Take! We have got to accustom the people to its sound and to its potentialities. There are precedents enough. Ninety years ago some at least of this land and hundreds of acres round about it were taken from the people by legal fraud and cunning. They were forced into the factories to make fortunes for the Fosters, and the Salts, and the Listers. When they revolted, their leaders were hung, or transported for life; they were starved and crushed and beaten; their children were massacred in the factories, and their bodies buried at dead of night. The most wonderful of all things to me is that their descendants take it so calmly, so magnanimously, with such meek and forbearing spirits. Some day the storm will break, and many other things will break with it. John Ruskin saw clearly when he said in "Fors Clavigera": "The land has been taken from you by force, and some day you will take it back again by force."

Let these things be disseminated among the people; let them be imbued, not with the spirit of revenge, but with the spirit which seeks its own and what belongs to it; let them take heart and stand on their own feet, and the oppression which now they suffer will melt away like a mist of the morning. And let them remember that on their efforts are hanging thousands of human lives, the women and children of the race. Surely if a man will not fight for his own self, he will fight for those who are dependent on him! The working-class movement is of all movements the most altruistic and the most unselfish.

JOHN WAKEMAN.

FREEDOM.

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GENOA.

We Anarchists detest above all things those cowardly opportunisms and illogical compromises to-day so much in fashion. We hate them because they prolong endlessly this agonising struggle; because under pressure they always break down; because, sooner or later, hard facts come face to face with them and knock them out. He who talks Revolution should mean it, should understand it, and should work for it alone. He who says that the entire capitalistic system is rotten should not be trying to bolster it up, as do the orthodox Trade Unionists. He who preaches emancipation should not be seeking to impose his own rule on the masses, as are the State Socialists and Bolsheviks.

All the great Anarchist teachers have emphasised this central truth. Without exception they have all been men who abominated humbug, and because they had in them that sincerity they saw both far and clearly. Read Bakunin, for example, and, although he wrote more than half a century ago, you will find yourself looking into the very heart of the intriguers now haggling like fishwives at Genoa. Study Kropotkin or Tolstoy, and you will understand why Russia's birth-pangs have ended in miscarriage. Scrape acquaintance with Proudhon, Tucker, or other of the innumerable Anarchist writers who have faced the economic situation squarely, and you will see how it is that England's workers still struggle vainly, as salmon in a net. Our men have abhorred illusions. Never have they pretended they could square the circle, in order that they might become respectable and popular, catch votes, and feather their own nests.

Long before the War this Western world was filling up with men and women who shouted habitually for Revolution. Few of them really meant it, or understood their shouts. The brutal wanted merely a row, and they got all they wanted. The cunning imagined that with the muddying of the waters their own fishing would be improved, and most of them to-day are bankrupt. Politicians thought their harvest-time had come, and all they actually have gathered is a crop of Dead Sea apples that crumble into dust. Their position, always precarious, is now more insecure than ever, for they hold it by the good-will of the masses who are learning to distrust them and under the sufferance of economic masters who force them sternly to toe the mark. What, for example, does the great Social-Democratic Party amount to at this moment, and who really believes that in this, or any other country, the voice of the Labour politician carries any serious weight?

Assuredly we Anarchists are not the ones to say that political power is an illusion, for we know only too well that those who can impose, as laws, their wishes on the masses, are anything but shadows. They are the cruellest of realities, but the mistake is in the failure to identify them and see, clearly and precisely, who they are. They are not the Thomases and Barneses, nor are they even the Asquiths and Lloyd Georges, though the press records every syllable uttered by these supposed oracles as solemnly as if they were the words of God. These people are not the thing itself, but only the tinsel in which the thing is dressed. They can be discarded by their masters at any moment, and if every one of them were to be hanged to-morrow there would be a thousand new applicants eager and able to take on the job.

Put this matter to the simplest but most conclusive of all possible tests. Consider merely the unquestionable fact that, although the War has brought Western civilisation to the very brink of ruin, certain men and classes of men made fortunes out of it, and colossal fortunes. We waste no words here on condemnation of that gigantic treason to humanity, for, in the first place, our opinion of it is inexpressible, and, in the second place, we are serenely confident that its punishment will come. We

merely invite you to identify the two classes to which these men belong, and we give the identification we Anarchists have made. First, as we see it, the capitalists made money out of the War—in proportion, naturally, to their financial strength. This was inevitable because, under the wage system—based always, as it is, on monopoly of the sources of production—he who has money commands the labour market and can open or close it as he chooses. The War, being one vast orgy of destruction, increased prodigiously the demand for commodities produced by labour, and those who controlled the labour needed asked and exacted what they willed. They are the first class of "hard-faced men who made money out of the War," and they made it because they were in a position to take advantage of the market. For fully six years it was a splendid market, but now the bottom has dropped out of it. Genoa is the latest attempt to put it back again.

The second class is that of the land monopolists, who have succeeded in cornering the raw material without which both Capital and Labour are helpless. Necessarily they also were in a position to dictate, and they also made money out of the War—and piles of it. They also want the prices of the materials they control kept up; they also are keenly interested in business being good, because they hunger for the tribute Capitalism hands over to them in exchange for the natural resources they control. When Capitalism's demands on them are brisk they prosper, and when their market falls flat they suffer. They also, therefore, are praying devoutly that Genoa will set business on its feet again.

In short, Monopoly is running the politics of Genoa, precisely as it runs the politics of the British Empire, the United States, France, Germany, and all the so-called civilised world. Into this charmed circle Lenin and his followers are now bargaining for re-admission. And why should they not? If any set of men are Monopolists surely it is they. They own—it is so stated in the Constitution which is their title-deed—the illimitable resources of that great section of Mother Earth which was but yesterday the Russian Empire. They have the stuff, the actual stuff, and, if they are able to keep their grip of it, they can give it or sell it as and to whom they please. They are in the best of positions to bargain, and ultimately they will drive a most successful trade. From their standpoint, as buccaneers, it is magnificent. From our standpoint, as revolutionists, it is the basest treason yet recorded.

Spanish Delegate on the Third International.

Angelo Pestaña, the Spanish delegate to the Moscow Congress of 1920, was on his return arrested in Italy, handed over to Spain by the police, and is still detained in the Barcelona prison. This prevented his opinion becoming known, and the Bolsheviks traded upon the uncertainty of his final attitude. Amando Borghi now publishes in *Umanità Nova* (Rome, March 7) a letter by Pestaña to himself, dated February 27, 1922, in which he says:—

".....What is the Third International? The Third International is nothing but the diplomatic organ by means of which the Russian Government remains in contact with the proletariat of the world.

"More so even. The Third International was founded to serve the political interests of the Russian Communist Party, not those of the world's proletariat.

"During my sojourn at Moscow, at all the sittings of the second Congress of the Third International, I saw nothing else. The politics suitable to the Russian Communist Party were always imposed, even when in contradiction with other workers' parties and organisations. From that moment the Third International was nothing but an organ at the service of the Government. All the rest did not concern it.

"Therefore the problem must be put thus: Since the Third International was founded solely to serve the interests of the Russian Communist Party, since the Moscow Government represents the interests of that party, and since this Government is about to make itself recognised at Genoa by the bourgeois Governments of the whole globe, can we, revolutionary Syndicalists and Anarchists, remain with the Third International? Can we live and co-operate with an organisation which belongs to a so-called revolutionary Government which in reality is a more or less bourgeois Government, even if calling itself a Socialist one? I think not."

He thinks that the Italian Syndicalist Union, the Spanish National Confederation, and all similar organisations should leave the Third International and join the Syndicalist International.

For if one had a hundred thousand acres of land and as many pounds in money, and as many cattle, without a labourer, what would a rich man be but a labourer?—*John Bellers, 1696.*

Emma Goldman on the Bolsheviks.

The following article is the first of a series which Emma Goldman wrote for the New York "World." We intend to publish some of the others in following issues.

Stockholm, Sweden, March 1st.

During my two years in Russia articles repeatedly appeared in the American Press purporting to be interviews with me. Some have had it that I had reformed, that I no longer believed in revolution, and that I had come to see the necessity of government. One paper even had a sensational story about an American flag in my room, to which, it claimed, I had erected a shrine. In short, that I had become a regular Sunday school teacher, doing penance for my sins against the American Government.

All that is, of course, sheer nonsense. I was never more convinced of the truth of my ideas, never in my life had greater proof of the logic and justice of Anarchism. But I did not give interviews to anyone for the very simple reason that it took me more than a year to get my bearings in the tragic situation of Russia. I considered then, and still consider, that the Russian problem is entirely too complex to speak lightly of it. That is precisely why I find most of the books written by people who had been in Russia a few weeks, or even months, so superficial.

So long as I myself was groping in the dark I would not express a definite opinion for publication. But even if I could have spoken authoritatively, I still would not have spoken to newspaper men. I found it necessary to observe silence so long as the combined imperialist forces were at the throat of Russia. Moreover, thirty years' experience with newspaper men has not convinced me of their veracity, though, of course, there may be exceptions.

Now, however, the time for silence has passed. I therefore mean to tell my story. I am not unmindful of the difficulties confronting me. I know I shall be misappropriated by the reactionaries, the enemies of the Russian Revolution, as well as excommunicated by its so-called friends, who persist in confusing the governing party of Russia with the Revolution. It is, therefore, necessary that I state my position clearly toward both.

Four years ago the United States Government made a felon of me, robbed me of home and hearth, and in the dead of night forced me out of the country. All that because I dared raise my voice against the World War. I had then called attention to the cataclysm which the war would bring in its wake, the destruction and ruin, the awful loss of human life. That was my crime.

Now many former supporters of the war have come to see that those of us who refused to be swept off our feet by the war hurricane were right—that the war was created, backed, and financed by charlatans and their dupes for the benefit of the war lords. The "war for democracy," the "war to end war," has plunged the whole world into a veritable inferno.

King Hunger, the grin of death on his lips, stalks through every land, while those who have grown rich and powerful on the spoils of human carnage pay court to this the mightiest of kings. Not content with the butchery of millions and the devastation of half the earth, they have turned the world into a fortress, a political dungeon, where the liberties of the people—gained through centuries of struggle—now lie fettered and prostrate.

Democratic America, once the "land of the free, home of the brave"; England, formerly the asylum for the rebels of the world; France, the cradle of liberty, and many lesser countries—what are they now but a spiritual desert, their once hospitable doors locked and sealed?

Only the groans and curses of the multitudinous unemployed and the cries of the political and labour prisoners disturb the silence of the graveyard of thought and ideas.

Verily the war lords have reason to be proud of their handiwork. They have succeeded in their conspiracy. Their iron heel is firmly planted on the neck of the peoples of the world. They have succeeded. Yet not quite. There is Russia.

That fair couple—high finance and militarism—did not reckon on the Russian Revolution. How "indecent" of the Russian people to light a conflagration which might have fired the whole world with revolution just at the very time when war profits were running high and imperialism was so confident of complete triumph. Something had to be done to crush "that brazen thing," the Russian Revolution.

During the war with Germany the hypocritical slogan was,

"We do not wage war against the German people, but against German militarism and imperialism." The same hypocritical refrain was heard in the unholy crusade against the Russian Revolution: "Not against the Russian people, but against the Bolsheviks—they have instigated the revolution, and they must be exterminated."

The march on Russia began. The interventionists murdered millions of Russians, the blockade starved and froze women and children by the hundred thousands, and Russia turned into a vast wilderness of agony and despair. The Russian Revolution was crushed and the Bolshevik regime immeasurably strengthened. That is the net result of the four years' conspiracy of the imperialists against Russia.

How did such a thing happen? Very simply. The Russian people, who alone had made the revolution and who were determined to defend it at all costs against the interventionists, were too busy on the numerous fronts to pay any attention to the enemy of revolution within. And while the workers and peasants of Russia were laying down their lives so heroically, this inner enemy rose to ever greater powers. Slowly but surely the Bolsheviks were building up a centralised State, which destroyed the Soviets and crushed the revolution, a State that can now easily compare, in regard to bureaucracy and despotism, with any of the great Powers of the world.

From my study and observation of two years I am certain that the Russian people, if not continuously threatened from without, would have soon realised the danger from within and would have known how to meet that danger, as they had the Kolchaks, Denikens, and the rest of them. Free from imperialist counter-revolutionary attacks, the people would have soon become aware of the true tendencies of the Communist State, its utter inefficiency and inability to reconstruct ruined Russia.

The masses themselves would have then begun to infuse new life into the paralysed social energies of the country. Would not the people have erred and blundered, even as the Bolsheviks have? No doubt they would. But they would have, at the same time, learned to depend upon their own initiative and strength—which alone could have saved the revolution.

It is entirely due to the criminal stupidity of some of the ex-revolutionists who clamoured for intervention, and to the imperialists who financed and backed intervention, that the Russian Revolution, the greatest event of centuries, has been lost. To them it is also due that the Bolsheviks, wrapped in the cloak of persecution, can continue to pose as the holy symbol of the Social Revolution.

I mean to expose this fatal delusion. Not because I have lost faith in the revolution, but because I am convinced that coming revolutions are doomed to failure should what Lenin himself called military Communism be imposed on the world. Not because I have made peace with government do I intend to show what the Bolshevik regime has done to the Russian Revolution.

Rather is it because the experience of Russia, more than any theories, has demonstrated that all government, whatever its form or pretences, is a dead weight that paralyses the free spirit and activities of the masses.

I owe this to the revolution, nailed to the Bolshevik cross, to the martyred Russian people, and to the deluded of the world. I mean to pay my debt in full, regardless both of the misappropriation of my words by the reactionaries and of vilification by blinded radicals.

The Anarchist Congress—A Correction.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—I am afraid the comrade who interpreted my remarks at the Berlin Congress in December must have misunderstood me. The American Federation of Labour has a membership of at least 3,000,000, and perhaps 3,500,000. The I.W.W. has also had a fluctuating membership, as its members are recruited chiefly from the ranks of the unskilled and migratory labour, such as lumber workers, fruit and hop pickers. They bear a striking resemblance to the Anarchists in one thing and that is, the idea underlying the organisation has always had an influence far out of proportion to their actual numerical strength. I doubt if they ever had 100,000 regular members, and at present, in my opinion, 20,000 is a high figure. As to the Communists, when the split in the Socialist Party came two and a half years ago the Left Wing represented more than 20,000, but it is very, very doubtful if there is any Communist Party in the real sense of the word left. At the time we met in Berlin there was a convention of the Left Wing elements held in New York and a new "Workers' Party" formed, absorbing most of the former Communist Party. This is a legal party, as the Communists of the United States have for the most part given up their "illegal" tactics. It is almost certain this new party has not got 10,000 paying members.—Fraternally,

HARRY KELLY.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Our European exchanges, brought into a single focus, give an impressive picture. Evidently a profound change of thought is taking place, and it finds its reflection in the Labour Press. The papers now coming to our table are no longer occupied mainly with isolated struggles, strikes, lock-outs, and similar skirmishes in the never-ending war between the Have-Nots and the Haves. The situation has been transformed, and the great world-movements—which are the true Revolution—now have the Labour movement in their mental grip. The Russian Revolution and Labour's attitude toward the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; Syndicalism pure and simple, which is practically the old Trade Unionism, as opposed to Syndicalism permeated with Anarchism and in revolt against all leadership; centralisation and officialdom, as opposed to decentralisation and autonomy—these, which bring violently-conflicting aims and opinions into violent conflict, are now monopolising the columns of our exchanges.

In other words, the entire Labour movement is now torn-up by internal strife; by ferocious war between old ideas, which refuse to give way submissively, and new, subversive ideas determined to assert themselves and drive the others out. We ought to welcome this because it was inevitable. It was inevitable because, for coping with the economic and political dislocations wrought by the War, Labour's former strategy and tactics have shown themselves worthless and out-of-date. The strikes have failed. The puny and spasmodic attempts at physical resistance—unarmed mobs against machine guns and aeroplanes—have been crushed contemptuously. Labour everywhere has been taught that its struggle is not against isolated individual employers, but against the combined forces of exploitation, backed by the gigantic power to-day wielded by the State.

So much by way of necessary preface. We now proceed to illustration. Of the latest French papers, *Germinal* is the only one that even troubles itself to give us details of recent wage-conflicts. It summarises them curtly thus:—"The capitalistic push to cut down wages still goes on. In the Strasbourg district the builders, now out on strike, refuse to accept a reduction from 2.65 to 2.50 francs a day. The workers at the Lorient arsenal have had their wages reduced, as have also the colliers at the Port of Nantes. Their strike having failed, the smelter-workers of Moirans have been compelled to agree to a 10 per cent. reduction. In Sweden the metal-workers have had to submit to one of 40 per cent. Everywhere struggle rages." After which columns are devoted to a severe criticism of the Third International, to the Russo-German treaty, the Anarchist Congress recently held at Roubaix, where Syndicalism was fully discussed, and so forth.

If we turn to *Le Libertaire* we find it occupied almost exclusively with considerations of the Russian Revolution, analysed mercilessly by Sebastien Faure, Alexander Beckman, and other well-known writers, and with discussions on Syndicalism and its relation to the State. We note that an Anarchist Congress has been held at Toulouse also, out of which have sprung the South-West Anarchist Federation and the Free Communist Federation of the Northern Region. There, too, Syndicalism and autonomous organisation were the chief subjects of discussion. It is to be noted also that the old and conservative C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labour) has split in two, the seceders forming a new organisation known as the C.G.T.U., and there likewise there is bitter war, the conservatives warning the rebels solemnly that if they escape the Communists it will be but to fall into the clutches of the more dangerous Anarchists.

Let us step across the border and into Spain. News from that country has been scarce of late, all the more radical papers having been ruthlessly suppressed. There, however, something very significant has happened, the constitutional guarantees, which had been suspended for three years, having been now restored, and hundreds of workers, imprisoned for so-called political offences, released from gaol. *Lucha Social* (Social Struggle) comments caustically and truly that the true meaning of this is that the workers have been beaten and that the employers feel themselves, for the time being, once more secure. It says: "In Spain the problem is simply that of the struggle against the State, as the general organ of capitalistic domination," and it maintains in forceful language that the great error of the workers has lain in their regarding it merely as a conflict between individual employers and employed, to be waged with the weapons of the strike, the boycott, sabotage, and personal attack. "Realities demand a new revolutionary strategy," it declares.

In Switzerland *Le Reveil* and *Il Risveglio* review scathingly the recent Berlin love-feast at which the Third, the Second, and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals made up their differences. It

calls special attention to the first item in the programme adopted, viz., insistence on the eight-hour law, pointing out that this was shoved to the front at the Congress of the First International, held more than fifty years ago!

Italy, where there is much suffering at present, reports considerable activity, but it appears to be almost entirely along the lines of discussion and propaganda. The effort to establish a united front and force the Revolution having failed, examination of the failure's causes is now in order. Malatesta is most active, both with his pen and in conferences, and is making Syndicalism his special theme. In his view, unless saturated with Anarchist thought and the determination to put freedom in the place hitherto occupied by officialdom, it will result merely in the formation of such conservative and unwieldy bodies as the American Federation of Labour and the Triple Alliance, which, regarding themselves as the aristocracy of Labour, care nothing for the interests of the masses and fight only for their own hand.

Such an extensive and far-reaching change of thought as we here register is of itself a great event, for out of it great things will come. Inevitably as the issues are clarified the fight will grow more purposeful, more forceful, and more severe. Strenuous times are close ahead.

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