

Freedom

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NOTES.

The General Election.

The overwhelming majority of the Conservative Party was a surprise to most people and a great blow to those who pinned their faith to the Labour Party. The Russian Treaties were made the supreme issue by the Conservatives, who gained many thousands of votes by the publication of the Zinoviev letter. We do not think there can be the slightest doubt that this letter was a forgery, but Mr. MacDonald's handling of the matter was so ridiculous that he played right into the hands of his political enemies, who exploited it to the utmost. Mr. MacDonald was so intent on looking out for what he once termed the "monkey tricks" of the Bolsheviks that he overlooked the possibility of "monkey tricks" nearer home, and the astute gentlemen of the Foreign Office landed him in the soup. The Labour Party are consoling themselves with the fact that they increased their total vote by over a million; but its importance may easily be exaggerated, as they put up 87 more candidates than at the General Election of 1923, and many Liberals were so disgusted with their leaders' pact with the Tories that in revenge they voted for Labour candidates. As for the Liberals, their arrangement with the Tories brought them the fate that befell the young lady of Riga who went for a ride on a tiger. With a majority of 229 over all other parties, the Tories feel themselves safe for four years at least, and we may expect to see Imperial Preference and thinly disguised Protection in the near future. The Government's Notes to Russia are bluff. They could not be very angry about the Zinoviev letter, even if they thought it genuine, as it helped to put them in office; and although they have cancelled the Treaties negotiated by their predecessors, they know they will have to negotiate others very soon. It is only a question of bargaining. Even Winston Churchill will shake hands with the Bolsheviks if they bring a few fat concessions in their pockets.

Imperialism Rampant in Egypt.

The murder of Major-General Stack, the Governor of the Sudan, gave the Cabinet an opportunity of showing how firm they could be with a weak country. An immediate indemnity of £500,000 was demanded from the Egyptian Government, as well as the withdrawal of all Egyptian units of the Egyptian army from the Sudan. They also said that the Sudan Government (a purely British body) will increase the area to be irrigated at Gezira to an unlimited figure. In other words, they intimated that they were in a position to stop the flow of the Nile and make Egypt a desert if the Egyptian Government refused to grant their demands. This is what Jingoists call a strong foreign policy to maintain the prestige of the British Empire. The contrast with their attitude to Mussolini over Corfu and to Poincaré when he invaded the Ruhr was noted by the press of the world. The French, who have vast economic interests in Egypt, sounded a decidedly hostile note at first; but they have since changed their tone. Probably the British Government have promised to allow them a free hand in that portion of Morocco just evacuated by Spain, so they will look the other way whilst British statesmen take away the last shred of independence left to Egypt. The Entente is now cordial again. Of course, the Labour Party, being in opposition, have raised an outcry against this display of force; but some of their most prominent speakers—especially Thomas and Clynes—have eulogised the Empire so often that their protests cannot be taken seriously. The Suez Canal is such a vital link with India and the East that those who believe in the Empire must be prepared to massacre every Egyptian, if necessary, to make it safe for British battleships. He who wills the end wills the means. Again we see that Empire and independence cannot live together.

The "masterly inactivity" of the League of Nations during the crisis is surely proof enough that it is a tool solely for the use of the great Powers represented on its Council.

"A Fair Return."

A Conservative Government can always be relied on to look after the interests of landlords, and the Conference on Agriculture which the Government have decided to summon will certainly take care that those interests do not suffer. The statement issued to the press says that "representatives of the three principal agricultural interests, namely, landowners, farmers, and workers," will consider the steps to be taken to increase the area of arable land in England and Wales—why not Scotland also?—and to stimulate the economic maximum production of food. It is suggested that the increase of arable land be not less than a million acres. Well, if the landowners are really anxious to help, we would suggest that they cease to levy the tax on food production which they term "rent," and take a hand in the actual work of farming. The preservation of game monopolises hundreds of thousands of acres, and if the agriculturist dethroned King Pheasant and used his sacred domains to grow food, the result would be most beneficial. The statement says the industry should be conducted in such a manner as will secure "a fair return to all those engaged in the industry," and as they evidently include landowners in this category, the question arises, what is "a fair return" for a landowner? Of course, if he farms his land he is entitled to be paid for his labour just the same as any other worker. But what does a man who is simply a landowner do that he should take a share in the product of the agricultural or any other industry? This question goes to the root of the matter, and if the representatives of the farmers and agricultural labourers insisted on raising it as soon as the Conference meets, we are certain they would be surprised at the amount of support they would get from the rest of the producing class. A landowner is one who is privileged to take a large portion of the produce of other men's toil without giving anything in return, and is interested in industry only for the same reason that a wolf is interested in sheep. Are we sheep?

The Cost of Government.

According to the *Bache Review* (New York), President Coolidge has reminded the people of the United States that the present yearly cost of national, State, and local governments has reached the staggering sum of over \$10,000,000,000 (say £2,000,000,000)—about the total that all American farmers receive for all their output for a year—93 per cent. of all wages and salaries of industrial plants—about one dollar out of every six of the national income, and an amount which would require the entire earnings for a year of nearly 7,000,000 wage earners employed at the rate of \$5 per day. In 1903 the per capita tax—Federal, State, and local—was about \$17. Now it is about \$100. This, of course, does not include the robbery of the producers by means of tariffs, railroad rates, and land monopoly, all of which are special privileges granted by government to those who have political influence. It has just been discovered that when the Northern Pacific railroad was built the United States Congress made it an enormous grant of land to aid its construction, the cost of which did not exceed \$70,000,000. The promoters raked in over \$136,000,000 from the sale of the free land. The war contract scandals, the Teapot Dome scandal, and many others too numerous to mention are further proofs of the wholesale robbery of the "sovereign people," who are skinned alive by the most unscrupulous gang of highwaymen the world has ever known. Government is everywhere the cloak which hides this robbery of the wealth producers, who innocently believe that government was instituted for the protection of the weak against the strong!

Push the sale of "Freedom."

HISTORY OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTION IN THE MODERN LABOUR MOVEMENT.

One has by now become quite accustomed here in Germany to confine the term "political action" to the narrow frame of Parliamentary activity. For this reason one need not wonder that to-day Anarchists and Syndicalists are being accused from all sides that they are opponents of the political struggle and are out to divorce economic action from political action. Not only from the camp of the old Social Democracy does this cry emanate; the spiritual lights of the so-called Communists, whose knowledge of our movement has certainly not been acquired by a study of it, are again blowing the old trumpet, and it is really touching how the hostile brothers in the general headquarters of authoritarian Socialism find each other again with lightning speed when the occasion arises to have a smack at the hated Anarchists and Syndicalists. When one, therefore, touches the question of Parliamentary action, it is necessary to state clearly our position towards political action in order to avoid misunderstandings.

Of a political nature is every event which has an influence on the progress and development of the community; even if it takes place exclusively on the economic field. Every large economic action, as for instance a general strike, is at the same time a political action of a very eminent significance, because it influences the "total mechanism" of the community in a greater degree than any other action. Parliamentary activity must be looked upon as only a part of the general political action, and in our opinion it only represents the most insignificant and weakest part of the political struggle. Anarchists and Syndicalists reject on principle every form of Parliamentary activity, because they are of the opinion that the interests of the bourgeoisie as a class are diametrically opposed to the interests of the proletariat, so that every compromise on the field of bourgeois Parliamentarism is not only useless, but directly detrimental to the workers, in so far as it turns the class struggle into an undignified comedy, and because it has a paralysing effect on the revolutionary energy and initiative of the masses. Not even the most generous franchise can alter this fact and all talk of "Democracy" is moonshine, for political freedom without economic equality is a lie and self-deception.

But our position towards bourgeois Parliamentarism must not by any means be regarded as a rejection of the political struggle in general. Such a position would be absurd, for does not the smallest wages dispute show that every time the least danger arises to the employing class, the State rushes to the spot in order to defend the threatened interest of the owners.

While history teaches us that the State owes its origin to the development of private property and social class distinction, so our daily experience shows us that the State, once in existence, is the most efficient and most unscrupulous defender of monopoly and class rule, and that consequently the struggle against capitalism includes as a matter of necessity the struggle against the State and its supporters. Every radical alteration of the economic conditions of life is unavoidably bound up with a change of the political system. Just as the absolute monarchy was the natural reflex of the old feudal system, so is the Parliamentary form of government the result of the capitalist order of society. Whoever is therefore in earnest in the struggle against capitalism is forced by the iron logic of circumstances to fight the modern State, as the defender and guardian of the capitalist system. The struggle against the "exploitation of man by man" leads with forced necessity to the struggle against the "ruling of man by man." Therefore, for every libertarian Socialist the abolition of private monopoly is equivalent to the abolition of the State. If the socialisation of the land and the means of production are the economic goal of his desires, so is his political goal a condition when—to quote Saint-Simon—"the art of ruling people" will be replaced by "the art of administering things."

In this struggle we consider, besides the education of the masses, the use of the economic strength which the working class have in their hands as the most effective weapon. Under the influence of Anarchist ideas and the Syndicalist movement, the working class, especially of the Latin countries and Russia,

have got used to applying the general strike more and more, not only as a means of obtaining economic concessions, but also as a political weapon to wrest from the State certain concessions. We only mention the general strike of the workers of Spain in 1904, for the purpose of obtaining the release of political prisoners, and the gigantic general strike movement of the Russian proletariat in 1905, which pressed the pen into the hand of the Tsar and forced him to sign the Constitution. Also the anti-militarist propaganda which has been carried on for decades exclusively by the Anarchists and Syndicalists, and which has entailed colossal sacrifices, belongs to the realm of political action.

The difference between the State politics of Social Democracy, with its different wings, and the anti-State politics of the Anarchists and Syndicalists, has been pronounced by James Guillaume, the delegate of the old Jura Federation, at the infamous Hague Congress in 1872, in the following classic words:—"We are by no means disciples of the political indifference with which we are falsely accused. But in opposition to the Marxists we are negative politicians, inasmuch as we have made not the capturing but the destruction of any and every political power our goal."

The Socialist movements prior to the foundation of the International Working Men's Association were, with the exception of the Babouvists and the followers of Louis Blanc, antagonistic to party politics of any description. They regarded Socialism as a question of culture, and appealed principally to the reasoning faculties of their contemporaries in order to make them receptive for the new gospel. For this reason they expected nothing from the State and the political parties, and they foresaw the realisation of Socialism only on the roads of direct action and practical experimentation.

One must also bear in mind that the Socialists of the pre-'48 period lived under the immediate influence of the great French Revolution and its social consequences, and felt, therefore, much more intensively than we, who are only able to see that great historic drama from a more remote perspective, the unmeasured over-valuation of State political action, by which the new democracy, personified in Jacobinism, was held. Saint Simon, in his "Critical remarks about the political parties of the great Revolution," tells them that they laid too much weight on the political transformation of the State and that they had too little understanding of far-reaching and fruitful economic reforms. Charles Fourier, the genial founder of the "Societarian School," criticises Jacobinism and its successors in a similar way; the same attitude was taken up by the followers of Lerroux, Cabet, Buchez, to speak only of the principal Socialist movements of that time.

Proudhon, who had grasped the essence of the State better than most of his Socialist contemporaries, recognised clearly and plainly the real significance of all State politics. He was perfectly clear about the character of political parties, and was firmly convinced of their insufficiency and their inability to solve the economic problems of the time. For this reason he warned the Socialists not to lose themselves in the stream of State politics, and told them that Socialism, once it fell into the hands of any Government, was doomed to inevitable reaction.

Also the old English Socialists could not be friends with what one nowadays calls politics. William Godwin, the first theoretician of Anarchism, in his admirable work, "Enquiry concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness," criticised the State and the political parties in the same manner as fifty years later did Proudhon. Also Robert Owen, the most influential of all English Socialists, and his numerous followers were very sceptical as to political action. Owen made against the Chartists, who through great mass demonstrations attempted to obtain universal suffrage, the same reproach as did Saint-Simon against the men of the French Revolution: he accused them of wasting too much energy on politics and of showing too little understanding of and energy for economic problems.

The only movements which were entirely saturated by the ideas of Jacobinism, which regarded central State-power as a means to decree Socialism from above to the people, were the Babouvists and the school of Louis Blanc. The former, who had united a great number of energetic elements, ready for any

sacrifice, in their secret organisation, were the faithful followers of the Communist Gracchus Babeuf, who sacrificed his life for his ideas; and, like him, they believed it possible to overthrow the Government by an audacious attack, in order to declare the establishment of Communism from above through the appointment of a Committee of Public Welfare. The idea of the Dictatorship, which has really nothing in common with Socialism, and which originated in the narrow bourgeois idea-circle of Jacobinism, formed an iron pillar of the Babouvist movement, and found in men like Blanqui and Barbes passionate and forceful defenders. Marx and Engels later took over from them the idea of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," under which nomenclature nothing else is to be understood than a Government invested with dictatorial powers, whose aim is to work for and to enforce Socialism by a display of legal power.

Louis Blanc, who was just as strict a Jacobin as Blanqui and the other leaders of the Babouvist movement, differed from these only by his methods. He rejected on principle the tactics of insurrection, but was also of the opinion that Socialism could only be established with the help of central State-power. Louis Blanc misunderstood entirely the deep difference between "State" and "society," and fought energetically against all libertarian social movements, which grouped themselves principally around Proudhon. Blanc says, for instance:—

"To demand the suppression of the State means the same as to demand the liquidation of Society as such, it means to desire that there should always be oppressors and oppressed, rich and poor, it means to enthrone tyranny in the midst of general confusion, it means not only to leave the path of Socialism, but to proclaim Individualism and to work directly for the destruction of liberty."

In his paper, *Revue du Progrès*, founded in 1839, Louis Blanc defended the point of view that Socialism could only be enforced by a democratic Government, and that therefore the conquest of political power would be the first task, in order to hand over to the people the weapon of legislation. Yet all the time he laid stress on the fact that the political struggle had to be subordinated to economic and social liberation; that the latter was to be regarded as the goal and the former only the means towards this goal. After the conquest of political power by the workers, the State was to suppress the capitalist organism, which was to be replaced by national workshops, in which the entire production was to be organised under the management and control of the State.

Louis Blanc was the real initiator of Parliamentary activity in the Labour movement, and his ideas found a certain echo in the ranks of the first Socialists of Belgium, Spain, and Switzerland. Also Ferdinand Lasalle, who was as strong a believer in the State as Blanc, and who was strongly influenced by the latter, saw in the conquest of universal direct suffrage the most important and noblest problem of the German working class, and demanded the establishment of Co-operative Associations, to whom the State should grant unlimited credit.

After the *coup d'état* of Napoleon III. in 1851, and under the general reaction which set in all over Europe, most of the old Socialist movements disappeared from the scene; their numerous publications were to a great extent destroyed and their ideas forgotten. The only two movements which weathered the storm were the Mutualists, as the followers of Proudhon called themselves, and the Blanquists. Only in the lessons of the "International Working Men's Association" was the question of the Parliamentary participation of the proletariat destined to be of decisive importance.

R. ROCKER.

(Translated from *Der Freie Arbeiter*.)

Society is composed of two great classes—those who have more dinners than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinners.—*Chamfort*.

REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT.

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

Price Twopence; postage ½d.

IN ARGENTINA ALSO.

For the moment the revolutionary movement is a cockpit of contending opinions, and we are glad of it. Never can we be made to believe in peace at any price, or induced to purchase unity by limiting individual freedom of expression. Such stupid tyrannies we leave to those whose ideal is the flock trusting blindly to its shepherd. No real Anarchist can hold that sterilising creed. On the contrary, he welcomes dissent, and hails the rebel as his brother. He recognises that no one is infallible, and that only by constant investigation, repeated experiment, and impartial discussion can we hope to steer our way. Never will we, as Anarchists, be content to go it blind.

Bolshevism, and the mob that has been gathering to its State Socialist banner—while often disavowing all connection with the standard-bearers—want none of this. What these people insist on is obedience, loyalty to the party, the devotion of the fanatic whose gullibility is impervious to reason. No Holy Inquisitor ever hated the heretic more cordially than do the gentlemen of Moscow, and their one virtue is that they do not conceal their hatred. For individual liberty, whether of speech or action, they do not profess regard. The unorthodox they persecute wholeheartedly. Their entire propaganda is directed toward imposing on the revolutionary movement everywhere a discipline, as Lenin put it, not of putty but of iron.

All this is very good. It shows us where we are. It forces the movement to sit up and take its bearings instead of drifting aimlessly and sentimentally, as has been its too easy-going habit. It compels decisions, starts furious controversies, wakes up the dullest, and clears the air. Out of these conflicts strength will come. The setback is only temporary and superficial. The growth will be deep-rooted, permanent, and real.

Here, in England, our chief enemy is slothful indifference; but the Latins are seldom apathetic. It is almost impossible for them to remain neutral, and when they take their side they take it. Accordingly, throughout Italy and Spain, Mexico, and Central and South America this Dictatorship controversy has swept its stormy way. The Authoritarian Communists have stood by Moscow, and to the best of their ability have copied faithfully its tactics. The Libertarians, who have no use for any Communism that is not individual and free, have stuck with equal fidelity to their own guns, and there have been battles royal. The latest to fall under our notice comes from Buenos Aires, in the Argentine Republic.

There the Anarchist movement has been singularly active, and at its head for many years has stood *La Protesta*, a noted daily. Out of it there has grown a Syndicalist movement, with the *Federacion Regional Obrera Argentina* as its centre; and both that body and the paper named appear to have ranged themselves with Moscow. On the other side, however, there is a host of talent—such noted Anarchist writers as Pierre Quiroule and Costa Iscar; *La Antorcha*, which also was aspiring to be a daily; no less than twelve other Anarchist journals; and, according to the list published, eighteen Syndicalist organisations. These are the heretics, and in the manifesto published by *La Antorcha* it is asserted that the Moscow authoritarians have stuck at nothing to run them out of business. In the first place, they excommunicated them from the central body and from the Prisoners' Defence Committee. In the second place, as it is charged, they raided one of the unorthodox locals, opening fire without warning, and wounding, perhaps fatally, two comrades sleeping on the premises. On the other hand, one of the raiders was killed.

The manifesto from which we take these details gives a list of forty-three Anarchist organisations which indorse its publication; and although we know nothing of their individual strength, their very number testifies to an activity we well may envy. These Latin comrades at least feel, and deeply. By reason of their intense earnestness they quarrel bitterly, and blood is shed. It is an incident; it passes. What abides is the strengthened conviction that in our camp Authoritarianism can have no place, and that he who will not grant to others the liberties he demands for himself is no Anarchist, whatever he may call himself. The road lies straight enough ahead of us, and those sincere ones who for the moment have strayed from it will soon get sick to death of Dictatorship, and find their way back again. Of that there is already more than ample proof. The Lenin craze is dying. W. C. O.

FREEDOM.

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The Shadow Fighters.

The social struggle is simplicity itself; but never-ending discussion, poisoned through and through by party fanaticism, has buried its simplicity out of sight. We are living under the wage system; and that fact alone, if stated clearly, explains all else. What difficulty is there in making the masses understand that under the wage system those who are in possession of the sources of production compel the dispossessed to work for them, on their own terms?

For the life of me I cannot see the difficulty, and never could. Never yet have I met the man or woman who dared dispute that simple statement; and I say to-day, more emphatically than I used to say it nearly 50 years ago, that in this elemental truth lies Labour's strength. All the rest is weakening; and I, who have been throughout my life too much of a bookworm and a student, am saturated with the conviction that the entire Labour movement is sick to death with pedantries. These pretty clevernesses, so dear to platform orators and those who cultivate fine writing; these fine-spun theories in which controversialists delight—all these have never got us anywhere, and never will.

Look at the net result of these interminable evasions! After a century of incessant warfare the Labour movement goes down once more to ignominious defeat. Throughout the civilised world to-day there is not a single country in which Labour has real power; not one in which it is not hanging on desperately to the very edge of life, on its knees to the possessing class, begging piteously for work, imploring protection, and humbly grateful for the "dole" that stands between it and starvation. The dole! Over and over again I have heard English Socialists declare that to accept the dole is no disgrace, their argument being that Labour itself provides the fund out of which the unemployed are fed. What cant! The dole is the badge of helpless poverty; and to Labour, which alone creates all wealth, the grovelling in helpless poverty should be the shame of shames.

In Russia a small body of determined men, who intended to get power and got it, are ruling more than a hundred million workers and peasants with a rod of iron. In Italy Mussolini, a gentleman of similar calibre, is still supreme. Here, in England, the Landed Aristocracy, which long ago grabbed this little island, and the Plutocracy, which joined hands with it in grabbing the far greater resources of the British Empire, are again firmly seated in the saddle. In the United States, once the stronghold of Democracy, the arch-representative of the Money Power has been re-elected President by an avalanche of votes. And over all this our Socialists are chortling! They say they have smashed the Liberals. They say they have gained more than a million votes. What of it?

Yes, indeed, what of it? These vaunted triumphs are not worth a pinch of snuff. In the first place, the economic rulers of this country are now more strongly entrenched than ever, and for years to come will be able to cement their power by passing whatever legislation pleases them. In the second place, the new voters on whom Socialism is pluming itself, are not Socialists at all. For the most part they are just the vaguely discontented, lured by the glitter of a skilfully selected assortment of artificial baits. Some thought the Socialists would give us a cleaner administration; others imagined that they would build more houses, increase the old-age pension, establish a minimum wage, and make the pint measure hold a quart. Mere aspirations; futile graspings at the rainbow. In all of them put together there is not a particle of actual strength, and to real Socialism they are not even distant cousins.

Forty years ago August Bebel put the matter in a nutshell when he wrote, in "Woman and Socialism": "The root of all

slavery is the economic dependence of the exploited on the exploiter!" It is the condition in which the wage worker finds himself everywhere, and in that condition he must remain inevitably until he himself takes possession of the means of production and thereby ends his dependence on the propertied class. This we should tell him straight. He can understand it readily; it will sink easily into his inner consciousness; and then, but not till then, he will be prepared to act. A hundred thousand men and women armed with that conviction would be worth a hundred million organised mechanically for impracticable non-essentials, as Trade Unionists at present are.

Half a century ago Tolstoy wrote: "The rich will do everything for the poor except the one thing needed—get off their backs." Surely he uttered an eternal truth, and summed up political economy in one brief sentence. Sooner or later, if they are ever to rid themselves of dependence on the exploiter, the workers must shake him off; and we should put it to them straight. Let us not be afraid of becoming monotonous in our insistence. Great truths lend themselves readily to infinite varieties of treatment, for all Life is there to illustrate them.

Strong movements have always sprung out of the simple statement of simple truths. The mental tyranny established by the Church of Rome received its death-blow, and modern science came to birth, when a few courageous spirits said: "We think for ourselves." Chattel slavery was doomed from the moment when William Lloyd Garrison and a few kindred spirits stood up and cried: "Human beings are not pieces of furniture, to be put up to auction or smashed to pieces at their masters' pleasure." History abounds with similar illustrations, all teaching the same lesson.

The trouble, as I see it, is that our Labour leaders do not wish to simplify. They live on compromises, and hope to hold their followers by promises which, under wage slavery, it is impossible to keep. By the very nature of our being physical needs come first; and until the masses, and the individuals who form the masses, have secured possession of the wherewithal to satisfy their needs, it is useless to talk of any mental and spiritual uplift. Oaks cannot be grown in flower-pots, and mankind cannot attain its proper stature so long as it is held in slavery and cowed by fear of want.

Let us acknowledge boldly that in England—and alas! elsewhere—the revolutionary movement is at its lowest ebb, and that discontent is wasting its strength in fighting shadows. In that there is no sense. If we miss, it is because we have not aimed correctly; and if the business does not go, it is because we have mismanaged it. However we may label ourselves, our appeal must be always to the masses; and if we ask for their loyalty we also must give proof of our own loyalty by discarding humbug and getting down to the grim reality of actual facts. In the courageous facing of realities salvation lies.

W. C. O.

THE GREAT ALTERNATIVE.

It is good to hear that the cause of Anarchism is getting a little more of the limelight than it has had for a considerable time past. That this is so is due in some degree to the efforts of Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, who have consistently and without fear exposed the crimes of that Government we know as Soviet, though it is neither worse in kind nor degree than any other Government. It is the fact of government that is wrong; and government, which protects monopoly and special privilege, is the bottom fact from which spring unemployment and its accompanying horrors of poverty and destitution.

It is a most extraordinary thing, the most extraordinary thing in all human experience, that men and women will consent to starve in a land of plenty; a land of plenty in spite of the fact that the soil is not producing one-tenth of what it might produce if only the most amateur efforts were applied to the task of ploughing and digging and sowing.

When the War came to an end it was Mr. Sidney Webb, that doyen of economists who has written a library of books on economic subjects, who assured us that there was so much work to be done that no one would be left without employment. Mr. Webb is one of the economists who prophesied falsely and without any real knowledge of the facts that round him lay. When Great Britain entered

into the War her overseas trade came to an end. This was so perfectly obvious to everybody that on August 5, 1914, thousands of workpeople were discharged from their employment, and they remained out of work until they were absorbed in war-work. But we are not justified in assuming, as apparently all the economists do assume, that the countries which had been buying cotton and woollen goods, and machinery, and railway rolling stock, and the other commodities that were being produced in our hives of industry, began to learn to do without these things until Britain got the War over and was able to supply them again. Not a bit of it. The Americans and the Japanese, the smaller peoples of Europe, the Mexicans and Chilians, began to make these things for themselves, and they have gone on making them for themselves ever since.

For some years before 1914 the manufacturers of textile machinery in Lancashire and Yorkshire had been sending machinery to, among other places, Japan and South America. No one supposes that these people bought looms and carding machines for the pleasure of breaking them up! No, the machines were put to production, and they are producing now, and will go on producing. All they are producing represents trade lost for ever to this country. The chief thing that is now troubling the cotton manufacturers of Lancashire is not orders but the supply of raw cotton. Only a week or two ago I heard one of them say that before very long the United States would be using all its own cotton crop, not to make bonfires of, but in the spinning and weaving of cotton fabrics in its own mills on its own machinery. And what will Lancs do then, poor thing?

Hundreds of facts might be adduced to demonstrate the truth of the observations I am making. Britain's export trade is a diminishing quantity, even though the figures published by a grandmotherly Board of Trade may show an increase this quarter or the next, an increase that is due, of course, to the increased prices of commodities. A million pounds in commodities represents a pre-war value of only half a million pounds.

Now the first need of this country, as of any country, is bread. There are three essentials to life: bread, water, and milk. Not one of them, it may be observed, can be produced in a factory; they can only be produced by the cultivation of the soil, by digging and by labour on the good brown earth. And they would be produced in great abundance, in very much greater abundance than ever before, but for that stupid and foolish thing we call government. Before the War, in 1910—for there was unemployment before the War, strange though it may seem—a company of unemployed men set to work on a piece of land belonging to the cathedral church of Manchester—the land was chosen because it belonged to the Church—to cultivate it and grow on it the foodstuffs they were not permitted to earn for themselves in any other way. They dug up the land and planted it, and then along came the Government in the shape of a number of policemen, who dragged these industrious workers off to prison, leaving behind them some of their number to dig up officially and in due form the seeds and sets the wretched men had put into the ground. Nothing like doing a job of this kind thoroughly, says the Government.

There are thousands of allotment holders in this country who are digging and manuring and making fruitful not the best patches but the very worst; and they are doing so though by the terms of their tenure they are forbidden to sell the surplus of their holdings. In short, we have got the people who want to make a new industry for us, we have got the material, the soil, for the making of that industry, and we have got the people slowly dying for the want of that industry, all contained in the same island. Well, what rot are we all suffering from? What mental disease is it with which we are afflicted? Here is the work waiting to be done, the employment for the unemployed, the bread for the hungry, and the happiness and gladness of liberty for everyone!

But we have got also the soldiers, the police, the lawyers, the statesmen, the bun-bailiffs, the blue-jackets and red-jackets, the wigs and gowns and woollacks, the national anthem, his majesty and princes and princelings, benefit of clergy and no benefit of clergy, Almighty God, the Devil, heaven and hell, and all the other paraphernalia and phantasmagoria of government. And true wisdom consists in knowing that government is the deadliest foe that industry and prosperity can have. We might be an industrious people living on our land in our own country if we liked to get "without government," to adopt a Lancs phrase. The Anarchist puts the idea forward for serious consideration, despite the weakly little sums the unemployed receive at the Labour Exchanges each week if they have been six clear days out of employment.

JOHN WAKEMAN.

Devil's Island—Solovetsky.

(FROM A LETTER OF A POLITICAL.)

Our colony of politicals contains at present about 300 persons. There are 137 Social Democrats, 14 Left Social Revolutionists, 109 Social Revolutionists, and 35 Anarchists. They occupy three separate parts of the old Solovetsky Monastery. Our division (known in Russian as "skit") is called the Savvatievski, the largest one, which now holds 180 Socialists and Anarchists. The Savvatievski is built on the main island, on which are located the headquarters of the Chief Administration of the Concentration Camps of the North. Here is also imprisoned the main contingent of the ordinary ("common") criminals. The second "skit" is called the Muksolmski and is connected with our island by a dam. The third part, known as Golgotha, is on the Anzerski Island, separated by 4 versts of water from the main island.

The local administration, surely not without the knowledge of Moscow, is now exerting its best efforts to force us into a regime of common criminals. Thus the last party of Socialists that arrived here has for a long time not been recognised as political. In the prison of Kemi (on the mainland, where they were detained before reaching Solovetsky) they were placed in the dungeon, compelled to hard labour, and in every way treated like common criminals. Here in the Solovetski we have with great difficulty finally succeeded in securing to them recognition as politicals.

Besides Socialist members of various parties, the Government—that is the G.P.U.—now send to the Solovki large numbers of non-partisan politicals of revolutionary tendencies. The greatest proportion of them are students. You are aware that of late the student movement has grown considerably. After the "cleaning" of the schools and universities of Petrograd, Moscow, and other cities, hundreds of the discharged students were arrested, exiled to the furthest provincial places, or sent to the Solovetsky. To the latter have also been brought a number of "komsomoltsi"—members of the "Communist Union of the Youth."

The Solovetsky authorities have refused to consider the students as politicals. Boys and girls of 18, 20 and 22 years of age—hardly any of them 25—are confined together with thieves, murderers, and prostitutes, are forced to do hard labour far above their strength, and are subject to the vilest insults of the common-criminal guard. Especially hard is the lot of the young student girls: they live in the general dormitories with the old female criminals and are constantly exposed to the brutal desires of their keepers. A most outrageous case of this kind took place in the prison of Kemi. The student girl Efimova had the misfortune of pleasing the eye of the prison *commendant*. He decided to keep her in Kemi "for work," while the rest of her party were transferred to their destination in the Solovki. It required a very strong protest on our part to cause the local administration to demand the delivery of Efimova from Kemi to this place.

Among the other politicals here who are kept on a common criminal regime are many rebel peasants from various parts of the country, as well as numbers of workers arrested during *strikes*. We want to call your attention especially to the group of *Kronstadt sailors* imprisoned here by administrative order of the G.P.U., in connection with the Kronstadt uprising of 1921. For some time they lived in the Muksolmski "skit" as politicals. When that "skit" became too crowded, they were transferred to the Kreml prison. There we aided them with food, books, newspapers, etc. One day the administration called out the "starosta" of the Kronstadt sailors (the prisoner officially recognised as the representative and spokesman of the men in their dealings with the authorities). The spokesman was told that henceforth the Kronstadt men are to be placed on the regime of common criminals, deprived of their rations as politicals, and put to such work as the authorities will assign them. The Kronstadt spokesman refused to accept the order, whereupon he was bound and confined in the dungeon. Then the armed guards forced their way into the place where the Kronstadt men were

confined. The prisoners resented the attack and the new orders, and were all bound hand and foot. They declared a hunger strike, which lasted nine days. Then they decided temporarily to submit, in expectation of the Commission which was soon to arrive from Moscow and before which they were to lay the matter for decision.

These Kronstadt men comprise the small number of revolutionists that have not yet perished since their arrest after the Kronstadt events of 1921. Hundreds of their brothers have died or been shot in the Northern Camps, in the hells of Kholmogorsk and Portaminsk. Only those that escaped from those prisons are still among the living. Among them are 2 Left S.R.'s, 4 Anarchists, 1 working-man Menshevik of Kronstadt, while all the others are non-partisan revolutionary toilers. The politicals of our department, in the Savvatievski "skit," did their utmost to aid them. We telegraphed to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, we protested wherever we could, demanding that the hunger strike be liquidated and that the Kronstadt men be placed on the political regime. But without avail. There is no doubt that the struggle in this matter is not yet ended.

Now the authorities are trying to force us also to the common-criminal regime. But we are fighting against it. The administration has deprived us of fuel, and since spring we have not been given a bath. Outside there was still snow, and we sat in cold, damp cells. We had to cut down our amount of hot water and warm food, because there was no wood and the administration supplied none. And now we are without wood, and it looks as if soon we are to have only *dry rations*—bread and cold water. All this in spite of the fact that many of us are sick with scurvy and also suffering from other diseases. We have been waiting all the time for the Commission from Moscow, but so far it has not arrived. We mean to put the whole question up for final decision. It has now become clear that Solovki is not supplied with food for the winter—and cannot be well supplied because of the system in vogue here. We had explained the matter to Feldman and Bokio, the members of the Commission that came here from Moscow in the fall of 1923. They assured us that there are sufficient provisions. But the norm established by that Commission was shortened soon afterwards. Last December already we did not receive the full ration, and in February even the hospital rations for the very sick were considerably reduced. Besides that, some of the most necessary products are entirely lacking in the Solovki; thus, white flour, butter, fats, and so forth. The result is increasing scurvy. We have refused to accept the fish, which was dished out to us five times a week instead of meat. Now we receive salt meat twice a week. No fresh meat and no fresh vegetables, only dried. The flour is bitter, our bread badly made. The hospital rations are reduced to 15 per cent.

It is the general policy of Moscow to ignore requests and demands, to drag things on, to gain time and do nothing; and—gradually to reduce us to the common criminal regime. The entire conditions organised by the Commission of Feldman have—since the slaughter here last December—been suspended. One after another we have been deprived of various privileges. They cut down at first our exercise in the fresh air, then limited our light, forbid the interviews with the Muksolmski spokesman, reduced the norm of rations, and so on. Just now they have forbidden us to receive visits from our relatives in our own "corridor." We were compelled to see them in the "office" in the presence of guards. Over a thousand versts our people had travelled to come to us, spending their last rouble for the long and arduous journey—only to see us, for it was impossible to talk under those circumstances. And that after almost nine months during which we had no visits at all and not even regular correspondence. *** We are awaiting the Commission, before which we want to put the matter of our transfer from the Solovetski. *We feel that we could not survive here another such winter as the past one.*

(From the Bulletin of the Joint Committee for the Defence of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia.)

The Joint Committee say they have just received word that a hunger strike has now been declared by all the politicals in the Solovetsky prison. They demand the abolition of the Solovetsky Islands as a place of incarceration and the transfer of the prisoners to the mainland.

DINNER TO EMMA GOLDMAN

The project of a dinner of welcome to Emma Goldman grew rapidly from a small semi-private affair of sixty or seventy people to a public gathering of something over two hundred, which overflowed the banquet room of Anderton's Hotel on the evening of November 12th. The spirit of the gathering was worthy of the occasion, quite apart from the after-dinner proceedings themselves. It was in scope and feeling more like pre-war meetings than anything of the kind that has been attempted since that period of division. It would have been a wonderful occasion for restarting the Anarchist education of England, for besides being a great rally of old comrades in the movement, there were scores of young people there evidently eager to know what it was all about and to go out and tell others; and the guest of the evening was the most widely known Anarchist teacher America has produced. But that was not the purpose of the gathering; it was limited, in fact, to two purposes, the welcome to Emma Goldman and the assertion of her right to take refuge in this country from her political persecutors in America and Russia, and from the risks she must incur in any other European country. These two purposes were admirably served. The quality of the gathering demonstrated that we are intellectually alive to the honour and advantages of being host to one of the great rebel spirits of the world, and that we are rousing again to the necessity of asserting the right to welcome these prophets of a new order and to keep them with us as long as they can find here a field worth cultivating.

Josiah Wedgwood, M.P., was in the chair, and his genial and hearty introduction of the programme set the tone of the evening. He made it clear at once that the gathering represented that considerable public whose mind is open to the consideration of Anarchist principles, even accepting them as theory, but—as he said of himself—finding it difficult to apply them to the actual problems of society. He spoke with greater conviction on the main question of the evening—would the right of political asylum be extended to Emma Goldman by the Baldwin Government, or would she be in constant danger of deportation as an undesirable alien? He assumed—as did some of the other speakers and apparently a large portion of the audience—that there was more danger of unfriendly action by this Government than there would have been under Mr. MacDonald's Government. Indeed, it appeared from the clever and charming speech of Miss Rebecca West that if we had still been living under that blessed dispensation it would hardly have been necessary to welcome Emma Goldman with such a strong demonstration, and that when Labour comes into office again everything will be done for us that rebels like Emma Goldman seem to think we ought to do for ourselves. That was not the way Miss West put it, but it represents the mood of her speech and the manner in which a large part of the company took it.

By far the best speeches of the evening were those delivered by Bertrand Russell and Wm. C. Owen. Mr. Russell, who has the most acute philosophical mind in England, made the most complete avowal of Anarchist convictions of the evening. Wm. C. Owen also put the conviction of sincerity into all he said. He gave a stirring picture of the career of the great little woman who, sitting beside him, was quite evidently more distressed by all this kindness than she had ever been by the abuse and danger to which she has so often exposed herself in public meetings. Of her own speech it will not be necessary to give an account for readers of FREEDOM, who have had frequent opportunities of learning her views regarding the present state of affairs in Russia. Observing even more strictly than the other speakers the limitations of the evening, she confined herself to that subject and to a heartfelt exposition of her reasons for concentrating upon the plight of Liberty in Russia. She declared it to be her intention for the immediate future to devote herself to this special revelation of the abominations of authoritarianism, to this controversy in which she sees the two conflicting theories of social organisation coming at last to grips.

It would be ungenerous not to grant a word of praise to those responsible for the great success of the gathering, more especially to Mrs. Everard, whose optimism and energy overcame all obstacles.

LETTER FROM EMMA GOLDMAN.

DEAR COMRADES,—Ever since I have come to England I wanted to get in touch with you and tell you of my plans for activities in behalf of our ideas. But I have been very busy adjusting myself to the new conditions and meeting people who might be interested in the work I have in mind. I am glad to say that my efforts so far have met with greater success than I had expected. The dinner on November 12th brought out a large gathering of men and women whose interest made me feel very hopeful for my chances in this country.

Desirous as I am to put life in our movement, to bring our social philosophy before the thinking people of this great land, I yet feel that the most dominant issue before the world is Russia. To clear the fog which hangs over this question, to make the world see the abyss between the Russian Revolution, the aims of the Russian people, and the present governing régime, seems to me of utmost importance. I mean, therefore, to concentrate on that first. I mean to have a series of lectures in London, and later in the provinces, to set forth the facts which I gathered during my two years in Russia.

The first meeting proposed is to be held in Queen's Hall, London, shortly after the holidays. It is hoped by the friends who wish to help me that the meeting can be made self-supporting by a charge for admission to the stalls and orchestra, leaving the balcony free for the workers who cannot afford to pay. Unfortunately, there is going to be a very large initial expense for which money must be raised immediately, about £100.

I do not know how you feel about the question of Russia or the need of throwing light on it, but if the importance is as apparent to you as it is to me, I feel certain that you will not refuse to lend your help to make our first venture an overwhelming success. If you are able and willing to send a contribution, please send it to FREEDOM Office. And if you are in London, perhaps you will also help with the announcements and the sale of tickets.

I remain fraternally,

EMMA GOLDMAN.

IS THIS A WAY OUT?

(To the Editor of FREEDOM)

DEAR COMRADE,—I am totally in sympathy with your ideals of Freedom and No Authority and would rejoice to be able to work with you; yet I fail to see how your present methods will ever bring you a step nearer your goal. You might succeed in a half-civilised country with no centralised government. You might succeed in persuading those people that government was an evil and that they could get on much better without it, since they already would be living most their lives without government and what government interference they had would manifestly be evil. But to-day the Government has been an established fact for so long that the whole environment of our life is against you. Every individual without exception is taught—in State schools, private schools, religious schools—that government is a natural state of affairs. Churches, political parties, trade unions, newspapers, and countless other institutions all maintain the same fable; until now, government is as natural as the rain. It is very inconvenient when we come into contact with it, but no one believes we could get along without it.

I submit that with your present tactics the odds are overwhelmingly against you. The laws that bind us are too strong ever to be broken by a frontal attack. But you can break them by *dissolving* them. You can abolish government by making the Government itself issue the decrees which abolish it. It requires but two laws, the operation of which would gradually dissolve all other laws:—

1. A Statute enacting that ownership in land not in actual possession of the person claiming ownership, to be illegal.
2. A Statute enacting that all interest on loans of any kind in excess of (say) 1 per cent. to be considered as part payment of principal debt.

Statutes embodying these principles would place the land at the service of the now landless unemployed; and would free all workers, tenants, debtors, from everlasting bondage to possessors

of capital. They would give opportunity to everyone, either individually or in groups, to work out their own salvation and to live their own lives without recourse to political or governmental props. The idea would grow inevitably. Nemesis would overtake every political movement. Government would die of disuse. The statutes would work, too, once we get a *majority of voters* in favour of them. Nothing our enemies could do would defeat their operation. No force of law would be required, since the Acts are merely withdrawals of legal protection.

Dispossessed landlords who sought to take advantage of plant, buildings, etc., would find themselves being quickly repaid by operation of the second law. The higher the interest, the sooner would the debt be paid and the tenant free. Nor would it hurt if bankers combined to refuse to lend money at 1 per cent. The produce of the land being free, mutual banks would very soon spring up and the other banks would merely have committed suicide. Nor would it hurt if millionaires were to rush to invest their money outside the country. Such an export of capital would only create a demand for our goods from outside, pushing up prices. The land and workers being free, the benefit of such an increase would flow to them, since, the basis of expropriation having gone, it would be impossible for the expropriators to capture any increase in wealth.

Government is the whip by which our masters keep us slaves. If Anarchists capture the Government, they can rob the whip of its lashes.

Such a political programme, putting forward these two statutes for consideration by the electorate, would have an *economic* appeal—irresistible and universal. No possible argument could avail against it. Side by side with that programme, the programmes of all governmentals would appear as perfect foolishness.

Forgive this long letter, but the argument seems so logical that I cannot help but put it forward. There is a world of difference between politicians who seek to increase or to maintain governmental power and politicians who seek to *decrease* it. The latter can quite logically call themselves Anarchists, and they could, in my opinion, formulate an appeal to the electorate which no reactionary could resist.—Yours faithfully,

STUART S. LEE.

[We have never been inclined to under-estimate the forces opposed to us, but we do not think the position is quite so hopeless as our correspondent makes out. If the people regard government as being as natural as the rain, we fail to see how they are to be persuaded to vote for the two statutes which he says will free the land and abolish government. They certainly will not do it without knowing the ultimate effect of the statutes, because the privileged class would immediately label them "Anarchism." So we should have to fight openly as Anarchists. The idea of "Anarchist" M.P.s capturing the Government has no attractions for us, because we are certain that during the growth of the party in Parliament compromise and intrigue would corrupt it as they have corrupted every other party. The road to freedom may be long and hard, but our experience of Socialist, Communist, and Labour Governments of recent years confirms our opinion that the workers will never gain their freedom by voting. Their first step must be the conscious recognition that all government is harmful and can never be otherwise.—ED. FREEDOM.]

RUSSIA.

(Dedicated to the Anarchist comrades waiting to be released from Soviet prisons)

Most mighty Epic of one swift, bold leap
Which spanned two epochs terrible and vast!
The World-Besieged come staggering, safe at last—
Triumphant, dazed, immortal—burst from sleep
Whose age-long visions terrors grim defied.
A country which bred giants thunderous-named,
And women who could not with whips be tamed,
Unmastered deeply tombed 'neath Neva's tide.
Russia! Our great Beethovenian history chord
Which through the centuries pulsed slow and strong,
Still beating out the music of her dreams—
To set them in one hour in one wild word,
One flaming breath which hurled like chaff her wrong.
Russia! That thou shouldst strive to stem Thought's streams!

ETHEL CARNIE HOLDSWORTH.

AGAINST SECTIONALISM.

DEAR COMRADE,—I hope my letter last month was clearly seen to be an attack on sectionalism and not on Mr. Aldred. The masses are confused enough, without all these skirmishes on the part of Labour, Socialists, Communists, and Anarchists. Reaction of all kinds is rallying her units, which are ever ready to be united and aid each other. The sight of rival sectarians arguing and waving their sectional flags even over the bodies of suffering Anarchists in Russia was too much for me. Let us at least try to render mutual aid to each other, and not leave our wounded on the field just because they happen to be in another battalion. If a crisis came to-day, which overthrew Capitalism here, the dominant section, whichever it was, would persecute the others. Perhaps it is to expect a miracle to hope that before the crisis comes we shall have buried the hatchets with which we strike our comrades in other sections, and be prepared to stand all with our faces one way, against the common enemy. Or perhaps if the miracle does happen it will happen when it always has happened—in the common hearts of the rank and file, whom necessity consolidates into eleventh-hour unity.—Yours fraternally,

ETHEL CARNIE HOLDSWORTH.

"THE ROAD TO FREEDOM."

COMRADES AND FRIENDS,—

Since the myrmidons of Mitchell Palmer laid their heavy hand on the radical press the Anarchist movement in the United States has been without an organ, without a medium able to expound our ideal, our philosophy, and our view of a free society. Many of our most active comrades being silenced either by imprisonment or through deportation, a period of stagnation was inevitable. But now comrades from all parts of the country are urging us to start with the publication of an exponent of our ideas. There never was a greater necessity for an Anarchist publication in the English language than at the present time. The bankruptcy of Socialism and the great upheaval in Russia need an interpretation from the Anarchist viewpoint.

The confusion among revolutionary workers about the way and means toward a free society, especially about the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, makes it imperative to have an exponent of our social philosophy, an organ of clarification and information, a clear picture of contemporary life and a comprehensive review of the international Anarchist movement.

Though we are aware of the difficulties—financial and otherwise—we nevertheless have decided to listen to the urgent advice of comrades and to start with the publication of a monthly paper, the first issue to appear in November.

Comrades—If Anarchism is not a mere dream in your life but an expression of life itself, an ideal to be achieved by earnest and serious toil, we urge you to support us in our endeavour to spread the gospel of freedom in this country. The work and sacrifice of our martyrs and forerunners shall not be in vain.

Send your address, your pledge for subscription, to "The Road to Freedom," Stelton, New Jersey.

[The first number has now been published.]

Anarchist Communist Conference.

A Conference of Anarchist Communists will be held at the Circle House, 15 Great Alie Street, Whitechapel, on Saturday, December 13, at 6 p.m. prompt, to consider ways and means of increasing the propagation of Anarchist ideas. All comrades are heartily invited. As there are many things to be discussed, please come early.

"Freedom" Guarantee Fund.

The following donations have been received since our last issue up to November 29:—M. A. Cohn £5 8s. 9d, J. A. Nielsen 17s., T. S. 10s., G. P. 4s., L. Sarnoff 4s. 6d., L. Newman and E. Richmond 10s., A. D. Moore 4s., A. Gayton 4s., J. Rosende 10s., R. Sinclair 10s., J. Petrovich 4s. 2d., R. Gundersen 4s. 2d., Speranzuolo 8s. 9d., Campigotto 4s. 4d., Taccola 2s. 2d., D'Isep 2s. 2d., Camillo 2s. 2d., Vernocchi 4s. 4d., Grilli 4s. 4d., E. D. R. £1 1s., J. Scarceriaux 4s. 3d., L. G. Wolfe (Oct. and Nov.) £2.

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Joint Committee for the Defence of Revolutionists
Imprisoned in Russia.

Berlin, November, 1924.

per ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

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(October 11 to November 29.)

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