

# Freedom

VOL XXXVIII.—No. 421.

OCTOBER, 1924.

MONTHLY: TWO PENCE.

## NOTES.

### The General Election.

The rival parties in the General Election are agreed on one point only—none of them wanted it just now. But the Labour Party evidently thought that as they were almost certain to be defeated on the Russian Treaty, an immediate election would suit them better than one in November; so they refused all Liberal offers of a compromise on the Campbell case and were defeated by a large majority. Thus ended the first experiment in Labour Government in Great Britain. Now the fight is on we are almost overwhelmed by the flood of oratory, which becomes more bitter in tone every day. The Liberals are annoyed because their overtures for a political arrangement, by which they would have shared in the spoils of office, were turned down by the Labour Party. Lloyd George and Asquith are now saying vitriolic things about Ramsay MacDonald in order to cover up their agreement with the Tories concerning three-cornered fights. Of course, they do not for one moment believe all the terrible warnings they are uttering about the Labour Government ruining the country if it gains a majority. Their sore point is that the Labour Party prevented them taking the jobs when the Tories went out of office last year. Joseph Chamberlain and Lloyd George were both villified as "red flaggers" in their early days, but found salvation among the Tories later on; and even MacDonald may follow in their footsteps some day. He has proclaimed his "spiritual affinity" with the gentry and nobility, so he seems to be taking long views. Whether the Labour Party will get sufficient seats to enable it to hold on to office, we do not dare to prophesy; but their first tenancy of the Government benches has turned Labour's steps from revolution to reform, and even the Communists are scurrying along that road. We do not say that that was the definite object of our ruling class when they allowed them to take office, but it has certainly worked out that way. Now they can turn them out, knowing that, having once tasted the sweets of office, Labour will follow the scent for some years to come.

### Squeezing Profits out of Misery.

"Grain brokers in the wheat pits at Chicago Board of Trade to-day [October 2] gave a rousing cheer when May wheat touched \$1.50 per bushel—the highest price in Chicago since 1921, and a new high-price record for this season. . . . There was trading on a big scale in all the grain pits, the urgent buying being attributed to Europe." This item in the news column of a daily paper is a typical illustration of the working of the capitalist system, which makes fortunes out of the miseries of the people. Owing to a partial failure of the harvest in some parts of Russia and other European countries, extra large supplies of wheat and rye will have to be obtained from America. This is the great opportunity of the grain speculators, to whom a famine brings as much profit as a war brings to armament manufacturers. "Business is business" is the motto of to-day, and if the famine-stricken masses of Europe cannot pay the enhanced price they can starve to death. Similar instances can easily be quoted. The invasion of the Ruhr, and the consequent depreciation of the mark, brought misery to the German workers; but it put many extra thousands of pounds into the pockets of coal-owners in this country, who sent millions of tons of coal to Germany at increased prices. When earthquake and fire devastated Tokyo and Yokohama, up jumped the prices of timber and structural iron, as the holders of these materials knew that the Japanese would have to buy large quantities from abroad. Charitable folk in America subscribed £2,000,000 pounds for relief purposes; but when Japan floated a loan in the United States, the bankers charged her 7½ per cent. instead of 5 per cent. as hitherto. Germany also has to pay 7½ per cent. on the £40,000,000 loan granted under the Dawes

scheme, and the German workers will be squeezed to the uttermost farthing to pay this tribute to the international vultures who have so generously agreed to "help Germany to raise her head again amongst the nations of the world." The morality of these Shylocks is on a level with that of a man who would refuse to throw a line to a drowning man unless he first agreed to hand over his purse to his rescuer.

### The Geneva Protocol.

Whether the Assembly of the League of Nations are deceiving themselves or only trying to deceive others, is difficult to say. We should like to give the majority of them credit for wishing to prevent war in future, but if the fulfilment of that wish depends on the Protocol drawn up at Geneva they are doomed to disappointment. There is not the slightest sign that any of the so-called Great Powers will agree to arbitrate on any question they consider vital. President Coolidge has already said that the United States will have nothing to do with it, which practically kills it, because an economic blockade of an aggressor would be unworkable if America objected. Look at the world to-day: is there any sign of sweet reasonableness among the nations? No one believes that France will dismantle a single aeroplane or dismiss her native troops in North Africa, estimated at half a million. The rival war lords in China are financed by international groups, who look to their respective champions for favours when victorious. Spain is throwing many thousands of soldiers into Morocco in an attempt to crush the Riffs, who are using modern weapons supplied by foreign concession hunters. MacDonald told the Egyptian Premier that neither the Suez Canal nor the Soudan were questions for discussion by the League of Nations. And when dealing with the question of the Turks' invasion of Mosul, Mr. J. H. Thomas made a fierce Jingo speech, saying that "the honour and prestige of this country is at stake," and that his Majesty's Government was determined "to show to the outsider and the foreigner that the prestige of this country remains unimpaired." The same sort of speech that was made by statesmen in 1914. These things do not induce us to revise our first estimate of the usefulness of the League of Nations, which Mr. Balfour once said was the Supreme Council under another name.

### No Justice for Anarchists.

The prejudice against Anarchists held generally by Authority was shown in a police court case last month. A French comrade well known to us, Jules Lemaire, was charged at Bow Street with having failed to register himself under the Aliens Act. When he was arrested by officers of the Special Branch at Scotland Yard, they found—oh, horror!—Anarchist propaganda printed in French, and Lemaire admitted he was an Anarchist. He added that for the purpose of evading military service he left France immediately on the outbreak of war and came to England, taking a false name. That was his crime. For ten years he has lived quietly here getting his living as a bootmaker, attending meetings occasionally, and taking an interest in the revolutionary movement. In court no complaints of any kind were made except that he failed to register. But the terrible title "Anarchist" had been admitted, and the magistrate sentenced Lemaire to six months' imprisonment and recommended him for deportation. A few days later, at the Thames Police Court, a Russian was charged with failing to register under the Aliens Act. He was not an Anarchist and possessed no Anarchist literature; but he said he had fought against the Bolsheviks. The magistrate gave him a sentence of 21 days' imprisonment and recommended him for deportation. The striking difference between these two sentences shows that an Anarchist has little chance of fair treatment in our "courts of justice" to-day.

Push the sale of "Freedom."

## BAKUNIN ON THE FALLACY OF VOTING.

*Le Reveil du Peuple* for September and October, 1870, published an important summary of an article by Michel Bakunin on the question of the social upheaval. Bakunin denounces all forms of reformist activity as being inimical to the emancipation of the working class, and proceeds to attack those who advocate a mere political revolution brought about according to the constitutional forms of capitalist society, and through the medium of its parliamentary machine, in opposition to a direct social revolutionary change effected by the workers.

Bakunin argues that the fact that wages practically never rise above the bare level of subsistence renders it impossible for the workers to secure increased well-being under bourgeois society. With the progress of capitalist civilisation the gulf between the two classes gaps wider and wider.

"It follows from this also, that in the most democratic and free countries, such as England, Belgium, Switzerland, and the U.S.A., the freedom and political rights which the workers enjoy ostensibly are merely fictitious. They who are slaves to their masters in the social sense are slaves also in the political sense. They have neither the education, nor the leisure, nor the independence which are so absolutely necessary for the free and thoughtful exercise of their rights of citizenship. In the most democratic countries, those in which there is universal suffrage, they have one day of mastery, or rather of Saturnalia—Election Day. On this day the bourgeoisie, their daily oppressors and exploiters, come before them, hat in hand, and talk of equality, brotherhood, and call them a sovereign people, whose very humble servants and representatives they wish to be. Once this day is passed, fraternity and equality disperse like smoke; the bourgeoisie becomes once more the bourgeoisie; and the proletariat, the sovereign people, continue in their slavery. This is why the system of representative democracy is so much applauded by the radical bourgeoisie, even when, in a popular direction, it is improved, completed, and developed through the referendum and the direct legislation of the people, in which form it is so strenuously advocated by a certain school of Germans, who wrongly call themselves Socialists. . . .

"For, so long as the people remain slaves economically, they will also remain slaves politically, express their sentiments as such, and subordinate themselves to the bourgeoisie, who rely upon the continuance of the vote system for the preservation of their authority.

"Does that mean that we revolutionary Socialists are opposed to universal suffrage and prefer limited suffrage or the despotism of an individual? By no means. What we assert is that universal suffrage in itself, based as it is on economic and social inequality, will never be for the people anything but a bait, and that from the side of democratic bourgeoisdom it will never be aught but a shameful lie, the surest implement for strengthening, with a make-believe of liberalism and justice, the eternal domination of the exploiting and owning classes, and so suppressing the freedom and interests of the people.

"Consequently we deny that the universal franchise in itself is a means in the hands of the people for the achievement of economic and social equality.

"On this ground we assert that the so-called Social Democrats, who, in those countries where universal suffrage does not exist yet, exert themselves to persuade the people that they must achieve this before all else—as to-day the leaders of the Social Democratic Party are doing when they tell the people that political freedom is a necessary condition to the attainment of economic freedom—are themselves either the victims of a fatal error or they are charlatans. Do they really not know, or do they pretend not to know, that this preceding political freedom, *i.e.*, that which necessarily exists without economic and social equality, since it would have to precede this, will be essentially bourgeois freedom, *i.e.*, founded on the economic dependence of the people, and consequently incapable of bringing forth its opposite and creating the economic freedom of the workers?

"Are these peculiar Social Democrats victims to a fallacy, or are they betrayers? That is a very delicate question, which

I prefer not to examine too closely. To me it is certain that there are no worse enemies of the people than those who try to turn them away from the social upheaval, the only change that can give them real freedom, justice, and well-being, in order to draw them again into the treacherous path of reforms, or of revolutions of an exclusively political character whose tool, victim, and deputy it always has been."

## THE PEOPLE'S BLINDNESS.

We have never been believers in an infallible humanity, but what overwhelms us is the spectacle of the same colossal frauds repeated at such short intervals. It is not even necessary to change the form. The public bites at the most antiquated and clumsy hook. It has been said that the poor cannot do without credulities, illusions, lies. Seeing the readiness with which these are swallowed, we cannot help asking ourselves whether it may not be that, for the poor, they are indispensable.

What illusion could be more idiotic or nefarious than the famous "if you want peace, prepare for war"? When one makes preparations for war one ends, as in all other things, by getting it. Nevertheless, all the Governments are declaring once more that above everything they desire peace; and they are all arming to their utmost capacity; and all their subjects are not only allowing them to do this, but are themselves docilely getting ready for the new butchery, the new destruction, while knowing that it is sure to be far more destructive than that of yesterday, still green in all our memories. And, as if that were not enough, they are labouring to put new life into it by erecting monuments, writing about it, holding commemorations, and so forth.

Naturally the so-called Proletariat Government does as do the most utterly Fascist; and, as a crowning piece of impudence, through the Third International, it now announces that eventually it will be in a position to ally itself with any and every bourgeois State—those States whose soldiers have obediently allowed themselves to be massacred at the order of their tyrants and exploiters. On the other hand, in the event of their country being at war with Russia, these proletarians will be expected to rebel against their own capitalist dictatorship and accept that of Moscow, which declares meanwhile that it is compelled to put off its Communism to a better day. Evidently its Communism is to be only State Capitalism. The State as master! And this to be Humanity's supreme ideal! As if the State would not always resolve itself into a special class of tyrants and exploiters, against whom we should stand unarmed.

As we are on the subject of deceit, it would seem as if that practised by the Bolsheviki ought to be now self-evident to all the world, even if we confine ourselves exclusively to their own admissions and confessions. And when there came the massacres of workers—similar in all respects to those of the Champs de Mars in 1791, in June, 1848, and in May, 1871—it should have been seen by all that the true Proletarian Revolution had failed, and that in its place had come the bloody triumph of a faction which, in another form and under other names, had established once more the old-time privileges of the few.

Undoubtedly Bolshevism lasts by virtue of its State subsidies, and also, to some extent, by reason of the legend to which the Russian Revolution has given birth. All great historical events produce these legends. Nevertheless, Bolshevism unquestionably counts its sincere followers by the thousands, and these thousands show thereby that they have no more critical sense, and no greater capacity for examining evidence, than have the most fanatically religious. The people's blindness has its far-distant source in an unreasoned faith; in a contempt, and even a profound hatred, of those who are not of its own church; in a sentiment that—whether by God or Marx, matters not—it has been called upon to save the world. Such people consider that the Bolsheviki act quite rightly when they punish those who differ from them in opinion, or are unwilling to serve them unconditionally. At bottom it is this mentality which has lit the pyres and rendered possible the massacres committed by religion.

—*Il Risveglio.*

## ATTEMPT TO AVENGE OSUGI.

On September 1st, in Tokyo, Kyutaro Wada, a Japanese Anarchist, attempted to kill General Fukuda, member of the High Military Council and Commander of Tokyo garrison during the earthquake last year. The general was on his way to an earthquake memorial service. Wada's first shot missed fire, and before he could fire a second shot he was overpowered and arrested.

At the police station he said he believed that Lieutenant Amakasu killed Osugi on instructions from General Fukuda, whom he attempted to kill in revenge for the murder of his comrade. Wada said he acted entirely on his own initiative, but the police raided the residences of many comrades and examined them. The date of the trial has not yet been fixed.

The "Japanese Advertiser" (an American paper published in Tokyo) in its issue for September 3rd, contained the following editorial, headed "In Another Category":—

"If there is any event of the past year which Japan should desire the world to forget more than another it is the martyrdom of the Anarchist leader, Sakae Osugi. His brutal murder at the hands of Captain Amakasu of the Gendarmerie serves as climax to the revolting persecution of Koreans and Socialists in the first post-earthquake period, a series of persecutions almost semi-official in nature. The apologists for them have failed miserably to whitewash the actions of a populace gone mad. For this reason it is commendable, if surprising, to find an influential Japanese newspaper calling on the people of Japan to acknowledge their degradation in this instance, and to endeavour to redeem it by future atonement in a concrete way.

"The follower of Osugi who failed in his attempt on the life of General Fukuda succeeded admirably in achieving his real motive, the driving home to the public of the guilt, not so much of General Fukuda alone, as of all those who condoned or overlooked the acts of terrorism of that period. It would seem that the Government has made every effort to eradicate remembrance of this lapse from the minds of the people of Japan. The tombstone erected over Osugi's ashes, once stolen but later recovered, does not bear his name, by order of the police. By some strange freak, however, they have overlooked the issuance of a censorship ban preventing his name from appearing in the press of this country.

"Assassination is still regarded as a political weapon in Japan, which probably explains its frequent use. Not only does the assassin remove a hated enemy from the realm of human activity, but, because of this strange psychological attitude, he gains tremendous sympathy and support for his own cause, regardless of whether or not there was a spark of righteous indignation in the assassination.

"Kyutaro Wada, he who failed to avenge Osugi's death because of a blank cartridge, is to come up for trial in a Japanese court. . . . The nature and extent of his sentence will be awaited with great interest. Captain Amakasu, convicted of one of the most brutal crimes of the age, performed under the cloak of authority, was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment, which was reduced on January 27th by three years. What will be the punishment meted out to Kyutaro Wada?"

## THE VICIOUS CIRCLE.

Many Socialists and Communists who admit that the workers are able to manage their own economic affairs, and call for the elimination of the capitalist director from the field of production, declare that in the political field there must be a directing class, an élite, to administer for the public, dictate the general terms of social life, and enforce their observance, imposing their own will on the rude and ignorant mass. It is true that for the most part they speak of this necessity as provisional, as temporary, as confined to a certain revolutionary period; but no one knows when that period, once commenced, will end. This limitation has very little worth, for provisional domination easily becomes permanent, and, instead of removing, serves to maintain and perpetuate the position of inferiority occupied by the working man. Such conditions in the political have their repercussion in the economic field, and thus there is formed a vicious circle in which Humanity will be condemned to turn, and from which it may never be able to break loose.

SAVERIO MERLINO, in *Pensiero e Volontà*.

## WAR AGAINST WAR.

*War against War.* By Ernst Friedrich. (In German, French, English, and Dutch.) 5Mk. Berlin: *Freie Jugend*, Parochialstrasse 29.

The war against war gains in strength every year, especially in Europe, where conscription is the rule rather than the exception; and a great quantity of anti-militarist literature is being distributed. The author of this book begins with a powerful indictment of war, and appeals to the workers, men and women, to fight against this monster which devours the youth of every nation. "It is true," he says, "that capital is the cause of every war. But the guilt of war rests on our shoulders. It is we proletarians that make the conduct of war possible, it is for us likewise to prevent wars!" "Fight against Capitalism and you fight against every war!" He gives illustrations showing how militarism is inculcated in the young by means of toys and books, by the school and the Church, and in the Boy Scouts and Church Lads Brigades. His most powerful argument against war is the reproduction of actual photographs taken on the field of battle during the war, and here the author piles horror on horror. Dead soldiers mutilated by shells, burned by liquid fire, or entangled in barbed wire, in all stages of decay. "Mass graves" where the dead "heroes" were buried in hundreds, some of them stripped of every article of clothing. But the most ghastly of all are the photographs of some facial mutilations of survivors, which are so terrible that one wonders how the victims still manage to exist. "War is hell," and if it could be prevented in future by exposing its horrors, this book should surely do it.

*War against War.* Report of the Revolutionary Anti-Militarist Demonstration at The Hague, July 27, 1924. Published by the International Anti-Militarist Bureau, De Bilt, Holland.

*Guerre à la Guerre.* A French translation of the Report. Same publishers.

This demonstration was held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Netherlands branch of the International Anti-Militarist Union, and to commemorate the outbreak of the War in 1914. The anti-militarist movement in Holland is a real live one, and there was a large attendance, thirty branches of the I.A.M.U. being represented, as well as sixty Trade Unions, a number of Anarchist societies, and several organisations of the Youth. Our Anarchist comrades are the moving spirits in the movement, which explains its definite anti-Statist character. Amongst the speakers at the demonstration were Lucien Haussard (editor of *L'Idée Anarchiste*), Emma Goldman, and Pierre Ramus. The booklet is illustrated with photographs of the speakers and anti-militarist cartoons.

## SONNET.

(Dedicated to the thousands of Revolutionaries languishing in Soviet prisons.)

Still serving thee, O Freedom, thee alone,  
Great formless spirit brooding earth and air,  
Flashing in sunlight, in wild waves that dare  
The age-old rocks, flung black with cry and moan.  
Serving, though we be pillowed on a stone,  
Our warders dream-eyed Hope and grim Despair,  
We know thou art no mocking vision fair—  
These wounds being thine, our darkest griefs thy own.  
Laughing at times to muse how those who prate  
Of Liberty can think to make a cell  
Strong to extinguish thy immortal flame  
Unflickering in the windy gusts of hate,  
Still steadfast in the ramparts of Power's hell—  
Though on its walls it writes thy murdered fame.

ETHEL CARNIE HOLDSWORTH.

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**Freedom Press, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.1.**

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## What is MacDonald Driving at?

Some of Mr. Macdonald's recent remarks will convey more comfort to the wealthy class than to his own supporters, who would have criticised them bitterly if made by a member of any other political party. In a preface to a new edition of his book, "Socialism, Critical and Constructive," he attacks Trade Unionists on the ground that they are "profiteers" as well as the capitalists. He writes:—

"The Trade Unionist has the same limitation imposed upon him in this respect as the capitalist—he cannot advance his interests at the expense of his society. . . . It cannot be over-emphasised that public doles, Poplarism, strikes for increased wages, limitation of output, not only are not Socialism, but may mislead the spirit and the policy of the Socialist movement. . . . The Socialist, therefore, looks with some misgivings upon some recent developments in the conflicts between Capital and Labour. They are contrary to his spirit; he believes they are both immoral and uneconomic and will lead to disaster"

We know that strikes for increased wages will not bring about a social revolution; but if Mr. MacDonald were a wage-worker we wonder what he would do if he found the cost of living rising week by week whilst his wages were fixed at the low standard to which they have been forced down during the last two or three years. Even if Mr. MacDonald finds he cannot afford a motor-car out of his salary of £5,000 a year, he is not in such desperate straits as a worker who has to keep himself and family on £2 a week. There are one or two Unions which may be called "job trusts" and able to command a wage considerably higher than that of the ordinary worker; but the bulk of the workers are faced by large combinations of employers who would grind them down to starvation wages if they did not occasionally strike and dislocate their employers' businesses. We are continually saying that the workers must change the system if they wish to lead a full and free life, but we recognise that the everyday struggle for existence demands constant resistance against the attacks of the exploiters.

When the transport strike occurred in the early days of the Labour Government, Mr. MacDonald threatened to put the Locomotive Engineers' Union under Government control if its officials called out the men on the Underground railways; and a proclamation under the Emergency Powers Act was signed by the King at the request of the Government and arrangements made for a transport dictator to assume control in London. This action coupled with Mr. MacDonald's remarks on strikes should surely lead the workers to ask themselves what sort of liberty they are likely to get under a Socialist Government that had the power to enforce its decrees. The aim of the State Socialist is an all-powerful Government that would control the means of life and dictate the wages and hours of labour of every worker in the country. Of course, the workers would have the privilege of voting for their new masters, and might even sit on some of the committees regulating industry; but once this gigantic State machine was built the individual would be merely a number on a card and be subject to the whims and fancies of the horde of bureaucrats which would inevitably come into being.

Another straw which shows the trend of Mr. MacDonald's thoughts are some remarks he made when interviewed by the editor of the *Review of Reviews*. Speaking of the Labour Party, he said:—

"Our patriotism is a thing we feel deeply, but do not talk about often. It is love of the soil, love of our villages, our cottages, the places where we meet our fellow men, the churchyards where our dear ones sleep. In the spiritual quality it is akin to the old gentry and nobility, though they, of course, have enjoyed privileges which we do not share. But we understand them, and I

believe they understand us. They, too, love the soil and their houses and the villages and the villagers, and they try to fulfil in their way the obligations of social service which their positions involve."

This glorification of the landed aristocracy by the leader of the Labour Party is simply astounding. Does he know the history of these people since William the Conqueror came here and carved up the country among his supporters? Does he know how vast estates were given away by dissolute monarchs to their mistresses or to courtiers who took their mistresses off their hands? Has he not heard of the gibe hurled at a member of the House of Lords, a landed proprietor, that he was "the tenth descendant of a pretty face"? Let him read "Our Old Nobility" and see the fraudulent and corrupt methods by which many of them gained their thousands of acres. And then let him read the story of the enclosure of the common lands. Of course the old gentry and nobility "love the soil and their houses and the village and the villagers." Why shouldn't they? For centuries they have lived a life of ease and luxury from the fruits of that soil produced by the underpaid toil of the villager, who dared not call his soul his own. And when sheep were worth more on the soil than men these beloved villagers were driven out of their wretched hovels and forced to emigrate overseas, as in the case of the Sutherland clearances. Less than a hundred years ago six Dorchester labourers were sentenced to six years' transportation for belonging to an organisation to raise their wages of 7s. a week; and even to-day in the South and West of England agricultural labourers hardly dare to join a Union for fear of being discharged and turned out of house and home.

The gentry and nobility that are so courteous and gentlemanly to Mr. MacDonald as Prime Minister can be, and often are, overbearing and tyrannical in their dealings with their villagers, and are downright blackmailers when a piece of "their" land is wanted for a public purpose. Their monopoly of the land is the basis of wage-slavery, and they are the bitterest opponents of any change—social, political, or economic. These are the people with whom the leader of the Labour Party claims spiritual affinity. Even the editor of the *Daily Herald* was disgusted, for in the report of the interview he left out the last sentence we have quoted, but without intimating to his readers that the cut had been made.

Mr. MacDonald is now asking the electorate to return him to office. The worker who, after reading the above quotations, votes for the Labour Party, in the expectation of any great change, must indeed be hopeless. He is of the kind whom politicians—and the gentry and nobility—love and cherish as the strongest supporters of Things as They Are.

## COMPULSORY ORGANISATION.

Wherever it has been possible our Social-Democrats [in Switzerland] have introduced compulsory organisation and the denial of the right of work to those who are not Trade Unionists. They have even had the impudence to call on the employers and urge them not to leave a free choice to those whom they hire, but to force them to become members of the Social Democratic Union organisation. And, to crown all, they do this in the name of Free Association! There is an Italian proverb which says that deceit recoils on the deceiver, and it is precisely this which has happened in connection with Fascism. Mussolini, knowing well that the Socialist Party's strength was in the Trade Unions, created a Trade Unionism of his own. Those who had been forced into the Socialist Unions at once began to join it, for employers were urged to give work to those only who were members of the Fascist organisation. The workers were coerced all the more by the fact that those who did not join were subjected to the worst forms of violence. But—let us say it at once—the highest form of violence is that of starving a man; of making it impossible for him to get work unless he bends the knee to some authority, it matters not what that authority may be. This form of violence the Social Democrats have always recognised and applied.

—*Le Réveil*.

As long as war is regarded as wicked, it will always have its fascination. When it is looked upon as vulgar, it will cease to be popular.—*Oscar Wilde*.

## Queer Views of Anarchism.

In the September issue of the *Socialist Standard* the place of honour is given to a three-page article on "The Conflict between Anarchism and Socialism," signed "J.O.L.," and it seems to me that FREEDOM, which delights in the exposure of sophistries, may think it worthy of reply. For my part, I confess to much impatience with arguments that have been answered conclusively ten thousand times, and for the sake of Socialism itself, I think it monstrous that there should be so dim a comprehension of the objections its all-Government creed will have to meet.

The article in question begins with dogma, it being stated that "the Socialist is going forward along the road on which the human race has evolved," while "the Anarchist goes backward to individualism and petty enterprise." "Is that clear?" the writer asks. Unquestionably; but it is mere assertion, and, as regards the reversion to petty enterprise, it happens to be false.

In the next paragraph but one we are told that the essential feature of Anarchism is the demand for absolute liberty; and that also happens to be false. Never have I known an intelligent Anarchist who did not recognise that his own liberty was bounded by the equal liberty of others, which he himself must not invade and should defend against invasion.

Then follows a true statement, viz., that we denounce majority rule, and the methods by which that, and other rules, are now enforced. Of course we do, not only because of our belief in Anarchy (from the Greek words *an*, without; *arche*, rule), but because we are realists who take life as we find it. Do you dare to tell us that the voice of the people is always the voice of an all-wise God? Have you the audacity to assert, in the face of all history and of the expulsion records of your own party, that the majority will never tyrannise? Or is it possible that, in your opinion, wrong can be transformed into right by the mere counting of noses?

We now come to the declaration that "to reject the necessity for majority rule under all conditions is ridiculous." Indeed it is. I suppose there is not an Anarchist living who has not agreed most cheerfully, over and over again, to put some question to the vote and to abide by the decision of the majority. But he himself has agreed to it. It has not been forced on him, and it is precisely there that all the difference lies. We are against the coercion of the non-invasive individual. We stand for his right to exercise his own judgment and be responsible for that alone to which he has agreed. At the risk of appearing discourteous, I must remark that ignorance of this distinction implies ignorance of everything for which Anarchism stands.

The statements that without work we cannot, as a race, exist, and that man is no longer a tool-less animal, are obvious platitudes. On them we need not dwell. Socialists and Anarchists alike admit that our command over Nature has become so great that poverty should be no longer possible, inasmuch as the natural resources are still here, as they have always been, and inasmuch as modern science enables us to get out of them far more than ever. Evidently also the machinery needed can be multiplied almost indefinitely, for we know how to make it. Why, then, is humanity still cursed by poverty? Clearly because the means of satisfying our wants are, at present, monopolised by the few. These facts are self evident, and on them we are agreed. Every human being, we all admit, should have full opportunity to support himself by labour. Here, however, we come up against another fact, which apparently is not so obvious, viz., that all labour falls, of necessity, into one of two categories, and that a third category is not even thinkable. To live we must work; and we work either as slaves, under the whip of orders, or as free men, by mutual agreement. We can set our own tasks, or we can have them set for us. Our activities can be determined by our own inclinations, our own tastes, our own individual judgments, or we can have no voice in the matter and must simply do as we are told. I repeat that into one or other of these two divisions all labour necessarily

falls; and the question is as to which is the more desirable and more nearly in accord with what we know of the principles of human evolution.

Socialism favours work at the bidding of authority, for it proposes to abolish individual monopoly by creating one gigantic, all-embracing monopoly, the State. For that monopoly we all shall be compelled to work. Its orders we shall all be compelled to execute obediently, for the simple reason that the State, being in sole possession of all the means of life, will starve us if we don't. Socialism, however, assures us confidently that tyranny will be impossible, because the State will be the people, and to itself the people cannot be unjust. Oh! can't it!

Anarchism, on the other hand, declares that such a plan is Militarism incarnate; that its very cornerstone is coercion by authority; that it will put the individual—and, after all, the mass is composed of individuals—completely at the mercy of the governing machine; and that, so far from being in harmony with the evolution from barbarism, it will carry us back to a Caesarism, from which we have been struggling desperately to get away. Anarchism does not propose to allow, if it can help it, free speech and the free play and interchange of thought to be suppressed, as, in the name of unity, Roman Catholicism suppressed them in the past, and as Socialism, wherever it acquires the power, suppresses them, in the name of unity, to-day. Anarchism does not propose to allow, if it can help it, the individual worker to be reduced to economic helplessness, as infallibly he will be if the governing machine is allowed to corner all the means of life. Anarchism proposes to pull down all the fences of monopoly, and thereby to put all men in a position to provide for their own wants by mutual agreement, as free men should and will. This, it maintains, is the natural line of evolution; for we are moving steadily, despite our appalling ignorance, from militarism to industrialism, and the further development of industrialism is possible only under continually increasing extensions of free and open contract.

The gist of the article I am criticising is simply that it can't be done; that industrial freedom is a dream; that, in the writer's own words, "a central authority arose when the division of labour took place"; from which it follows logically that, the greater the division of labour, the more authority will be required. Truly a cheerful outlook. Why, bless his simple soul, what he brands as impossible is being done every minute of the day and night beneath his very nose; for industrial societies, founded on and regulated exclusively by mutual agreement, control the production and distribution of the world. Those who have the needed means find not the slightest difficulty in entering into those far-reaching contracts by which they benefit themselves enormously; but from that prosperous and ever-expanding circle the propertyless wage-worker is, as yet, excluded. Let him also, we Anarchists declare, break his way into that ring. Let him also refuse to be barred any longer from the fruitful opportunities the few at present enjoy, that he too may have the economic power which will enable him to shape his life according to his individual needs. We Anarchists are not proposing to castrate him. We are trying to get him to assert his virility and be a man.

Inevitably we detect Militarism and whatever smacks of the Militarist philosophy, which says of the masses: "Theirs not to reason why." And this brings me to "J.O.L.'s" fling at the attitude some of us adopted toward the War. May I suggest that the distinguished company amid which he has placed me so politely, perhaps, regarded the War as a barbarous military invasion to be put down at any cost, and the sooner the better? If it pleases him to imagine that Kropotkin or Tucker were pandering to "the common herd," it is an amusing folly of which I do not wish to rob him. I myself, by the way, happened to be living in California, and not in England.

WM. C. OWEN.

To the man who possesses nothing it is indifferent, to a certain extent, under what government he is living.—*Montesquieu*.

Men were never made to believe stupidities for any other reason than to make them submissive.—*Voltaire*.

## THE IMPRISONED REVOLUTIONISTS.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—I have just read the following in FREEDOM: "Thousands of Revolutionists who have bled for the Revolution . . . have either been done to death or are till this day languishing in Soviet prisons, in the frozen North, and in ghastly concentration camps throughout Russia." You will observe the words I have left out. To have bled for the whole of the peoples constitutes, in my mind, a more noble claim than to have "helped" to form and crystallise Power in any form. Mr. Aldred asserts his claim to the title of Anarchist. I don't. But I do say that the rod of power is detestable to me, whoever wields it, and that I would sooner be broken by it than wield it. If these "thousands languishing in Soviet prisons" are Anarchists, Labourites, Socialists, or Communists does not appear to be the question. I assert my bonds with all of them, considering them types of one mass mentality, which has split up into these forms for the time being. These bonds with all I consider my highest freedom, and the highest expression of individuality. I do not belong to any Anarchist group, or any other group. I belong to the folk—from the most undeveloped and illiterate, so confused that they are the bedrock of even reaction, to Whitman and Morris, and Marx, Kropotkin, and Bakunin. Now, where are we? Still on the wide-flung earth, brother, with its divided masses, and its divided expression of those masses. And I am writing to say that what is needed to serve those "who languish in prisons" is not argument by rival sectarians, but a poet to sing their indignities; and I offer my gifts in their service—as I would for any other imprisoned comrades. Their great claim is that they ought to be out, helping to build up, and make firm, the city jerry-built on the ruins of the one they helped to destroy. May I have the privilege each month of singing their wrongs, through FREEDOM?—Yours in the cause of united Freedom,

ETHEL CARNIE HOLDSWORTH.

P.S.—You need not send me any facts. The fact that they are in prison is enough.

[We shall be glad to publish our comrade's poems. We always remember with pleasure her songs in the *Clarion* some years ago. Mrs. Holdsworth now helps her husband in the publication of the *Clear Light*, the address of which is 29 Slack, Heptonstall, Hebden Bridge, Yorks. We print her first contribution in this issue.—ED. FREEDOM.]

## 25th Anniversary of the "Freie Arbeiter Stimme."

The 25th anniversary of this well-known New York Anarchist weekly was celebrated by a dinner at a restaurant in Aldgate, organised by our Jewish comrades. A very enjoyable evening was spent. Most of the speakers dwelt on the great value of the work of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* during its long career. Among those who spoke was Emma Goldman, who received a warm welcome; Millie Rucker, now on a visit to London; and Madame Sophie Kropotkin, who spoke feelingly on conditions in Russia, and made an appeal on behalf of the Kropotkin Museum in Moscow. At the close of the proceedings a collection was made for the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*.

## The Proposed Anarchist Conference.

Arrangements for the Conference are in progress. Several comrades have agreed to help, and the "Workers' Friend" Group have decided to send delegates. It is hoped that a definite announcement may be made in our next issue. Comrades who wish to attend are urgently invited to communicate with us at once.

## Propaganda in the East End.

On September 16 a debate was held on Tower Hill between our comrade E. Zaidman and H. Martin, on "The Fallacy of Marxism," in the presence of a large audience. At the close of the debate many questions were put to Zaidman and answered satisfactorily. As a result, three dozen Anarchist pamphlets were sold.

Several Sunday morning meetings were held in Victoria Park during September, when Zaidman spoke on various questions. Four dozen pamphlets and 50 copies of FREEDOM were sold. It is thus evident that there are splendid opportunities for propaganda and the sale of literature if speakers will come forward and help Zaidman to carry on these meetings, which are held in Victoria Park every Sunday morning at 11.30.

## Martyrs of Bolshevism.

The Joint Committee for the Defence of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia are issuing a series of postcard photographs of well-known revolutionists still in prison. The first four photographs are those of Maria Spiridonova, Alexandra Jzmailovitch, David Kogan, and Aron Baron. Each card gives particulars of the prisoner's revolutionary activities and imprisonment. We can supply these cards at 2½d. each; the set of four, 9d. post-free. All the proceeds go towards the relief of these victims of Bolshevik tyranny.

## "Freedom" Guarantee Fund.

The following donations have been received to date (October 10) since our last issue:—G. P. 2s., T. S. 10s., R. A. Lown 3s. 6d., O. K. £1, Elizabeth £1, L. G. Wolfe £1, "L'Adunata dei Refrattari" Group (Newark, N.J.) £5 6s., H. G. Russell 2s. 6d., W. M. S. 2s. 6d.

We wish to thank our Italian comrades in San Francisco and Newark, N.J., for their recent generous donations to our funds, and hope it will inspire our English-speaking comrades to follow their good example.

## CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

(September 11 to October 10.)

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