

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Chinese Crisis.

To read the daily press one would imagine that the trouble in China was caused by the refusal of Mr. Chen, supported by Mr. Borodin, to recognise the pacific intentions of John Bull, who has just obtained the support of that arch-pacifist, Mussolini. For the time being Mr. Chen has taken the place of A. J. Cook as the great enemy of the British Empire, and, like the miners' secretary, is supposed to take his orders from Moscow. Could anything be more ridiculous? Here is a country containing one-fourth of the human race, which less than a century ago had no official intercourse with any of the other nations of the world. In 1842 the British Government, in revenge for the seizure and destruction of 20,000 chests of contraband opium by the Chinese High Commissioner, sent warships to bombard the coast and massacre thousands of Chinese, and then forced a Treaty on the Chinese Government by which it secured the island of Hongkong and an indemnity of 21 million dollars. Since that date China has suffered innumerable insults and outrages at the hands of all the "Great" Powers owing to her inability to defend herself. The Boxer Rebellion in 1896 was the beginning of the present wave of Nationalism in China, which is the manifestation of a growing spirit of independence amongst the Chinese, who wish to be masters in their own house. Writing immediately after the Boxer movement, Sir Robert Hart, who was head of the Chinese Customs for many years, said:—"In fifty years' time there will be millions of Boxers in serried ranks and war's panoply at the call of the Chinese Government; there is not the slightest doubt of that! And if the Chinese Government continues to exist it will encourage, uphold, and develop this national Chinese movement. It bodes no good for the rest of the world, but China will be acting within its right, and will carry through the national programme!" This prophecy, which appeared in Sir Robert's "Essays on the Chinese Question," is now being fulfilled; and if British lives are now in danger it is because his prophecy was unheeded. John Bright on one occasion told the House of Commons that "no page of our annals is more full of humiliation, because full of crime, than that on which is recorded our transactions with China."

Malatesta and the Fascisti.

For some months we have been unable to get in touch with our old comrade, Errico Malatesta. The reasons are now apparent in the following letter from him, with the Editor's comments, which we quote from *Le Réveil* (Geneva) of February 5:—

"Comrade Malatesta writes us [from Rome]:—

'I have been in bed for three weeks, suffering from pains in the hip. Of these I am now cured, but the thing of which I cannot cure myself is the surveillance of the police, which grows stricter all the time. Day and night I have police-agents at my door. They no longer try to dissemble, for they say frankly that they have imperative orders not to let me out of their sight. If I do not go out they come and knock at my door, on the most grotesque pretexts, to see if I am at home. If I do go out, they follow me almost everywhere; and if any one comes to the house or approaches me in the street, they stop him and demand to see his papers.'

"One calls to mind the interview with Mussolini in which that ignoble renegade, in order to exemplify his tolerance and refute the charge that all independent spirits were being persecuted, spoke of Malatesta, whom he described as 'the terror of all the European police,' and said that he was living in Rome in complete liberty and tranquillity. The lines quoted above show how strange is the liberty our comrade enjoys, and the situation in which he has been placed. To the proud militant, who even to-day utters not a single word of discouragement, we address our best wishes and fraternal greetings."

The General Strike "Inquest."

The result of the Conference of Trade Union executives, held in London on January 21 and 22, to discuss the General Strike, was a vote of 2,840,000 to 1,095,000 in favour of the report of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. Of the minority, 800,000 votes were those of the Miners' Federation, leaving less than 300,000 other than miners who voted against the General Council. This result was a foregone conclusion, as it was a Conference of Trade Union officials only, none of the rank and file being a delegate. The official element which makes up the Trade Union "machine" was hardly likely to pass a vote of censure on those whom they had selected to run the strike. The reports of the General Council and of the Miners' Federation were in direct conflict on two points. The miners stated that they accepted the General Council's mediation provided there was to be no reduction of wages, and the General Council said that "it could not demand the complete observance by the Government and the mineowners of their obligations under the report, and rule out the miners' obligations." This means that the General Council took the view that the miners would have to accept a reduction of wages, although on the eve of the General Strike they said that "the wages and working conditions of mine-workers are already so depressed as to render it imperative to seek remedies other than a further degradation in their standards of life." The second point of conflict was the Samuel Memorandum, which the General Council and their supporters hinted was official, though to save the face of the Government letters were published declaring it was unofficial. The miners said it was simply a trap, and they refused to accept Sir Herbert's assurances, even though he had been Governor of Palestine. The principal facts brought to light by the Conference were that no definite objective had been fixed for the strike, and no preparations made for carrying it on. We need seek no further for reasons for its failure.

Attack on Birth Control.

In a book just published, entitled "Medical Views on Birth Control," eight doctors have contributed essays dealing with what they consider its dangers from a medical and social standpoint. Sir Thomas Horder, in his introduction, says the benefits promised by birth control are highly problematical and the means of attaining them by no means certain or practicable. We do not know what promised benefits he is referring to, but unless the means used had been shown to be certain and practicable we do not think these medical gentlemen would have written this book. Sir Thomas says Nature's first law is self-preservation. Granted; and it is with this desire that so many married and unmarried folk are practising birth control. Our ruling class have made the gaining of a livelihood so difficult for the average breadwinner that as a means of self-preservation he is compelled to use artificial methods to limit the size of his family or become as ascetic as a monk. It would be easy to find more than eight doctors who would maintain that sex-suppression was more harmful to men and women than birth control. One of the writers says that disease is the penalty for interference with the plans of Nature. Since when have doctors acted on this rule? How many doctors are there who will explain to their patients the laws of Nature? Almost the whole of the medical fraternity are engaged in a conspiracy to keep humanity in ignorance so that they may reap a harvest in ministering to the ills caused by such ignorance. They know that if the people really understood the laws of Nature their occupation—and their fees—would vanish. So we look with suspicion on their new-found solicitude for those who practise birth control. We are not among those who expect that our social problems will be solved by a limitation of families, but in the struggle for existence forced on them by an unjust economic system men and women will be justified in adopting birth control as a means of self-preservation.

A Fighter of Forlorn Hopes.

(Conclusion.)

In the spring of 1892 Fred Charles, Cailes, and Battola, the Walsall Anarchists, were in prison, and so, too, was David Nicoll, for his article in the *Commonweal* denouncing Justice Hawkins, when Sam Mainwaring made his way back to his native Wales.

In the '80's and early '90's London was undoubtedly the centre of revolutionary thought and action in this country, and this being so the return to Wales was nothing less to a person of his temperament than a species of self-inflicted exile. The eagerness with which he welcomed the chance to return to London a few years later is proof that he himself regarded these years as a sort of banishment. This does not mean that he remained inactive or silent during this time. The nature of the man—his exuberant enthusiasm and his fighting quality—precluded any such possibility. An amusing incident that occurred during his first few months' exile spent in the Rhondda Valley, and related to the writer by an engineer who worked with him at this time, illustrates what manner of man Sam Mainwaring was at this period of his life. Taking their accustomed Sunday evening walk along the one main street the little mining town boasted, he observed to his companion that there were quite a number of idle strollers like themselves, and that such a good opportunity should not be wasted. So saying he mounted a low wall at a street corner and proceeded to give the amazed strollers a vigorous half-hour's harangue on the evils of the present system and the workers' duty to themselves. Finished, he stepped down, and, continuing the stroll, said to his companion who had loyally stood by the whole time (a rare display of moral courage in that town and in those days), "There! I feel better now."

During the ten months spent in this place he held many informal classes in economics in the clubroom of a local inn, but the work on which he was engaged having come to an end he was forced once more to move on. He settled finally in Swansea, and here his wife and family joined him, and to all appearances his connection with London was finally broken.

Swansea in 1893, although a comparatively large town, had no forward Labour movement of any kind. There were, it is true, a few isolated individuals who had belonged to a branch of the S.D.F. at a neighbouring town, and there was at least one philosophical Anarchist, a local bookseller; but for all else the town was barren and promised but sterile ground for the growth of revolutionary ideas, yet in a very short time Mainwaring had formed a group of eager inquirers and sympathetic minds which ultimately developed into the Swansea Socialist Society. This was by no means an Anarchist organisation, but the platform was so catholic, the organisation so free from cut-and-dried dogma, that it performed very useful work in breaking up what was practically virgin soil. By the end of 1894 this body had managed to erect a hall of its own—Liberty Hall—and was engaged in a strenuous propaganda campaign. So strenuous and persistent was this campaign that Mainwaring once more found himself in the throes of a free speech fight, and his clash with the authorities resulted in a fine and heavy costs.

In January, 1894, James Tochatti started publishing his monthly paper, *Liberty*. Tochatti had been a member of the Hammersmith branch of the Socialist League, and had travelled the same road as so many of the League members—towards Anarchist Communism—so that his paper, when it appeared, was avowedly an Anarchist-Communist journal. It was pushed most whole-heartedly in Swansea and South Wales generally by Tochatti's old comrade, and a great deal of the work accomplished at that time can be put to the credit of Tochatti's well-got-up and excellent monthly.

William Morris had contributed a long article to the February issue of *Liberty*, and for the sake of historical accuracy it is needful to point out that he had travelled a very different road to most of his old Leaguers. So different that he writes in the course of this same article: "They [the workers] will at last form a widespread and definite Socialist Party, which will by using the vote wrest from the present possessing classes the means," etc.; and, again: "I am opposed to Anarchism because it forbids the use of this method."

In the spring of 1896 Mainwaring was offered work in London, and the eagerness with which he accepted the offer shows how keenly he felt the severance of the old ties and how glad he was to get back to the scenes of his earlier days in the movement. This work was in Silvertown, so that 1896 finds him settled in West Ham. He found a vastly different

London to the one he had left a few years previously. David Nicoll was in Sheffield; Joe Lane had had a very serious breakdown and all his old associates were forbidden to trouble him; Morris had retired from the movement (he died in the November of that year); Mowbray was in America; and very many of the old League had disappeared into private life. Some, it is true, were still active, notably Frank Kitz; Tom Cantwell, with E. Young, was engaged printing FREEDOM, setting up the paper, and printing it on the old hand press still to be seen on the ground floor of the offices. But he found, instead of the old comrades and the old movement, new associates who were engaged in actively propagating Anarchist ideas. A strong group was soon at work in West Ham, where the usual open-air meetings were the chief feature. Anarchists and Anarchism were very much in the public eye in the '90's owing to the "propaganda by deed" which was periodically startling and frightening country after country; and Mainwaring found that though it had needed physical as well as moral courage to call oneself a Socialist in the 80's, to avow oneself an Anarchist in the '90's required still greater courage. Despite all this, three years saw the flood-tide of Anarchist agitation in this country, and he flung himself into the fight with the same enthusiasm and expenditure of self that had marked his entry into the revolutionary arena some twenty years before.

Meanwhile, in 1897 the engineers' strike for the eight-hour day, after lasting for six months, had resulted in a defeat for the men, mainly, if not wholly, due to the treachery of the self-styled leaders; and Mainwaring, now domiciled at Ponders End, published a leaflet advocating his scheme of co-operative workshops to be run by the Trade Union concerned. This, in the autumn of 1897, is surely the first attempt in this country at constructive Syndicalism. He continued to interest himself in Union affairs, and just about this time became a member of the London Trades Council. In 1901 he helped to set up the Barcelona Strike Committee and worked hard to place as many of the Spanish Trade Union refugees in positions as he could, and it was in connection with this matter that he and Tarrida del Marmol journeyed to Wales some time in 1902 to settle differences that had arisen between the Spanish and native workers at the Dowlais Iron Works.

Keen as he was all his life for Trade Unionism, this movement of itself could not absorb his energies or satisfy his restless endeavours towards realising a better state of society, so (although at an age when many good men lay down their weapons to let younger men carry on the fight) some time in 1903, with Manubens and others, he started the International Group of Correspondence. The aim of this Group was to keep in touch by means of correspondence with all known exponents of Libertarian thought throughout the world. Latin America was the especial care of Manubens, and I believe the best results were achieved in that direction. October of the same year saw the publication of the *General Strike*.

The publication of this paper was at once the most forlorn fight of Mainwaring's life and the bravest. In "Why We Appear," in the first number it is stated that the correspondence arising out of the activities of the International Group of Correspondence had become so heavy, it being found impossible to reply to all, it was decided to issue the *General Strike* as a means of communication, but chiefly to familiarise the workers with the idea that direct action is the only remedy for their grievances and that legislation is a will-o'-the-wisp which they can never depend upon.

The paper was originally issued as a monthly at a half-penny, but at the end of the third month publication was suspended owing to lack of support. Another attempt was made the following February, this time at one penny, the manifesto of the *General Strike* being written by Kropotkin and Brown. This attempt had even less success. The paper with its slogan of "Watch Your Leaders" was undoubtedly too strong meat at that time for the ordinary Trade Unionists, and, perhaps what is more to the point, was too definitely Anarchist in tone and outlook.

It was his last fight. Just a couple of years of comparative inactivity remained before his death, which took place in September, 1907. A fighter all his life, he died suddenly while speaking at a meeting on Parliament Hill. Physically strong, he gave all his strength outside that demanded by his daily work to the workers' cause, and this from early manhood to the day of his death. Never a seeker after "jobs," he was always to be found where there was work to be done, and, always on the unpopular side, was in very truth a fighter of Forlorn Hopes.

W. M.

P.S.—The year of his birth was 1841, not 1848, as stated in the first instalment.

U.S. Government's War Propaganda.

A few weeks back the press was full of statements showing the strained relations between the Governments of the United States and Mexico, but few realised that this was propaganda put out officially by the Government of the United States. Yet this is proven up to the hilt by an article in a capitalist paper, the *Philadelphia Sunday Transcript*, written by Clement H. Congdon. He says:—

"I charge the President of the United States with deliberately attempting to pollute the press of the world through established news agencies, including the Associated Press.

"I charge the President of the United States with deliberately using the high offices, the diplomatic agencies, the wealth and the armed power of these United States in an effort to array the world against the Republic of Mexico, where corrupting American interests plan to profit in the billions."

To substantiate these charges he says: "Here is precisely what occurred on Tuesday, November 16, 1926, in Washington:—

"Soon after ten o'clock Tuesday morning each of the Washington offices of the several news agencies, including the Associated Press, was called on the telephone by the State Department and the responsible managers of these news bureaus were directed to call, in person, at the offices of the Hon. Robert E. Olds, Assistant Secretary of State.

"These invitations, or directions, to call upon Assistant Secretary Olds were conveyed through the office of one Hugh R. Wilson, who is listed on the pay-roll of the Department of State as the person in charge of 'the Division of Current Information.' Wilson's title means nothing except that he is the press agent or mouthpiece of the Department of State in his relationships with the newspapers of the world represented at Washington.

"Hugh R. Wilson, later on, made definite engagements for all the managers of all the nationally recognised news associations to meet Assistant Secretary of State Olds in secret conference at 11.30 o'clock Tuesday morning, November 16, and they did so meet Mr. Olds at the time and place agreed upon.

"At that time, at that place and in the most exact language an American can utter, the Assistant Secretary of State, Robert E. Olds, most deliberately proposed that these responsible agents of the great news distributing agencies of the United States, including the Associated Press, should set about to poison the minds of the American people against Mexico by comprehensive and inspired propaganda for which the Department of State would *not* be in any official way responsible.

"The news men were stunned by the proposition. Only one had the poise and courage to protest, saying:

"Our association does not manufacture news. You give us no base upon which to rest news if there is any, nor a hook upon which to hang the propaganda fakes you want us to write without telling us why we are to write and distribute them."

"In reply the Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Olds, said: 'Can't you men and your agencies say that the influence and the powers of the United States are being seriously abridged in Central and in South America by the activities of Mexico?'

"We have reason to believe that Mexico is the focal point from which radiates most, if not all, of the "Socialistic and Bolshevik" propaganda now flooding the Western Hemisphere. Mexico is fast becoming Communistic.

"Out of Mexico come "Red" doctrines and "Red" organising groups. Mexico is openly aiding revolutionists in Nicaragua and Mexico now has potential voice in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and, obviously, in Nicaragua.

"This is an important problem of State. The United States is face to face with this issue. We must meet it with more decision at this time than discretion might impose upon us and, to this end, the Administration asks that you gentlemen create a news situation that will turn the people of America against Mexico and prevent Mexico from being heard through the American press."

"One of the startled news executives blurted out:

"But what about our newspapers; about those who depend upon us for accuracy and the news?'

"Communism is a National Peril here now. It has its origin in Mexico and we must stamp out Communism wherever it crops out and whenever it comes to our notice. We rely upon the American press to accomplish this end," replied Mr. Olds.

"Mr. Olds seemed quite oblivious to the fact that he was asking the great news distributing agencies of these United States to deliberately manufacture propaganda looking to *war* with Mexico and the small Latin-American republics which, for a century, have been taught to believe that the United States was a neutral power if not always a very definite and outspoken friend consistently maintaining the Monroe doctrine in all matters affecting South American republics.

"When this phase of the matter was more directly presented to Assistant Secretary of State Olds he suavely indicated that exigencies of State compelled new and more subtle methods to-day, as a post-war plan of procedure, than the older and more open diplomacy common to American negotiations made possible.

"'But it's none of our business,' persisted one of the elder news managers, 'and my chiefs in New York will want to know the exact origin of this propaganda. Do you mean to say that I can't tell my own chiefs that the State Department inspired the campaign?'

"Precisely that. You can tell nobody; none."

Here we have the whole plan laid bare, and the articles which appeared in the English press show that, in spite of the protests of some of the journalists present at this interview, this propaganda put out by the Government of the United States was published broadcast in an attempt to rush the people into war with Mexico. If at the present moment the war cloud has passed, it is due to the American people and not to the President of the United States. A similar propaganda against China has flooded the British press in the last few weeks, and it is quite possible that Downing Street has been responsible for most of it.

Dictatorship in Egypt.

When Zaglul Pasha was struggling for the independence of Egypt, the people fought with him against British Imperialism. Then he was a national hero, a revolutionist, and was several times imprisoned. To-day, as Prime Minister, he has become Dictator and a renegade to the principles of Liberty which he championed in the past.

A comrade recently in Egypt sends us some details of the persecution and tyranny now rampant there. Many Anarchists, Communists, and Socialists are now in prison. Our comrade Flosny-El-Araby (who translated Kropotkin's "Appeal to the Young" into Arabic, 12,000 being distributed) has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment; Sh. Polack got three years; and several other young Egyptian comrades got sentences ranging from three to five years. About 150 men and women were expelled from the country. Zaglul is far more tyrannical with his fellow Moslems than his predecessor, General Allenby. He goes to the Mosque regularly every Friday, like the rest of a small clique of Pashas who exploit the 13,000,000 inhabitants of the country, who are promised Paradise when they are dead, but many of whom are now suffering the tortures of a hell on earth.

Zaglul Pasha is following in the footsteps of all revolutionaries who seek power. Immediately they have got that power, they become reactionary, conservative. This man, who was elected by the votes of an overwhelming majority of his countrymen, now wields the whip as vigorously as any of the Dictators in Europe. The cries of "Liberty!" with which he deluded his followers are now hushed, and reaction rules for the time being.

The younger generation of Egyptians, however, are beginning to see through all the machinations of politics and religion. They realise that Mahomet died long ago, and that Allah will not bring them the Millennium. They begin to speak in a different manner to their fathers, and are determined to work for a new and better life here and now rather than wait for a shadowy Paradise in the hereafter. The time is ripening for great changes in Egypt, and the young generation is knocking at the door.

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Robots or Men?

It is our great task to spread abroad the truth that freedom is Life's basic law. That truth is indisputable, and its validity is not affected by the fact that powerful vested interests deny it, or that the masses are still largely unconscious of its supreme importance. We know, alike as the result of scientific investigation and from our daily experience, that when Life is deprived of freedom to develop it sickens and dies. The plant must be free to extend its roots and absorb the food needed for its existence. The organ that is put out of use withers into impotence and finally expires. The brain that is forbidden to think on certain subjects becomes, to that extent, dead. In all such cases Life is killed, and those who are responsible for these assassinations of freedom are murderers. Indeed, when viewed from the standpoint of that development of vital forces which is Evolution's sovereign aim, the ordinary murderer is a saint as compared with him who conspires to strangle truth. For something like fifteen hundred years the Church, caring only for the maintenance of the dogmas on which her power rested, suppressed the discovery that the earth was round and in perpetual rotation. Measure if you can the woes inflicted on humanity by that suppression!

Furthermore, the fact that the masses as a whole hold freedom in slight esteem should not discourage us. In the main they are still desperately afraid of freedom, and necessarily so, inasmuch as for centuries untellable they have been taught that if they give their thought, their natural instincts, their passions, a free rein, they will be plunged into ruin in this world and perdition in the next. That is still the teaching. "Be afraid of yourself," is the united cry, "and see to it that you hold your unruly passions in full check. Keep a watch on your thought, and do not venture into waters too deep for you. Play for safety, and remember that security comes with obedience and order, while liberty easily degenerates into licence and is full of danger." What teaching could be better adapted to ward off change and permit the few who have gorged themselves at the expense of the many to rest in peace?

"Theirs not to reason why; theirs but to do and die." This is the idea of every ruler, from Arch-Dictators of the Lenin-Mussolini type to the pettiest Jack-in-Office. A well-tamed, thoroughly-disciplined, submissive army of workers, who may be relied on not to take the bit between their teeth or kick over the traces, however brutally they may be fleeced. Men and women who will count respectability the highest virtue; who will strip themselves of all individuality, because "we are all members of one social body," and he who wanders from the beaten track disturbs the serenity of the procession; tailors' dummies whose real religion is "good form"; cogs in a gigantic wheel kept in motion by the superior few. In a word, a race of Robots.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the practical question is always: "What are we getting out of this?" Here, in England, we have as our reward a powerful landed aristocracy, possessed of certain barbaric virtues which have still a high survival value, but devoted exclusively to physical and social pleasures; strongly disinclined to intellectual studies, which it holds secretly in much contempt; full of admiration for the antique, on which it spends profusely and completely out of touch with modern thought. Back of this upper circle an enormous army of lackeys, from the legal and

clerical retainers who guard their masters' interests in the law courts and House of Commons, and teach the proletariat submissiveness, to the humbler servitors who patrol the game preserves, look after the stables, and wait behind the chairs.

Next in order comes the upper bourgeoisie, wedded to comfort, respectability, and money-making; the so-called "practical business men," who think only in small parcels, and are almost completely barren of general ideas. Below this class the lower bourgeoisie, struggling desperately for survival and, therefore, slavishly subservient to those on whom they depend for that credit without which they could not exist. And lastly the British worker as you see him; driftwood at the mercy of strong currents he is powerless to control. Having been always in leading strings he has lost all capacity for going it alone, and no sheep ever followed the bell-wether more trustingly than he does. He swallows all the current slogans greedily, for they save him trouble of thought. If he is a railwayman he pins his faith to Thomas, and if he is a miner he swears by Cook, although the former is probably more conservative than Mr. Baldwin and the latter a devoted worshipper at Moscow's shrine. According to an eminent and conservative authority, 72 per cent. of our wage-earners are out of work in certain of our Northern districts; but they have not the slightest idea as to what they can do about it, and will merely set their teeth, draw their dole, and drag on hopelessly.

This country at present is locked up, and until a general unlocking is effected things will go steadily from bad to worse. Bars must come down, but it is not the monopolists who will remove them. Riders must be unhorsed, but they are not going to dismount because we ask them. It is the disinherited, the swarming millions of wage-workers, not one of whom has ever had as yet a decent show, who will have to supply the needed force; but this they will not and cannot do until they themselves have put on their thinking caps and found for themselves the road to freedom.

"Open thine eyes to see,
Slave, and thy feet are free;
Thy bonds and thy beliefs are one in kind,
And of thy fears thine irons wrought
Hang weights upon thee fashioned out of thine own thought."

W. C. O.

SACCO AND VANZETTI.

The fate of our comrades Sacco and Vanzetti is still hanging in the balance, but even after seven years of anxiety they are holding their heads up, knowing that their innocence has been proved to the world. Yet they are under no illusions as to the unscrupulousness of their enemies. In a letter to Leonard D. Abbott, published in the *Road to Freedom*, Vanzetti writes:—

"The reasons why I believe that we shall never have a new trial is because the framers and the higher authorities, who are refusing it, know that we would beat the case. To them, to give us a new, impartial trial would be a self-admission that we were framed; we would not only be acquitted, but their frame-up would be revealed to the world by the unfolding of the new trial. Overmore, there is something even more dreadful than the unmasking, to our murderers: namely, our freedom. We have resisted and challenged every pain, every danger, every sorrow, every anguish—an agony of seven years, with fearlessness, grimness, and dignity. We have not renegated our faith, we have not shown repentance of our heresy, we have not faked to return to civil and religious orthodoxy. We remained Anarchists; we have not cast down our heads before the enemies; we have looked into their eyes and compelled them to cast their heads down.

"Now, what should a murderer, capable to do what Judge Thayer has done to us, believe that his victims would do against him, if he were freed?

"It is for these two reasons that we have been denied a new trial and will be denied of everything. Our enemies know full well that such a way is the only possible way to beat and to eliminate us. And I am surprised that none of those who talk of the case have stated these two reasons, the fundamental truth. It should not be hidden but highly proclaimed.

In the June-July issue of FREEDOM last year we wrote: "The release of these men would be a condemnation of the police authorities who faked the evidence; consequently they will stick at nothing to send them to the executioner." And in spite of the overwhelming evidence of our comrades' innocence, we believe the influence of the police will prevent their release even if they escape the electric chair. The prestige of the Law must be upheld at all costs.

Facts About Russian Trade Unions.

The severe criticism of British Trade Union Leaders by Messrs. Tomsy and Losovsky, with which we are all familiar, would lead one to suppose that Russian Trade Unions had reached an ideal stage of perfection. A. J. Cook, after his visit to Russia, is also convinced on that point. Interviewed on his arrival home, he said the Russian Trade Unions were on a far more democratic basis than here, and their domination of the Soviet was complete. In the debates which he attended at the Trades Union Congress, there was entire freedom of speech.

Let us see what some Russian Trade Union leaders themselves say as to conditions in the Unions and as to freedom for the workers under the Communist Dictatorship. The following facts are taken from *Industrial and Labour Information* (7/9/25), published by the International Labour Office.

In July, 1925, the Central Council of Russian Trade Unions issued a circular dealing with the lack of contact between the Trade Unions and the working class caused by very serious irregularities and defects in Trade Union organisation. In the same month Mr. Andreiev, chairman of the Railwaymen's Union and secretary of the Central Trade Union Council, in a speech before the leaders of his Union, set out the chief defects from which Russian Trade Unionism is suffering. He said that the officials have lost all contact with the working masses, and have ceased to feel any responsibility towards them. They have confined themselves to carrying out the orders of the higher Trade Union or Communist organisations, and acknowledge no responsibility except to such organisations. Serious labour disputes, followed by strikes, which took place in certain large-scale State undertakings in the spring of 1925 were due to the bureaucratic spirit and inertia of the Union officials. Owing to the absence of any serious control, "the embezzlement of Trade Union funds," says the Central Council in its circular, "has increased considerably and is still increasing," and is encouraged by the too benevolent attitude of Works Councils and Central Trade Union Committees towards the guilty parties. We will quote now from *Industrial and Labour Information*, which gives all the authorities for its statements:

"The lack of understanding displayed by the trade unions with regard to the wishes and requirements of the workers, the authoritarian and uncompromising attitude of the trade union leaders, together with the arbitrary manner in which the trade unions are conducted, has led to the result that the workers have entirely lost interest in their occupational organisation. In this connection it is symptomatic that not more than 50 per cent. of members pay their contributions. General meetings are as a rule very poorly attended. It is extremely rare to find more than 15 per cent. of the total number of members attending them.

"To the reasons given above may also be added the fact that the agenda is generally overloaded with questions of secondary importance, or with questions which have no connection with the immediate requirements of the worker, such as discussions on problems of world politics, on chemical warfare, etc.

"This situation (continues Mr. Andreiev) has been aggravated by the fact that, in the great majority of cases, the elections to trade union organisations (and especially to Works Councils) are confined to the mere formality of accepting the official list, and there is no opportunity for the general meeting to discuss candidatures. The list is passed *en bloc* without any individual presentation of candidates. The outgoing committee does not always submit a report on its administration to the general meeting, and when a report is submitted it passes over in silence anything that might be awkward for itself. Trade unionists who endeavour to exercise their right of criticism are met with reprisals, which sometimes go so far as to exclude them from the union, and this generally means that they lose their employment. In these circumstances, the general meetings of workers are flat and uninteresting. Proceedings are confined to the mere reading of the report and to the adoption without opposition of all motions submitted.

"A yet more serious feature of the situation is that in certain State undertakings the Works Councils appear to forget that they are trade union organisations, created for the defence of members, and connive at all the acts of the management, even if such acts are against the interests of the workers. This is particularly noticeable in wage questions, as also in the case of the dismissal of workers who are 'undesirable' from the point of view of the management.

"There have been cases in which Works Councils have,

in agreement with the management, threatened workers on strike with a lock-out. Again, Works Councils indiscriminately approve of piece-rates proposed by the management. This often leads to a fall in wages.

"The Central Trade Union Council states that these facts have shown that the organisations the duty of which is to defend the interests of the workers are not competent to carry out their work. The tendency of Works Councils to become organs of the management is, in the opinion of the Central Council, likely to lead to a dangerous relaxation of the bonds between them and the workers. The workers come to consider the Works Council as a creature of the management.

"One great evil, which has had no small effect in alienating the workers from the Unions, is the abuse of the so-called 'voluntary contribution.' By means of resolutions passed by trade union committees, by Works Councils, or even by plenary meetings of trade unions, the workers are compelled to become members of a number of public organisations, such as the Association for the Promotion of an Aerial Fleet, the Association for the Development of Chemical Warfare, the Association for the International Support of Revolutionary Parties, etc. These associations sometimes absorb between 10 and 12 per cent. of the wages of the workers."

If more evidence is required as to the attitude of the officials (overwhelmingly Communist) towards the workers, we have the appeal of three of the most important members of the Soviet Government—President Rykov, M. Stalin, and M. Kuibysheff—published in *Pravda*, and reprinted in the *Daily Herald* (24/8/26). They say:

"The régime of economy proclaimed nearly a year ago remains a farce. . . . While petty economy is being enforced at the workers' expense, the establishments maintain swollen staffs and the higher officials receive bonuses, increase their own salaries, give themselves everlasting travelling commissions, receive advances which they do not refund, exploit the official motor-cars for private purposes, and so on and so on. Such abuses have created hostility among the workmen towards the principle of economy, inducing them not to increase the productivity of labour." The signatories appealed for a reform of these abuses.

If the workers cannot control their Trade Unions, it is foolish to talk of them "dominating the Soviet," as Mr. Cook says. At the Congress of the Russian Trade Unions in December, at which he was present, Mr. Tomsy said that as regards wages the Central Council of the Unions had consistently acted on the indications of the Communist Party and "subordinated the interests of the workers to the interests of the State." Another speaker said: "The State fixes by decree the numbers and categories of employees in each undertaking, as well as the wage attached to each category. In these circumstances it is impossible for the Trade Union to discuss the matter, and the labour agreement arrived at by free discussion ceases to exist."

The State is everything, the worker nothing. The State in Russia is the Communist Party, and we have no doubt that the officials who boss Unions and embezzle the funds are the loudest in proclaiming themselves "humble disciples of Lenin" and the sturdiest supporters of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." What we can never understand is why British Labour visitors to Russia find it necessary to tell us tales of the conditions of the workers in that country which are flatly contradicted by the official reports of the Russian Government.

The "Workers' Friend" Republished.

After a lapse of several years, the Jewish Anarchist journal, the *Workers' Friend* (*Arbeiter Freund*), as it was known here in London, has been reissued by our Jewish comrades in Paris, who have recognised the need of an organ for the propagation of Anarchist ideas amongst the Jewish workers at home and abroad, and to combat the Bolshevik reaction which has worked such havoc with the cause of Freedom. It will not be out of place here to quote from Comrade T. H. Keell's letter to the "Workers' Friend" Group, London:—

"I am very sorry not to be able to attend the Social to-night to celebrate the re-issue of the *Arbeiter Freund*. Owen lives in Sussex, and very seldom comes to London. It is unfortunate that neither of us could be present to show our comradeship with your Group in the new venture. I am sure I can speak for Owen in sending you our best wishes for the success of the *Arbeiter Freund*, and hope it may have a long run and stir up interest in Anarchist ideas among the Jewish workers. Our propaganda is in such a sad state that any change must be for the better, otherwise we might as well shut up shop and leave it for another generation to revive the belief in Freedom. Although often disappointed, I was always an optimist, looking for a turn of the tide soon, and so I shall continue to hope for it in the future."

An appeal is made to all Jewish comrades to subscribe to the journal and also to send along donations for its upkeep, as the economic position of our comrades in France will not enable them to maintain the journal by their own efforts.

The annual subscription is 2s. 6d. in Europe, and \$1.00 in America. All communications and cash should be addressed: Pour "Arbeiter Freund," Librairie Internationale, 72, Rue des Prairies, Paris (20), France.—E.M.

"FREEDOM'S" BIRTHDAY FUND.

The following sums have been received to date Feb. 10):—Previously acknowledged, £60 10s. 5d.—J. R. Armstrong 7s. 6d., G. Wickel 8s. 2d., C. E. S. Wood £1, Sara Bard Field £1, H. Briner 4s. 9d., A. J. R. 10s., Julia A. Nielson 12s., C. Blandy 2s. 6d., L. G. Wolfe 5s., A. D. Moore 5s., J. Haining 1s., Anarchist Comrades of Boston, Mass. (per F. E. Henry) £10 16s. 8d., G. W. Tindale 2s., V. Garcia 2s. 6d., A. E. Lavers 2s. 6d. Total £76 10s.

Lecture Tour of S. Marcus.

The "Relief Society for Political Prisoners in Russia" of Detroit, Michigan, have arranged a lecture tour with comrade Sh. Marcus, who will begin the tour from New York and cover all the cities of the United States and Canada wherever groups and individual comrades will be able to arrange one or more lectures. Marcus is giving his services free; only travelling expenses between each city will be reimbursed. The money raised by the lectures and debates will go exclusively for helping the imprisoned and persecuted Anarchists in Russia as well as in other countries. These are the subjects on which Marcus is prepared to talk:—The Individual and Society; The State and Slavery; Anarchist Communism and Individualist Anarchism; Can Present Society be Changed?; Free-thought in the World's Literature; Anarchism and the Russian Revolution; Why Are There Political Prisoners in Russia?; Can Punishment Eradicate Crime?; Anarchism and the Labour Movement.

Wherever Marcus will stop one of the lectures to be arranged should be "Why Are There Political Prisoners in Russia?" If it will be possible to arrange debates with Bolsheviks, Marcus will be ready to meet any of their speakers on either of these two subjects: Has the Revolution in Russia Failed? Are All the Political Prisoners in Russia Counter-Revolutionists?

Groups and individuals who desire to arrange lectures or debates should write to M. Tananko, 1461 Sheridan Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. The latest date for comrades to arrange lectures or debates will be March 10. Cities close to New York should write at the earliest, in order to have ample time for arranging the lectures.

PRINTED PAGES.

"A Dream of John Ball."

We are pleased to receive from Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. a copy of "A Dream of John Ball and A King's Lesson," by William Morris, which they are now issuing in paper covers at the price of 1s. 6d. We have been surprised that a cheap edition of this book was not issued before. In "A Dream of John Ball," Morris was at his very best. His graphic descriptions of the Peasants' Revolt and the beautiful words he puts into the mouth of the "Mad Priest of Kent" enable us to visualise those stirring times as few writers have done. And when in his dream he tells John Ball of the great improvements in the productivity of our days, and says the workers will still be slaves of the masters, he shows how incredible it seems to the priest. But in spite of all, Morris ends on a note of hope. "Yet shall all bring about the end, till thy deeming of folly and ours shall be one, and thy hope and our hope; and then—the Day will have come." The "King's Lesson" has also a lesson for the workers.

In Memory of Elisee and Elie Reclus.

The Oriole Press announce the forthcoming publication of "Elisee and Elie Reclus: In Memoriam." It will include tributes, appreciations, and essays by Elie Faure, Prof. Albert Heim, Jean Grave, Havelock Ellis, Max Nettlau, Bernard Lazare, Peter Kropotkin, Patrick Geddes, Jacques Mesnil, Anne Cobden-Sanderson, and many other important contributors. Also fragments and letters, and sixty woodcuts by Louis Moreau. This book has been compiled and edited by Joseph Ishill, who is also responsible for the printing and binding.

Those who remember the artistic appearance of the book, "Peter Kropotkin," which was published a few years ago, and which Joseph Ishill printed and bound entirely by hand, will wish to secure a copy of this book by the same splendid craftsman.

The edition is limited to 290 copies, of which only 230 are for sale. Advance subscription is \$8.00 per copy. After May 15 the price will be \$10.00. Subscriptions should be sent to JOSEPH ISHILL, Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, U.S.A.

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