

Freedom

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NOTES.

An Electoral Joke.

The election that has just taken place at Berwick is an example of the cynical contempt which political parties have for the electors. At the General Election last November Captain Hilton Philipson was returned as a National Liberal. On May 2 he was unseated for corrupt practices. It was proved that, in order to defeat the Act which limits the election expenses of candidates, he and his agent founded the Berwick Coalition Liberal Association, which was financed solely by the honourable and gallant Captain, and which spent money in forwarding his election. The judges who tried the election petition found that the Association was a bogus one, and on these grounds the Captain was unseated and deprived from again sitting in the present Parliament. His agent is acting as the scapegoat, and will probably be tried for perjury. The honourable and gallant Captain, however, was not dismayed, and proceeded to play another card. When the writ for another election came along he put forward his wife as a candidate. This lady (at one time an actress, known as Miss Mabel Russell) had helped her husband to get elected as a Liberal, but she now stood as a Conservative! And had the active assistance of her Liberal husband. The electors obligingly returned her at the top of the poll. As it is very difficult to distinguish the difference between a Liberal and a Conservative, the 12,000 electors who voted for her may be excused; but the colossal impudence of the proceedings should help to kill the blind faith in elected representatives held by so many. This professional lady will soon find herself at home in the House of Commons, which is probably the most theatrical assembly in the country. In staging this electoral joke, Captain and Mrs. Philipson have done an excellent piece of Anarchist propaganda.

Religion in the Schools.

During a debate in the House of Commons, Mr. George Lansbury, late editor of the *Daily Herald*, said that not only in Russia, but also in France, America, and Australia, religious instruction is not given in the schools. "I do not agree with that," he said, "because I want to see religious education established." What is religious education? Is it Protestantism, or Roman Catholicism, or Methodism, or Quakerism, or the religion of the Latter-Day Saints or of the Seventh-Day Adventists? Is it Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, or Shintoism, or any of the other thousand and one creeds which exist to-day? Does Mr. Lansbury think the State is competent to decide? At present the children are taught what are called the "simple" elements of religion, everyone of which is in conflict with the teachings of science. Surely the children's brains are befuddled enough as it is without making their confusion worse confounded. Religion is used as a means of persuading the workers that the present social system is a divine dispensation, and that if they have to suffer on earth, their reward will be in heaven, where very few of the rich ever squeeze in. We would like to see religion eliminated from the schools. It is impossible for the children to understand it, and to cram into their heads something on which no two people are agreed, is a crime. The attitude of religious folk toward scientific discoveries is well illustrated by a letter which appeared recently in the *Daily Herald*. Discussing the question of man's origin, a woman writes: "As for Darwin's theory, or any other theory, if it was not the Bible theory, I would not give it one moment's thought." There speaks the truly religious individual so beloved by the Pope and General Booth. There is the product of religious education in the schools. All scientific progress has been a continuous struggle against that spirit, and to foster it is to attempt to put back the clock. Was Mr. Lansbury's statement a bait to catch the votes of the religious folk for the Labour Party?

Curzon and Russia.

"I'm George Nathaniel Curzon; I'm a most superior person." This skit fired off at the present Foreign Minister in his schooldays aptly hits off this pompous political personage in his dealings with Russia. He can never forget he was once Viceroy of India, riding on an elephant, with his dark-skinned subjects bowing down before him. From his Olympian heights he looks on the Russians as an inferior people, and his Notes breathe scorn in every line. In his latest effusion he speaks of "the spirit of goodwill and forbearance which has animated His Majesty's Government." It is certainly not visible to the naked eye. The bluntness and brutality of his first Note have usually been reserved for dealings with such potentates as the late lamented King Theebaw or Cetewayo. As we might expect of an ex-Viceroy of India, Curzon concentrates on the question of Russian propaganda in Persia and Afghanistan; and he says that if the officials concerned are not "disowned and recalled and an apology offered for their misdeeds," it would be "inconsistent with the recognised canons of international intercourse." The only "recognised canons" we know are to bully the weak and turn the other cheek to the strong. When the Russian Government seizes half a dozen British trawlers outside the three-mile limit, the Press foams at the mouth and Curzon sends gunboats; but when the American Government, in its zeal for Prohibition, seizes twenty-five British vessels outside the three-mile limit, the Press cannot find space for the news and the Foreign Office merely sends polite letters of protest. We are absolutely opposed to intervention in Russian affairs. We have no faith in the Bolshevik Government as a revolutionary body, and think many of its members are reactionary; but the Russian people must work out their own salvation. We believe in free intercourse between all peoples, and think the time has come for our people to clap an extinguisher on the reactionaries and firebrands who strive to keep in the limelight by fomenting animosity and hatred among the nations.

Panel System a Failure.

The North-East London coroner's denunciation of the ninepence-for-fourpence panel system, introduced from Germany by Lloyd George, has caused a scare in the medical world. This denunciation was made at an inquest on the death of a young man, whose father complained of the treatment his son had received at the hands of his panel doctor. The coroner said there was no doubt that there had been neglect in this case; and he went on to speak of the defects of the panel system under which patients received their "so-called medical benefit" under the National Insurance Acts. He said there was no time for any but the most perfunctory investigation, for the waiting-room was full of other patients waiting to be seen, and the patient was hurried from the surgery almost before he had entered it. "The panel system was a retrograde step not too strongly described as a disastrous blunder and a miserable failure. It put a premium on scamped work and inefficiency, for it could not be denied that on the whole the worst work was being done by the men drawing the largest incomes." The experiment had had ten years' trial and had proved a failure. We are certain, however, that in spite of this failure of another much-boomed State scheme for dealing with the people *en masse*, State Socialists will still continue to bring forward working-class "reforms" for the State to administer. One of the pet schemes of the Fabians in the Labour Party is a State medical monopoly, all doctors to be State officials; yet the Labour Members are constantly complaining of the heartlessness of State departments. The State, however, is very successful in the art of killing people; so perhaps State Socialists think that if the State can kill it can also cure. There does not seem much logic in it, but they were never very strong in logic.

Push the sale of "Freedom."

RUSSIA TO-DAY.

By A. SHAPIRO.

Translated from "*La Revue Anarchiste*" (Paris), No. 16.

With a sigh of relief I alighted from the train in Moscow, having been abroad nine months. My first thought was: Now I shall be able to get to work; to what is the best of work. Russia is a mysterious country. She draws you to her and holds you captive. She bewitches you. Hardly have you left her when you wish to see her again. You become involuntarily a Russian patriot. You lose sight of her imperfections—let us say, rather, of her horrors—political, economic, and otherwise, and you see only the people. You hasten to be among them once more.

Moscow certainly has changed in the few months that have passed since the adoption of that New Economic Policy which was to rescue her from all her ills. Instead of empty windows, dirty and covered with dust—which is the hall-mark of Government Monopoly—I found myself looking into up-to-date shops filled with all the delicacies the gourmand loves—foreign cheeses, caviare, cream-pastries, all sorts of canned meats, sardines; in short, everything for which a well-filled purse can long. At the principal crossings the streets have been repaved, and Moscow's fashionable quarter, that in the vicinity of the Tverskaya, has become once more the new aristocracy's rendezvous. Cafés and cabarets spring up like mushrooms after rain, and with them come all the vices prostitution brings in its train. Moscow has thus become a true European capital, with all the faults that term implies. At the brilliantly-lighted entrances to the "houses of pleasure" stand lackeys in evening dress who obsequiously help the visitors to remove their furs. But why describe further phenomena so well known? It having been decided to readmit the bourgeois to one's economic system, he will insist on having his pet amusements and leading the life he likes. There is nothing so extraordinary, therefore, in the fact that Moscow has become herself again.

Assuredly it is not the bourgeoisie whom these institutions will demoralise, for they have witnessed far finer scenes; but undoubtedly the poison of degradation is being brought into the workers' ranks. The Soviet bureaucracy has brought to the surface of the Russia of to-day a swarm of administrators, commissioners, and business managers, who have been drawn from the working class and who were, until quite recently, in the workshop, at the lathe, in the fields. It is from them that there has been born the new Communist Bourgeoisie which, swept away by the whirlpool of the New Economic Policy, is trying, as best it can, to build up new enterprises, new Trusts, new governmental schemes, new financial projects—and all this round café-tables at which they are consuming fine liqueurs, and living in a style of which they never dreamed when they were in the factories. Far, far away seems Labour's past! Far, far away those years of toil and trouble—and how appetising these tit-bits brought to one's table by polite and charming waiters . . . also proletarians; also "Comrades"!

These men—and their number is legion—are lost for ever to Socialism and the Revolution. They are helping to build up the intermediary class which thus is developing into the new "Red" bourgeoisie; into the new "proletariat" of the Communist-Capitalist State.

But, does all this wealth mean that the supply of food in the markets has been increased? Certainly it does. From the moment when liberty of sale and purchase was decreed it became possible to obtain those ordinary necessities of life which, only the day before, the Government, with all its enormous apparatus, was absolutely unable to provide. Let me say, however, at once that the increase of food in the markets did not always mean more on the worker's table. Thanks to the rapid springing-up of little shops, in number quite out of proportion to the quantity of food the peasant was able to send to town, the cost of living advanced by gigantic bounds, and the increase of wages did not at all keep pace with it. In this way speculators, organisers of Trusts, men of business, concessionists, and their like were able to satisfy all their wants, while the working man had still to dream of getting a morsel of the white bread he now saw exposed for sale in large quantities in the windows of the bakeries and newly opened pastry shops. Furthermore, such of the people in the large centres as had the good fortune to possess friends or relatives abroad could get the famous food packages from the "Ara" [American Relief Association]; and these they were in the

habit of selling at the Ara's very doors, in order that, in lieu of the white flour contained in the packages, they might be able to buy larger quantities of rye flour.

The markets are full of Ara condensed milk, Ara flour, Ara rice. This undoubtedly is due, in part, to the gigantic amount of stealing of Ara merchandise from the stations in which the Ara trains stand. Amid a general increase of robbery and brigandage, the thefts on railway lines have attained a magnitude hitherto unheard of. Entire freight trains have disappeared as if by magic, and the whole railway service, from the superior worker of the central depot to the humblest signalman, takes part in this lucrative occupation. This is solely because wages are far too low to permit of the workers living even moderately, and because the country is producing nothing.

The absence of production is horrifying. The official organs of the Government publish daily figures of the products exported, of plans for new units of production, of new and improved systems for the "Taylorising" of work, of perfected schemes for railway traffic—and everyone asks where all these figures come from and what they mean. At this moment the economic and industrial life of the country is at a standstill. Here and there some workshop produces in a month what formerly it produced in a day. And at the last Congress of Councils on National Economy it was declared officially: "We have just attained the level of production that we had reached before the time of Peter the Great!"

Prior to the introduction of the New Economic Policy—in the Pre-Nepian era—there was neither production nor consumption. Since the introduction of "Nep" we still have no production, but consumption has increased. The peasant now brings his product to the market. The Nep-men, as the Russian dealer and speculator are called—the new class of which I have spoken—speculate in provisions, and live quite comfortably, while the country becomes poorer and poorer.

The one class of production that has increased hitherto is that of paper money. The kaleidoscopic metamorphoses of the different kinds of bank notes, State bonds, money tokens, etc., are literally astounding. These astronomical figures—for every petty street mendicant is a multi-millionaire—excite the imagination, but they are far from being able to improve the conditions of life. The mathematical quip that a rouble is not a rouble, but actually ten thousand, and that a hundred roubles of the 1922 issue (which were equivalent to a million roubles prior to 1922) equal only one rouble of the 1923 issue—these give some idea of the complete crash of the financial system, and of the desperate economic tangle into which the country has got as a direct result of absence of production.

The New Economic Policy has transformed Russia into a nation of shopkeepers—the nickname hitherto always given to England. Industries do not exist, and the industrialists are conspicuous by their absence. But there are plenty of shops and shopkeepers. Everybody, from the mechanic in the shop to the head of a ministerial department, buys and sells. People sell their clothes, their shoes, or their old pencils. They buy flour, milk for the baby, butter, and so forth. The prime necessities of life change hands incessantly. Some get rid of their last clothes in order to still their hunger. Others go on a famine-diet that they may be able to buy something with which to clothe their nakedness. Moscow's markets swarm with peripatetic merchants—men and women—who belong to the intellectual world, to the old aristocracy, to the working class. There they are, drawn up in line behind hillocks of mud, trying to sell their trinkets; or, rather, to exchange them with similar merchants for something they need more urgently. The New Economic Policy has commercialised the nation without increasing in the least its productivity. In Petrograd the Baltic factory is the only one in operation, and it is working almost exclusively on the ice-breakers which have to keep Petrograd's harbour open during the winter. In the province of Moscow there is a factory for the repair of locomotives, at Podolsk, about 60 versts from Moscow, which is working well. In this connection, however, it is interesting to note that this is Russia's "show factory." Every newly arrived foreigner is immediately transported to Podolsk, that he may see that the high level of production Russia has reached is not a myth. Its manager, and the one who has made it a success, has been during all these years one of our comrades, an Anarchist-Syndicalist. We may be proud, therefore, of the fact that the only proof that production [in the sense, of course, of factory production.—ED.] now exists in Russia is due to the efforts of an Anarchist-Syndicalist.

What improvements, then, have resulted from this new economic

régime, and have they brought a real betterment not only in the condition of the working class but in political and social life?

The transformations produced in the economic field by the Bolsheviks' political right-about-face have brought some superficial improvement to the lot of that special class of workers which is employed in such industrial enterprises as are still alive and, thanks to the introduction of piece-work, have been able to bring their budgets up to the level of normal life. The great mass of workers is not touched by this improvement. Even if the workers appear to be more satisfied to-day than they were a year or two ago, when State Communism was in full vigour, it is because they can now buy what they want—if they have the money. This they could not do legally under the "strictly Communist" régime. Piece-work is now the order of the day, and it has brought with it overtime. Thus, the great "social reform" which was introduced on the first day of the November Revolution—and notably the eight-hour day—exists only as a decree, and is no longer a practical fact. Often it is the workers themselves who, impelled by poverty, demand the longer day.

This is all that there is to be said about the economic "ameliorations." An immediate halt was called to the transfer of the poor to the houses of the rich—a propaganda dodge which, even at the time when sympathy was at its height, was administered so brutally that the workers preferred to remain in their own caves. It was absolutely impossible for a workingman to find one or two rooms in which to house his family. In the summer of 1922 it cost him at least one and a half milliard roubles—about £20—to get the right to a room-key, to say nothing of the rent. Everything had to be spot cash, and prices were high, for they were calculated not in proportion to the worker's average wages but by Stock Exchange quotations.

Now we have that European institution—the Stock Exchange. Shares and foreign bank-notes are quoted daily; markets are reported as being dull or active; the papers publish every day Stock Exchange notes, and the various Stock Exchanges issue special bulletins. The official organ of the Council of Labour and Defence is now complaining that some of the provincial Stock Exchanges do not publish these bulletins.

We have in Russia two kinds of Stock Exchanges—the official kind and the "black," or private, kind. Business in shares is transacted chiefly in the latter, for no one has any confidence in the official Stock Exchange. The rate of exchange is far higher on the "black" than on the Government Stock Exchange, and the latter must keep up with the private rate if it is not to see all the gold and other values disappear into the hands of private speculators. The official Stock Exchange is in the Rue Ilyinka, where the institution of the same name stood under the old régime. The "Black" Exchange is near it, in a park, with the sky for its roof; and there a mob is in constant movement, buying and selling notes, gold, silver, etc. Thanks to this competition the rouble falls even more than it would have fallen if absence of production had been the only factor operative. With the rise of prices thus occasioned the increase of wages cannot keep pace.

Let us take the Moscow ruling prices toward the end of October, 1922, when the dollar (4s. 3d.) was worth about twenty million roubles.

Rye bread cost from 250,000 to 500,000 roubles a pound, and white bread from half a million to a million.

Meat cost from a million to a million and a half roubles a pound; sugar from six to nine millions, and potatoes three-quarters of a million. Half a litre of milk (about 4-5ths of a pint) cost a quarter of a million roubles. An ordinary suit cost two hundred millions, a pair of shoes not less than a hundred millions, and so forth.

What have wages been during this same period? I lived in a small cottage where there were also a telephone girl who earned fifty million roubles a month, an employee in one of the Moscow Soviet departments who earned about a hundred millions a month, and a worker in an automobile factory who earned, by piece-work and overtime, from a hundred and sixty to a hundred and seventy millions a month. This last was considered a high wage for a workingman. When one considers that a workingman's family consists, on the average, of himself, his wife, and two children, it is clear that the family budget could not meet its most primitive wants unless it were supplemented. Thus it was that the entire population was compelled to devote itself to commerce and employ all its energies in obtaining the most indispensable necessaries. Consequently it became more and more apathetic as to its surroundings—

to the Revolution, even to the counter-revolution, to Bolshevism and every other "ism."

Perhaps it may be said that these economic difficulties were not due solely to Bolshevik maladministration, and the Communist Party—to right the imperfections caused by force used against it—at least tried to enlarge the bases of political improvements, and to enable the people to breathe more freely than had been previously possible. Let us examine, therefore, the effects of the New Economic Policy on the country's political and intellectual life.

(To be continued.)

THE TRIAL OF JOHN BALL (1381).

Sir John Tresilian.

John Ball, you are accused of stirring up
The poor deluded people to rebellion;
Not having the fear of God and of the King
Before your eyes; of preaching up strange notions,
Heretical and treasonous; such as saying
That kings have not a right from heaven to govern;
That all mankind are equal; and that ranks,
And the distinctions of society,
Aye, and the sacred rights of property,
Are evil and oppressive:—plead you guilty
To this most heavy charge?

John Ball.

If it be guilt—
To preach what you are pleas'd to call strange notions:
That all mankind as brethren must be equal;
That privileged orders of society
Are evil and oppressive; that the right
Of property is a juggle to deceive
The poor whom you oppress; I plead me guilty. . . .

Sir John Tresilian.

Did you not tell the mob they were oppress'd,
And preach upon the equality of man;
With evil intent thereby to stir them up
To tumult and rebellion?

John Ball.

That I told them
That all mankind are equal, is most true;
Ye came as helpless infants to the world;
Ye feel alike the infirmities of nature;
And at last moulder into common clay.
Why then these vain distinctions?—Bears not the earth
Food in abundance?—Must your granaries
O'erflow with plenty, while the poor man starves?
Sir Judge, why sit you there clad in your furs?
Why are your cellars stor'd with choicest wines?
Your larders hung with dainties? While your vassal,
As virtuous and as able too by nature,
Tho' by selfish tyranny depriv'd
Of mind's improvement, shivers in his rags,
And starves amid the plenty he creates.
I have said this is wrong, and I repeat it—
And there will be a time when this great truth
Shall be confess'd—be felt by all mankind.
The electric truth shall run from man to man,
And the blood-cemented pyramid of greatness
Shall fall before the flash!

Sir John Tresilian.

Audacious rebel!
How darest thou insult this sacred court,
Blaspheming all the dignities of rank?
How could the government be carried on,
Without the sacred orders of the king
And the nobility?

John Ball.

Tell me, Sir Judge,
What does the government avail the peasant?
Would not he plow his field, and sow the corn,
Aye, and in peace enjoy the harvest too?
Would not the sunshine and the dews descend,
Tho' neither King nor Parliament existed?
Do your court politics aught matter him?
Would he be warring even unto the death
With his French neighbours?—Charles and Richard
contend;
The people fight and suffer:—Think ye, Sirs,
If neither country had been cursed with chief,
The peasants would have quarrell'd?

—From ROBERT SOUTHEY'S "Wat Tyler."

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“The Earth is the (Land) Lord’s.”

Governments come and Governments go, but they all bow to the wishes of the landowning class. Conservative Governments, perhaps, are more truly representative of that class, and when they are in power the landlords can always rely on being specially favoured. The slump in the prices of agricultural produce has hit the farmers pretty hard, and they have been seeking means of relieving the pressure. They have cut the wages of their labourers to a bare subsistence level, assisted greatly by the “mediation” of Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the Labour Party. But as this was not sufficient, the only way out was to get some relief from the landlords by a reduction of rent. The landlords, however, foresaw this demand, and have persuaded their friends in the Government to come to their rescue. This they have done by introducing a Bill to reduce the rates on agricultural land and farm buildings by about one-half, the taxpayers to provide the other half. And now the landlords will draw their usual rents from the farmers and chuckle at the ease with which they have got out of a tight corner. Of course, the Government say this measure is for the relief of farmers, but that is the camouflage necessary in a democratic Parliament like ours. Lord George Hamilton—one of the “hungry Hamiltons”—speaking some years ago of a Conservative Government of which he was a member, said: “It is to safeguard and protect the interests of our friends, not only when we are in office but even in the contingency of our being out, that we have acted throughout.” The politicians are not usually so frank as that.

The obstacles that landlords place in the way of those who wish to use the land are almost incredible. Land enclosure for sport is a striking feature. In Scotland nearly one-fifth of its area is reserved for deer forests. Where for generations many thousands of hardy Scotsmen had gained a living from the soil not a single cottage can now be seen, and many mountains which hitherto had been the rambling-ground of holiday-makers are now barred to everyone except a few millionaires and their friends, who hunt the deer for a few weeks only in the year. In England, in many districts King Pheasant holds sway, and Nature-lovers find their progress barred by the insolent notice-boards: “Trespassers will be prosecuted and dogs will be shot.” Do you remember the posters during the War: “Isn’t this worth fighting for?”

Even when landlords are graciously pleased to let you have a piece of their land the conditions they sometimes impose are those of the highwayman. In some country districts farming leases contain a clause insisting on a certain proportion of the land being kept in grass and pasturage so as to provide facilities for fox-hunting. If you lease a plot of land in a town, the lease may run for ninety-nine years; the house or factory you build must please the landlord, and at the end of the ninety-nine years the building must be handed over to the landlord in good condition. One almost doubts the sanity of a people that can tolerate such bare-faced robbery.

Running in double-harness with the landlord is another legalised robber—the lawyer. He claims heavy fees every time you buy or lease a piece of land, and the representatives of the legal fraternity in Parliament have prevented any serious attack being made on their privileges. Then to fill your cup of trouble to the brim, although the landlord paid no rates on the land during the time he had withheld it from use, as soon as you put a building on it down comes the rate-collector with his demand-notes. Thus is industry rewarded!

All these facts are known to many thousands of people, but hardly anyone has tackled the problem seriously. The Liberal and Conservative parties, of course, support land monopoly; but one might expect the Labour Party, as representing the landless workers,

to put forward drastic proposals. The *Daily Herald*, the organ of the Labour Party, says: “Free the land!” Yet their only idea of freeing the land is to make the State the sole landlord by buying out the landlords and saddling the people with the cost for countless generations. Philip Snowden’s Land Nationalisation Bill might almost have been drawn up by a committee of landlords anxious to stave off the revolution. We should call it a case of compounding a felony. Centuries of oppression and robbery by the landed class are to be forgotten, and we are to go to them cap in hand and ask them to be so kind as to allow us to have access to the means of life and in return we will keep them and their descendants in luxury till the crack of doom. Meanwhile thousands of men, women, and children are being driven out of the country in search of a livelihood; and the Skye crofters who seized a few acres of land to save themselves from starvation are sent to prison.

Land monopoly is the basis of the slavery of the workers, and no compromise is possible in the matter. It is either slavery or freedom. If a man’s right to the use of land is not recognised, he is a slave and has to accept such terms of employment as the masters dare to enforce. Unfortunately, this country is so industrialised and the machinery of trade so complicated that the workers cannot see the connection between land monopoly and their present helplessness; but if the possibility of gaining their living on the land here were put before them, as an alternative to emigration, we are certain they would accept it. The only natural right to land is the right to use it as a means of getting a living. The landlords, backed by all the forces of the State, deny this right, and challenge us to dispute their monopoly. This challenge must be taken up and the fight carried on until the land monopolists are utterly routed. But to substitute State monopoly for private monopoly would be to jump out of the frying-pan into the fire. Monopoly itself is the great tyranny and it must be abolished.

Anti-Fascisti Movement in the United States.

We have received, from the Italian Chamber of New York and the Workers’ Anti-Fascisti Alliance of North America, which represent over 150,000 Italian Trade Unionists in the United States, a powerful Manifesto which sets out in great detail the hideous atrocities of which Fascism has been guilty in Italy. Unfortunately, this ominous drift toward Dictatorship, with all the brutalities Dictatorship implies, is not confined to Italy, or even to Europe. Already, in North America, Fascist contingents have been organised in various States of the Union, and there also they have attacked Labour and started the shedding of blood.

Once more we invite our readers to consider the teachings of this Mussolini, for they are the fountain-head from which has sprung this most barbarous of reactions. Quite recently he has declared in public that “men nowadays are tired of liberty,” and that “both in Russia and in Italy it has been demonstrated that it is possible to govern outside, above, and against all liberal ideas.” He has asserted openly that “neither Communism nor Fascism has anything to do with liberty”; to which he adds obligingly:—“Liberty is no longer a chaste, severe maiden for whom generations in the first half of the last century fought and died. For the intrepid, restless youth who are now in the dawn of a new history, other words exercise a greater fascination: namely, order, hierarchy, and discipline. . . . Fascism is not afraid to declare itself illiberal or anti-liberal. It has already passed, and if necessary will again pass, without the slightest hesitation, over the body, more or less decomposed, of the Goddess of Liberty.”

The Enchanted Fruit.

England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition. With unabated bounty the land of England blooms and grows waving with yellow harvests; thick-studded with work-shops and industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest, and the willingest our Earth ever had; these men are here, the work they have done, the fruit they have realised is here, abundant, exuberant, on every hand of us; and behold, some baleful fiat as of Enchantment has gone forth, saying, “Touch it not, ye workers, ye master-workers, ye master-idlers; none of you can touch it, no man of you shall be the better for it; this is enchanted fruit.”—*Carlyle*.

BULGARIAN ATROCITIES.

To the revolutionary proletariat of all the world!

To the oppressed of every country!

Once more those dearest to us have been offered up, by scores, as sacrifices! Once more proletarian blood is shed! The insatiable monster, on whose head rest the wrongs and misfortunes of all this suffering world, is writing into mankind's history, with the blood of the workers and in the name of "Civilisation," more pages full of terror. The world-wide reaction, which has all countries in its grip, could not leave our hapless country unscathed. Here also the babbling mob of adventurers now in power is setting up its tyrannical machinery as against all who are battling most strenuously for bread and liberty. Under the pretence that they are pursuing murderers and robbers, the ruling power is now employing the most highly refined and barbarous methods of terrorism that Sadism and imagination gone mad have yet devised. Like the rulers of all the other countries, those of Bulgaria threw aside the mask as soon as they discovered that the slave was after just one thing—escape from slavery.

During the last few years Anarchism has had a great growth in Bulgaria. It has become a factor in our social life, and is acquiring more and more influence among the workers. The bankruptcy of the Communist Party, rotten to the core, created an atmosphere most favourable to our propaganda. The workers no longer believe in the revolutionary phraseology of the parties that seek to guide them. For the attainment of their liberation from the foul bourgeois régime they are following the path of ceaseless battle, and it is the realisation of the great influence that Anarchist ideas have over the workers that has infuriated the worshippers of power. They desire to combat the Anarchist movement with every weapon at their command. It is the Anarchists who are directing this struggle, which is one of life or death. The army and the police force blockade our clubs and break up our meetings. Hundreds of our comrades have been arrested, and the most active have been murdered, under the pretext that they were trying to escape arrest. Others have been handed on from prison to prison and tortured brutally, while many have been interned for no cause stated.

Nevertheless, the mass arrests, the acts of terrorism, and the individual murders are as nothing when compared with the unheard-of crimes committed by the Government in the city of Jambol, on March 16.

Our comrades are calling meetings in every town to oppose the disarming of the working class and the preparations for another war which the Government is obviously making. Fearing the effects of the Anarchists' speeches, the Government tried to make the holding of a meeting impossible. The police fired on the assembly and many fell, dead or wounded. A bloody battle followed, which lasted several hours. The Jambol garrison was reinforced later on by cavalry, brought from a neighbouring city. Those in command, thirsting for blood, gave orders that the wounded and many who had been taken prisoners should be killed immediately. Many workers were shot to death in the barracks-yard. Others were told that they could go free, and were shot down by a machine-gun after they had got a short distance away. The corpses were then stabbed, to make sure that no life should be left in them. A worker, whose wounds had been dressed and who was lying down in a private house, was hunted up by the police, who carried him to the court-yard and left him to die there. A wounded student, aged fourteen, was taken to the insane asylum, and murdered. We cannot state exactly how many were killed, for the evidence of these acts of terrorism was concealed as far as possible, and many of the corpses were buried during the night or thrown into the river that runs just outside the city.

These incomparable brutalities will suffice to show you how difficult are the conditions amid which the Bulgarian Anarchists have to fight their battle. The bourgeoisie applauds the barbarous conduct of this so-called "People's-Power Government" and of the bloodthirsty Stambolijski. The press, both of the Left and of the Right, traverses the entire gamut with its old chant of "Bandits!" The State-worshippers, feeling that the ground is giving way beneath their feet, are forming a united front against us. But we are in the right. Standing firmly at our revolutionary post, fully conscious of the difficulty of the task our epoch has imposed on us, and believing profoundly in the awakening of the revolutionary proletariat, we are ready to fight to the last and offer every sacrifice for our great ideal—Anarchism.

Comrades, help us in these moments which are, to us, so full of difficulty. International solidarity and brotherly co-operation as among those who are suffering throughout the world should not be merely a matter of empty words. The Anarchists of Bulgaria call to you loudly: "Long live Anarchism! Long live the testimony of those comrades who have fallen in the fight!"

BULGARIAN ANARCHIST COMMUNIST FEDERATION.
KASIMIR SUDBIN, Secretary.

Since the above was written Stambolijski and his new Cabinet have formulated an anti-Communist law, which the Bulgarian Legation in London reports as being as follows:—

"In every Bulgarian village where there are more than ten Communist electors a commune will be formed, and all the real property, goods, and chattels of the partisans of Communistic theories will be confiscated for the benefit of the public. All the members of the said commune will have to live in commune houses and on equal terms. They will have to work during fixed hours in groups, under the control of a superintendent, and they will have to obtain their goods and clothing only by means of coupons and only from the shop belonging to the said commune. Anybody who misappropriates the property of the commune or starts to live in a way different from that fixed for all members of the commune will be liable to execution in a public place."

It is stated by the Legation that later there will be another law for the Communists of the cities.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

International Working Men's Association.

The International Working Men's Association (Berlin) has issued, as part of its news service, a powerful manifesto addressed to Revolutionary Syndicalists, which opens with the statement that all over the world Syndicalist organisations are discussing the question of whether they shall throw in their lot with it, thus forming a solid block against Capitalism and the State, or side with Moscow. In Norway the central Syndicalist organisation has joined the Association. In Portugal, Spain, Holland, and the Argentine the workers are taking a referendum on this subject. We quote:—

"Thus the Russian Revolution, having become the slave of a subtle Party Dictator, has been used as a stepping-stone by others besides the Bolsheviks. The premeditated defeat of that revolution by the Marx-Communists has supplied the counter-revolutionists of all the world with a historical lesson by which they have profited. Liberties conquered by long years of struggle have been trampled under foot—first by the Bolsheviks, and later by the Fascisti. The hunting down of revolutionists, which had reached its climax in 'revolutionary' Russia, is now being imitated successfully by Mussolini in Italy. There is nothing to be astonished at in the fact that Mussolini, one of Lenin's pupils, bows before the Kremlin and declares openly that 'Fascism has passed already, and, if necessary, will pass again, without the least hesitation, over the body, more or less decomposed, of the Goddess of Liberty. . . . Russia and Italy have shown that it is possible to govern outside of, above, and in opposition to liberal ideology. Communism and Fascism have nothing to do with liberty.' We are now in the full tide of the development of Fascism; and if we look more closely into the causes of that development we shall see that it springs not so much from the failure of the Russian Revolution as from its transformation into an iron Dictatorship, directed against the most vital interests of the working class."

The manifesto then calls attention to the terrible calumnies circulated everywhere by Moscow, through its innumerable agencies, against all who venture to question its authority. Mexico is cited as a case especially in point, for there, according to the bitter complaint of the Bolsheviks themselves, the leadership of the revolutionary movement is in Anarchist hands. We ourselves could have told them long ago that this was inevitable, for the Mexicans are the last people in the world to submit willingly to Dictatorship. We observe that Enrique Flores Magon, recently deported from the United States, is very active in Mexico, and that it is proposed to issue *Regeneracion* once more.

Six Hundred I.W.W. Arrested.

A strike of sailors and longshoremen, mostly members of the I.W.W., began on May 1, in San Pedro, California, with the result

that about a hundred vessels laid idle in the harbour. The men displayed splendid solidarity, and as it was evident to the bosses that they could not break the strike by ordinary methods, they decided to try extraordinary ones. On May 14 the chief of police brought a large force into the town, and whilst the strikers were holding an open-air meeting a mass attack was made on them. About 400 were immediately arrested, later arrests bringing the total up to 600. They were marched to the station, where special trains were in readiness, and taken to Los Angeles. As the prisons could not accommodate such a number, a huge stockade of barbed wire was set up and wooden huts erected, armed police patrolling the grounds. The strikers are charged with vagrancy and criminal syndicalism. In California the possession of an I.W.W. card is sufficient legal evidence of the latter crime. I.W.W. offices were also raided, 25 men arrested, and half a ton of literature confiscated. An indignation meeting was held the following day, but when Upton Sinclair started to read the Constitution of the United States he was promptly arrested. We would like to note one feature of this strike, as of several others which took place about the same time—the first demand of the strikers was the release of the 53 political prisoners still in gaol for opposing the War.

PRINTED PAGES.

L'Âme Enchantée (I.—Annette et Sylvie). Par Romain Rolland.
7 fr. Paris: Librairie Ollendorf.

It is probable that English readers as a whole will class "Annette et Sylvie" as an unpleasant book. It is not that Romain Rolland has lost any of his skill: he has probably never written a more skilful study of life; but the story deals almost throughout with the question of sex, and it deals with the question frankly.

There is no mention of English people; but Roger Brissot, who is satirised in the book—quite charitably—seems peculiarly like a certain type of Englishman. He is nominally a Socialist, but is essentially bourgeois in his outlook. He shows no understanding of the ideals of liberty or equality. He and his family always politely evaded facing the truth. "La vérité gênante n'était pas une habituée de la maison Brissot." When Annette, who loves him, and whom he loves, claims that, if she is to marry him, she must retain her liberty of mind and soul, he does not understand her. She tells him that "to unite our lives does not mean that one should suppress the other"; and then she asks: "Do you accept me free? And accept me entire?"

"Free?" replies Roger, with propriety. "Everybody is free in France since '89." And he laughs at her.

This is only one of many sides of the sex question with which the book deals. Annette and Sylvie, who are devoted to each other, are only half-sisters; and Sylvie, who was not born in wedlock, does not at all worry about the marriage question, nor even try to remain constant to one male "friend." Then for a short time the sisters hate each other through jealousy about a man whom neither of them loves—just simply, to them both, a fascinating male animal.

There are many interesting passages dealing with the relations between the two sisters and their intense affection for each other; but probably many English readers will disapprove of the book all the more because there is not a sentence in it which is flippant. It is, throughout, a sincere study of life, and every character lives; but it is sad, and it disturbs the reader's ethical ideals uncomfortably.

"Annette et Sylvie" is only the first volume of a book called "L'Âme Enchantée," to be written in several volumes, on the plan of "Jean-Christophe." Just at the end of the volume there is promise that in the next the interest will be in a character which is not yet born. In his preface the author states that he intends "each volume to have its own character"; but at the same time he asks the reader "to consider each volume as a chapter of one work in movement."

FELIS.

Anarchist Discussion Circle.

Every Saturday evening, 7.30, at the Minerva Café, 144 High Holborn, W.C. (entrance at rear of the building). Open to the public. See *Daily Herald* (Saturdays) for subject of discussion.

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GETTING NEAR THE ROCKS.

We are sorry to say that FREEDOM is again in a very dangerous financial position, and needs the immediate help of all its friends. It has had many ups and downs in its time, but lately the "downs" have predominated. The circulation is not anything like what it might be, and we hope comrades will do everything possible to increase it. Meanwhile, please send us as much cash as you can spare. The following sums have been received since our last issue:—

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