



Freedom

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NOTES.

The War Against Revolution.

At last the Allied capitalists have determined to defy the workers who are opposed to intervention in Russia, and new and stronger forces are to be sent to Archangel and the Murmansk Coast at once. The excuses given for sending troops there last year were false, and the new excuse, that those troops are in danger is also false. The fact is the rulers recognise the danger to capitalism in the spread of Bolshevik ideas, the revolution in Hungary having put them in a fearful panic, and they hope to stop the danger by striking at the source in Petrograd and Moscow. The revolutionists in France, Italy and Great Britain must accept this challenge and act without delay. If the Russian revolution is crushed, all other revolutions will be crushed in turn.

The "Triple Alliance."

As we expected, the threatened strike of miners, railwaymen and transport workers has been staved off by compromise on both sides, although the final vote has not yet been taken. The miners get 2s. a day increase from February 1, with a seven-hour day in July, the six-hour day to come into force next year—perhaps; the transport workers have got an increase in wages and a reduction of hours; and the railwaymen have obtained a few small concessions, but their claim for the war bonus pay to be made permanent was refused. There was a strong demand for a strike to enforce the point, but J. H. Thomas, who always acts as a lightning conductor on these occasions, stepped into the breach and saved the situation for the Government. Bonar Law repeated the threat made earlier in the dispute by Lloyd George, thereby causing much indignation amongst Labour men in the House. In reality, however, he stated a simple fact when he said that in the event of a strike all the resources of the State would be utilised to win, and to win quickly. That is done in all large strikes, and in the big railway strike in 1912 Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary, flooded the railways with troops. The State is organised and controlled by the capitalists and financiers to protect their own interests, and they use it ruthlessly when they think it necessary. Bonar Law challenged the Triple Alliance to strike, and they declined as they were not prepared for revolution; the time is rapidly approaching, however, when a revolutionary situation will arise, and then the Alliance must fight or be crushed. To ensure success, they will have to get rid of some of those leaders who are always taking the capitalists' side in their labour disputes, and who are now looking forward to nice soft jobs when nationalisation takes place.

Conscription and the C.O.s.

The damnably inhuman treatment of the C.O.s must end. It is impossible to believe that the Government will be allowed to continue to send men to prison on repeated sentences for the same offence until their health breaks down, then release them to recuperate, and re-arrest them when it is supposed they are fit to undergo another period of torture. Some have been killed and others driven insane by their constant imprisonment, and we think the time has now come when petitions are useless and some more drastic methods necessary to secure their release and to prevent further victims being secured. The new Conscription Bill now passing through the House of Commons must be defeated, and we are glad to see that the Miners' Federation "proposes to take such steps in conjunction with the organised Labour movement, both political and industrial, as will compel its withdrawal." We hope this is not one of those pious resolutions, forgotten as soon as passed, which hinder rather than help agitation. The fact that the Government cannot raise a voluntary Army, even with higher pay and bonuses, is sufficient proof that the soldiers are "fed up" with Army life, and could easily be persuaded to join an agitation against Conscription. To take young men and force them into the Army, to be sent to kill in all parts of the world, is opposed to all our ideas of the value of personal liberty and dignity, and the people who tolerate it proclaim themselves a nation of slaves. Let the Miners' Federation act in the terms of

their resolution, and we are certain they will be surprised at the amount of support they will get in sweeping away this vile and cursed thing—Conscription.

The Government's decision to release all C.O.'s who have served two years in prison is not enough; it means that every C.O. must submit to two years torture before he can prove his objection to military service. And those released will still be liable to be called up again under the new Army Act. Conscription must go!

The Unemployed and the Land.

With a world waiting to be rebuilt after the orgie of destruction of the past four and a half years, we find considerably over a million men and women with no work to do. That fact alone is sufficient to condemn the capitalist system. Half of Europe starving, yet we find idle men and idle land everywhere in this country. Why? Because the landlords whom we have allowed to seize the land in the past refuse to allow it to be put into cultivation until they are sure of making a profit out of a tenant. The men who suffered the discomfort of the trenches and "went over the top" against the enemy, in the belief that they were thereby saving "their" country from invasion, now come back and find the old "Trespassers will be prosecuted" boards in the same places as when they left. They wander through the country and see that nothing has changed during their absence. The land that was to be made "fit for heroes" is still fenced off from the workers by Lord Rackrent or Sir George Midas, whose game preserves must be kept intact though heroes starve. But it is not the wooden fences or the barbed wire that keep the workers off the land but their slavish worship of the musty old Acts of Parliament and title-deeds by which the landlords legalised their robbery of the land. The men who charged the Germans regardless of machine-guns and high explosive shells now bow the knee to the landlords at home, and in some cases even help to protect them from those who would rid the country of such parasites. This reverence for laws is a greater obstacle to change than bayonets.

Mr. Brownlie and Mr. Windsor (late Wettin).

The friendly feeling between all classes, brought about by the Great War, is illustrated in a striking manner by the frequent visits of Labour leaders to Buckingham Palace. It makes one realise how near is that happy time when the class war will be forgotten and the industrial magnate will work side by side at the bench with his late employees. Quite recently Mr. Brownlie, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, strolled along and called in to see George, who "wanted information about the course of Labour events." After George had told him to be "absolutely frank," Mr. Brownlie explained that he "had been a Socialist for a quarter of a century, and that he thought the time had come for a great and historical change in social and industrial conditions." Fancy that! But it seems, according to Mr. Brownlie, that George knew all that and much more. "He showed that he had studied and understood the various tendencies and movements of Labour in Europe, and that he knew much about its leaders." So Mr. Brownlie told him all about his friends (?) the shop stewards, and also about a wonderful agreement with the employers which had stood the test of twenty years, and been of mutual advantage to both parties. (Vickers made record profits during the war.) "I am not a Bolshevik, and I explained to his Majesty the difference between that Anarchist creed and the resolute progressive effort of Trade Unionism to secure the improvement of living conditions for the mass by constitutional means. But I made it quite clear to the King, I think, that I would rather waste five years of my life in prison than sacrifice the workers' right to the retention of the strike weapon." Someone who was not present says the King roared with laughter at this joke, because he remembered the Munitions Act, under which all the members of Mr. Brownlie's Union were liable to imprisonment and fine if they went on strike. Really, Brownlie, old chap, you ought to appear at the Palladium in a new sketch, "How I Ticked George," with tickets half-price for A.S.E. members.

FACTS ABOUT RUSSIA.

(Not to be found in White Papers)

The success of the Hungarian Socialists in establishing a Soviet Republic based on the dictatorship of the workers and the immediate alliance of their Republic with Soviet Russia is another welcome and immensely important advance along the road which is rapidly bringing the Social Revolution nearer to Western Europe.

It is reported that a meeting of the full committee of the Austrian Workers' Council, with F. Adler in the chair, was held to consider a message from the Hungarian Socialists inviting them to follow suit and join the Russian-Hungarian Soviet Alliance. It was thought to be impracticable for the moment, as their food supply entirely depends on the Entente; but it was decided "to be ready for all eventualities, and to proceed as rapidly as possible with the development of Soviet organisation." The latter part of their decision can be recommended to English and other Socialists.

Probably Soviet Socialism is already invincible, although our capitalist and Labour politicians seem too blind to see this. Perhaps there is nothing bourgeois governments and parliaments or even their League of Nations can do which could now prevent its spread across the world. But the steady extension of Soviet Russia to its old boundaries, including the Ukraine, South Russia, and the Baltic Provinces, the splendid accession of strength from Hungary, and the continued development towards World Revolution, which is showing itself in all sorts of places, are beginning to make the inevitableness of Social Revolution obvious to even the most obtuse.

When the colossal changes brought about by the Soviets during the last few months in organising in various parts of the world a Socialist type of society are compared with the lack of results gained by orthodox Parliamentary Socialist and Labour parties in any country, the gross impertinence of the resolutions passed by the so-called International Socialist Conference at Berne the other day is apparent. If it were possible to summon up sufficient patience to listen to their lectures to working-class parties on the correct and authorised methods that should be adopted to bring about social changes, or to read these politicians' long-winded resolutions on Bolshevism (which is simply another name for practical Socialism) and similar subjects, no doubt the humour of the situation might strike one and a hearty laugh be got out of it. But unfortunately it has also a tragic side, when Allied troops are shooting and starving Russian peasants and workers in the interests of a brutal reactionary gang of landlord and capitalist politicians; and when the Government of moderate Socialists in Germany is using all the resources of modern militarism, flame-throwers, poison gas, bombs from aeroplanes, big artillery, etc., etc., to maintain their alliance with the militarist bourgeoisie and to crush out every genuine movement amongst the workers to establish Socialism here and now; and when the Allied armies of occupation are everywhere dissolving Soldiers' and Workers' Councils and doing everything possible to bolster up the old and dying system of exploitation and profiteering. Under such circumstances the least that could be expected of any decent body of men and women calling themselves Socialists would be not merely that they should studiously refrain from affording any appearance of a possible justification for these attacks by capitalist governments on Socialist communities, but they should protest all the time as vigorously and effectively as possible against such action, and should refuse to discuss any points of detail on which there might be differences of opinion until capitalist governments had been compelled to withdraw from these attempts at a forcible suppression of the new and better order of things that is growing up. What have the rank and file members of I.L.P. branches to say about the action of their delegates on these points?

Probably but for the hopes of restoration of the old and ever vanished order, which are based on Allied intervention, the small Russian bourgeoisie elements would by now have acquiesced in the new forms of society which all the other elements of Russian life have now accepted, even including the Socialist parties that were most keenly anti-Bolshevik and many of the bourgeoisie intellectuals themselves.

Maxim Gorki has given an account in his paper, the *Noviya Zhizn*, of the orgy of Stock Exchange speculation and company promoting which went on during the Kerensky régime. This enables one to understand the bitter disappointment and anger felt by the exploiting classes at the success of the Bolshevik Revolution eight months later. During the first six months of 1917, 206 companies were floated with a total capital of 467 million roubles. In May and June 105 companies were formed with a total capital of 256 million roubles. In September, on the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, 95 companies were started on their career

with a total capital of 304 million roubles. During the whole of 1915, 34 companies only were formed with a total capital of 40 million roubles. During the whole of 1916 44 companies only were started with a total capital of 48 million roubles.

Accounts have often been given of the terrible amount of unemployment in Russia, which capitalists attribute to the incapacity of the Soviets to organise production rationally. Naturally nothing is ever said about the attempted strangle hold on Russian industry through the Allied blockade and military adventures in various parts of the country. Last August the Moscow *Pravda* gave the unemployed statistics for the district. From February 19 to July 16, 110,804 unemployed were registered; of these 23,203 were still unemployed on July 16. During the first half of July 8,234 unemployed were registered and jobs were found for 5,275. These figures will compare very favourably with English figures of a similar kind. Remember there are a million workers in Great Britain who are at present receiving the utterly inadequate Government out-of-work pay, and that every Russian unemployed worker receives a standard wage until work is found for him or her.

The same paper contained announcements of high-class concerts that were being arranged by the Soviets at which, amongst other well-known artists, Chaliapine, the great Russian singer, with a world-wide reputation (many will remember his visit to England) was to take part. The tickets for these, which were free, were distributed by Trade Unions, Soviet officials, and Workshop Committees, and could only be obtained by workmen. The artistes themselves seem to be very well satisfied with Soviet arrangements.

Colonel John Ward, the Labour Party M.P. for Stoke-on-Trent, has so delighted his capitalist and jingo employers by the brutal reactionary work he has done in Siberia against the Workers' Socialist Republic that they have conferred on him some further titles and "honours." The villainous brutalities he has committed against Russian strikers and labour organisations, and the way in which he has supported the scoundrelly activities of Admiral Koltchak seem to have helped for the moment Allied plans. For instance, they have prevented great accumulations of goods which are lying and rotting in Vladivostok warehouses and custom houses from getting into Soviet Russia, where they are most urgently wanted.

Last October there were sufficient stocks of many articles to supply all Russia; they included 40 million pounds of tea, 10,000 tons of rice, 7,000 tons of coffee and cocoa; thousands of machines, including the urgently needed agricultural machinery, and 600 automobiles. The total stocks of various kinds amounted to about one million tons. There are metal wares, tools, hardware, leather, fats, cotton, jute, preserved milk, chemical drugs, grain, cloth, footwear, timber, electric lamps, etc. It is understood these stocks have largely increased since then. The place is full of profiteers and speculators hoping to make personal gain out of the position. At the other end of the country the Entente has prevented the delivery of 40 million roubles worth of seed from Denmark, which the Soviets had paid for.

But this does not mean that the Entente politicians are indifferent to trade when carried on in the interests of private profiteering. Side by side with John Ward's military performances the English Government established a Siberian Supply Company, through which all goods had to be sent and to which a commission had to be paid on all transactions. It was, of course, a pure accident that this agreement was made with Mr. Leslie Urquhart, well known to our readers as the personal friend of Admiral Koltchak and the promoter of various Siberian mining companies. Russians say the ways of this Government Company are peculiar. Licences have first to be obtained from the War Trading Department, of course, solely for the purpose of seeing that the needs of the Siberian consumers are properly supplied. But fixed prices have been abolished, and such things as a consignment of 20,000 bathing costumes and boots sent in entire ignorance of the needs of the climate have been duly forwarded, and anyway they all pay their commission to the Government Agency, which is this precious company. Siberian co-operators have offered the British Government during the war supplies of butter, both at the Siberian market price and at what it would fetch in England, but the Food Controller seems to have had such a glut of butter on hand that he rejected each offer. Could it be possible that he had friends elsewhere who were in the trade?

In Soviet Russia a different view is taken of co-operation, which has developed in an unheard of way during the last two years. Labour Co-operative Societies in particular have grown enormously. In Moscow the older co-operative societies, open to all, had in June, 1918, 20,000 members; but the more recently founded Labour Co-operative Societies had a membership of 160,000. It seems that the Co-operative Bank at Moscow has now been nationalised and the co-operative societies incorporated into the Soviet organisation, so that the general distribution of

goods takes place almost entirely through co-operative societies, to which the entire population have to belong if they want supplies.

Various developments have taken place in connection with the currency. All capitalist governments during the war have kept themselves going by a huge increase in the amount of paper money issued and in fictitious loans of various kinds which would involve huge yearly payments of interest from the workers to the bondholders for an indefinitely long time if the system was not just about to break up; and all the capitalist daily rags have told us with indignant screams that the Bolsheviks have done the very same thing so far as printing paper money goes, which was gradually becoming valueless. In reality, a considerable amount of direct barter between the producers of various goods has been organised, both by the co-operative societies and the Soviets. Our readers are aware of many cases in all parts of Russia. Another case is that of the Russian Central Union of Consumers' Societies, which organised a boot manufacturing department. At first it tried to get boot leather from America, but then it fell back on an organised effort to purchase raw leather in Russia and also built its own tanneries, organising a special transport service to bring these things to Moscow.

In Zarisk it established a boot factory which soon turned out 10,000 pairs of boots monthly, but as this was quite insufficient it organised Kustari (Co-operative Unions for peasant home industries) for bootmaking. In the Kmiri district alone these Kustari now supply the unions with 50,000 pairs of boots monthly. These peasants do not accept cash in payment, but mostly other goods, such as fish from the union fisheries and salt from the union salt mines.

It seems the Soviets have now decided to abolish money altogether and to replace it with labour tickets. In postal matters the position is simplified by the Russian Post Office conveying all letters and cards up to 15 grammes weight and parcels free. They are making an application to the International Postal Union for the free conveyance of all letters, cards, and parcels from or to Russia and all other parts of the world, and it is understood they have a definite scheme ready for carrying this out. It will be interesting to see what attitude the postal reformers in capitalist countries will adopt towards this proposal. One advantage the Soviets will gain from abolishing money is that they will nip in the bud a scheme reported from America for flooding Russia with forged paper roubles and so destroying their value, a trick played during the French Revolution.

Separate classes of accommodation for passengers on trains, steamers, and other means of transport have now been abolished. There will be only one class in future, but great efforts are to be made to improve railway carriages, etc., so that this one class shall be the very best possible.

The Soviets have everywhere collected the up-to-date agricultural machinery found on landlords' estates and lent it out in turns to the peasant cultivators. But there is a demand for immensely greater quantities of all kinds of agricultural machinery.

The *Nation* for February 15 last contained a very interesting account of the "Red Train." It contained four passenger carriages and three freight trucks of the American pattern, all covered with paintings in gay colours by the studio of the Art Section of the Moscow Soviet. Amongst the paintings were revolutionary mottoes like "Proletarians of all countries unite," "The world for the toilers," "Learn to employ the book, the weapon of thought." It carries 200,000 books, 400,000 pamphlets, 1,000,000 posters, 100,000 newspapers. It is besieged by the peasants from all the surrounding villages whenever it stops at small stations. They are all eager for information. In twelve months three million copies of the Communist Party programme have been sold, and propagandists say they will sell another ten million copies as soon as they can be printed. The train travels over the long Russian steppes spreading Socialist ideas broadcast, but it is utterly inadequate to satisfy the hunger for knowledge that exists on all hands, and already plans are being laid to utilise steamboats, automobiles, aeroplanes, and other means of distributing printed matter amongst the innumerable villages dotted about Russia.

F.C.C.

LONDON DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

In order to assist the wives and children of David Ramsay and W. F. Watson, a London and District Defence and Maintenance Committee has been formed at 7, Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, W.C. Any comrades who are anxious to help the victims of these brutal prosecutions should send along their spare cash to above address, and thus help to defeat the bosses.

"Ireland had suffered from nothing so much during its history as from the broken pledges of British statesmen."—SIR E. CARSON, House of Commons, April 16, 1918

GENERAL STRIKE AT BARCELONA.

Once again Barcelona is the scene of a terrible struggle between the workers and the capitalists. In the last weeks of last year and the first weeks of this year many employers were murdered (some say as many as eighty), the murderers being undiscovered. Several papers, especially the Madrid daily, *El Mundo*, asserted, without any proofs, that these murders were committed by Syndicalists and Anarchists. Acting on these accusations, the Government caused all the well-known militants to be arrested on January 17 and put them on board the warship "Pelayo." The authorities also suppressed *Solidaridad Obrera*, the daily organ of the Workers' National Confederation, and *Tierra y Libertad*, the Anarchist weekly paper. The workers' meeting-places were closed, and everything taken away from the Union's offices.

The Government were determined to execute a number of those arrested in revenge for the murdered employers, but a general strike of the workers compelled them to hold their hand. Some of those arrested had not been active in the Labour movement for some years. The Censor forbids the publication of the names of these victims of Authority, and very few details have appeared in the press.

The principal strike, which was precipitated by the dismissal of eight employees, took place at the works of "La Canadiense," the Canadian company which supplies Barcelona with gas, water and electricity. After the strike had lasted several weeks, with the workers as firm as ever, the Government tried the French trick of mobilising all strikers of military age, and ordering them to work as soldiers. But this time it failed. The Government then altered their tactics. They dismissed the Governor of Barcelona, and the Commissioner of Police resigned. The Prime Minister sent his secretary to negotiate with the imprisoned Syndicalists, and the following terms were agreed to: (1) All strikers to be taken back, including the eight men dismissed; (2) All wages to be increased, varying from 10 to 60 per cent.; (3) An eight-hour day; (4) Wages to be paid in full for the time the strike lasted—that is, from February 1; (5) Minimum wage equal to that paid by other companies; (6) Full wages in cases of accidents; (7) No reprisals. These arrangements were come to with the comrades in prison, who did not insist on their own release; but at the meeting of strikers to which the terms were communicated, their release was demanded, and the press says it was granted.

Martial law was declared in Barcelona to kill the strike, but instead of doing so 22,000 new members were enrolled by the Unions in a very few days. The printers refused to print lies against the workers. (English compositors, take note!) *El Progreso* (Lerroux's paper) and *La Gaceta Catalana* were fined and suspended by the men's Union for publishing news prohibited by them, and will not appear until the fine is paid.

Whilst the "Union General," managed by the Socialists, is weakening (only 88,000 members, according to last official report), the fighting "Confederation General" has over 200,000 members, and expects to number 500,000 by the time the next Congress is held (in May or June).

Since receiving the above facts from a well-informed comrade, we read in the press that, owing to the Government failing to keep their promise to release all the prisoners, the Barcelona Trade Unions declared another general strike on March 24, and all work in public and transport services and newspaper printing was stopped at midday. All banks and shops were closed, even the sextons and undertakers joining the strike. "The authorities," said the telegram, "are meeting to re-establish martial law and call up the men for military duties." A later telegram says martial law has been proclaimed. Troops have occupied the towns, and are safeguarding the provision of food and light; they are trying to carry on the transport services.

The Barcelona workers are sturdy fighters, and the Spanish Government will have a tough nut to crack in tackling them. Our best wishes are with the workers. English readers are warned against accepting the lies telegraphed here by the Spanish Government.

COTTIN AND VILLAIN.

The verdicts in the trials of Cottin and Villain afford a striking illustration of bourgeois ethics regarding assassination. Cottin, an Anarchist, shoots at Clemenceau and only wounds him; a court-martial sentences him to death. Villain, a patriotic jingo, kills Jaurés, and a patriotic jury acquits him and he is at once released, although he admitted his offence. The French workers will remember this case when the day of retribution arrives.

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A PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP.

The Russian Revolution is the most momentous thing that has happened since the Great French Revolution, and its effects are more far-reaching than even that great upheaval, and for us anarchists to criticise it would be like criticising an earthquake. An Empire of 130,000,000 people, after several ineffectual attempts, at last overthrew the most gigantic and tyrannical despotism that the world has ever known, amidst the cheers of all lovers of freedom. The amount of blood shed in this revolution was infinitesimal in proportion to the immense issues involved. The capitalist press of the world are printing stories of the atrocities of the Bolshevik Government, but we can safely say that there were more people killed in the suppression of the Paris Commune by the French rulers than have been killed by the present Government in Russia. Their worst crime, in the eyes of the Allies was the killing of King Capital and the repudiation of the loans granted to the Tsar by international financiers. Had Lenin and Trotsky been content with a political revolution, they might have copied the Tsar's bloodthirsty methods without a protest from the Allies. In fact, they would have been hailed as the two strong men whose firm rule had saved their country from chaos.

But although we recognise the tremendously valuable work done by the Bolshevik Government, we think a great mistake will be made by copying their methods too closely. We anarchists are in favour of the total abolition of government, and therefore are opposed to all dictators, "proletarian" or otherwise. We stand for a system of society in which co-operation will replace competition, and in which the free agreement of individuals shall replace the present compulsion exercised by Governments and employers. Government, as we have said many times, was instituted by the great exploiters and robbers in order to protect their own interests and to keep their slaves, the workers, in subjection. All legislation and all decrees passed by Governments has had that one object—"making the world safe for the robbers." The form of government has undergone many changes, but, as the French say: "The more it changes, the more it is the same." Always one class wielded the weapon by which the rest of the people were kept under.

We thus see that government is and has always been an instrument of domination for one class over another. But if, as Socialists and Anarchists agree, a Social Revolution means the abolition of classes and the foundation of a society in which all—men and women—will stand on an equality, whence comes the need for a Government? The comrade whom to-day we greet as our equal becomes a privileged person as soon as he becomes a member of a governing body—it will make no difference, even if you call it a Soviet Executive. The fact is that a Government must of necessity govern, which means regulating the lives of other people. We do not believe that any man or woman is good enough to govern others, therefore, we are opposed to all government, as we believe it compels those who govern and those who are governed. Let every Socialist and Communist face the question squarely. Either he believes in equality or he believes in government; but he cannot believe in both. If he thinks some form of government will be necessary, as otherwise a few individuals may throw over the traces, let him remember the words of William Godwin in 1793: "In our plans for social betterment let us hold in mind the healthy and unfettered man, and not the cripple that interference and restraint have made."

THE IRON HEEL DESCENDS.

The recent charges brought against W. F. Watson and David Ramsay, of having made seditious speeches, have furnished the workers with fresh proof of the effectiveness of D.O.R.A.

When the people of this country allowed themselves to be dragooned by the Government for the purpose of waging war against Germany, we pointed out in these columns the danger to our liberty foreshadowed in the war-time legislation and Orders in Council. Further, we saw in the active co-operation of the Trade Union and Labour leaders nothing but a menace against the workers. But with characteristic British phlegm, they received the affectionate attentions of the Government without turning a hair or winking an eyelid. It was so very much more easy to allow a paternal Government to think and act for them. Thus it happened that the C.O.s were left to die or go mad in prison and British troops were allowed to sail for Russia to assist in putting down the revolution there. Then, when the armistice was signed, this same high-minded Government, possessed with a lofty sense of justice, allowed the workers the privilege of voting for its own special coupon Parliamentary candidates.

But somehow, through it all, there was just a hazy sort of notion among the workers that they were being sold, not only by the Government, but by those very convenient sheep-dogs, the Trade Union officials. And thus it happened that no sooner had Lloyd George decided that everything was going according to schedule, and it was quite safe to fix up in Paris the destinies of the European nations, than the unofficial movement in the Trade Union world became painfully apparent.

So Lloyd George and his masters, the financiers, were forced to witness a sudden revolt of the wage-slaves. The matter was the more provoking in that the warring parties had actually forgotten to make the enemy a present of their proposed tactics. They dared to resort to direct action without giving their "accredited" leaders an opportunity of betraying them. But no sooner was the appalling situation realised by the Government and the Trade Union officials than the latter, with indecent haste, started writing in the capitalist press about the need for maintaining authority and acting in a constitutional manner. Of course such a threatened industrial war had to be suppressed at all costs, so Lloyd George declared he meant to govern and would stand no Prussianism in this country. Then followed the delectable spectacle of tanks, machine-guns and all the paraphernalia of war in Glasgow—the deliberately provoked rioting, and the arrest of the inconvenient rebel leaders. More examples of Governmental Prussianism were seen in Belfast, and yet another clause added to D.O.R.A. in order to intimidate the electricians. Then came the demonstrations against intervention in and the blockade of Russia. Everywhere the unofficial movement asserted itself and for a few brief days the members of the Government exhibited symptoms of what is known popularly as "blue funk." Then it decided to act. Meanwhile, within the Trade Unions the shop stewards' movement was growing and actually threatening the old worn-out organisations. But the Trade Union leaders, having vested interests to defend, naturally sided with the Government, and thus it is that the present prosecutions have been made possible.

David Ramsay and W. F. Watson were foremost among the advocates of the shop stewards' movement; further, one was the chairman and the other the treasurer of the newly-formed "Hands Off Russia" Committee. These facts alone decided the Government, and the decision to prosecute two such prominent Trade Unionists was forced on them because direct action, as the chief effective weapon in industrial warfare, had been vindicated. The workers at last had seen through the fraud of political action, and had decided upon up-to-date methods. The measure of their success may be found in the prosecutions and the pending trials of the Glasgow strike leaders. Fortunately it has forced the Government into the open, and the worker now realises that the real enemy is not the German worker, but the Government that must of necessity always act on behalf of the vested interests and financiers. He now sees that while it was permissible for the Government to bring pressure to bear upon any small nation to force it into the war on the side of the Allies, yet that same principle may not be applied by strikers and those whose desire it is—to use a hackneyed phrase—"to make England fit for heroes to live in."

So David Ramsay and Billy Watson must go to prison because before all things they taught methods of organisation to the worker that might endanger the security of the exploiting class. They stood for an honest attempt to win a happier life for the wage slave, and like all pioneers, who in the past have fought for the poor and oppressed, they have been persecuted

by those who sit in authority to defend the power of capital.

Perhaps the one sad feature in this, as in the case of the C.O.s, is the knowledge that the mass of the people is still supine and apparently indifferent to its slavery. The workers have not yet fully realised their own power. But for every Watson and Ramsay taken from their ranks, hundreds of class-conscious lads are ready preparing to organise for the coming fight. These two names will now serve as an inspiration to those who have so far dwelt only in the realms of theory. Circumstances are changing day by day—economic conditions are aiding us. It is now only a question of time. Others from our ranks will undoubtedly be taken, it will merely act as a spur to our energies—our enemies are already insecure, entrenched though they may be behind the forces of law and authority. Only a few short months will see another economic crisis in this country. Already the number of unemployed workers reaches the enormous total of one million. Reconstruction is not possible, even were there no vested interests to bar the way. Upheaval will come, though circumstances may delay it, and as the Government feels its position becoming more and more unstable, so will it resort to every possible act of repression in order to maintain power.

So we send greeting to these victims of a brutal class system and go forward to the fight inspired by their example. Soon it may be our privilege to testify to our faith in this way, but behind it all is the consciousness that a new system of society will arise and that we shall one day know no masters high or low.

DETERMINISM AND IDEALISM.

In Socialist philosophy are two completely opposite stand-points from which the social problem is viewed. Though it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line of demarcation between those who take one particular standpoint and those who take the other, still it is fairly easy to recognise those writers who more frequently adopt one than the other. Both schools of thought are usually materialists, in the sense that they believe that an individual can only reason positively from ideas arising from sense-perceptions. They have that much in common, but they differ inasmuch as some are "Determinists" and some are "Idealists."

An illuminating instance of the manner in which the determinist philosopher looks at things is shown by a sentence taken from "Vital Problems in Social Evolution," by Arthur Lewis, which runs: "The social revolution approaches not because we proclaim it, but we proclaim it because it is approaching." Another sentence, from Austin Lewis's "Militant Proletariat," is also a good example of determinist reasoning; he says: "Socialists will not be called on to perform, the 'machine process' will do all the performing for them."

That even those writers are conscious of the fact that the undiluted determinist opinions are favourable to the policy of the reactionaries is demonstrated, when one discovers that Arthur Lewis devotes a lot of space in another of his books to prove that a change in the ideas of the workers, relative to the existing system, is all that is necessary for working class emancipation. That propaganda and fatalism seem contradictory even to the fatalist is confirmed by Austin Lewis referring disparagingly to some economic determinists who use the term "philosophic Marxism" in a narrow and restricted sense.

Coming to present-day problems, the same inconsistency is exhibited by those numerous Marxists who oppose the Bolsheviks' attempt to establish Communism by quoting Marx against any such attempt, when Marx himself wrote: "National choice is an important factor in social revolution. If Russia chooses it might get the fruits of the capitalist system without going through the tortures connected with it."

Despite those contradictions, it is quite logical to refer to some Marxists as determinists, or, to be strictly correct, some Marxists are dogmatic prophesying determinists. It is perhaps necessary, in order to be clear in one's thought, to use these two adjectives, qualifying determinist, because the idealists are also determinists, inasmuch as they agree that everything has a material causation and is determined by this causation. But the idealists recognise that it is folly to predict the future course of social evolution; they believe that future development may transform capitalism "into a sort of new feudalism or slavery," as Boudin puts it.

The determinist contends that a League of Nations is only possible when the economic necessities of international financiers require such a league; that Communism cannot be established until the world has become internationally trustified or a majority of the inhabitants of the world "proletarianised" or "machine processed." According to this line of reasoning the majority of the inhabitants of the world must be composed of the ideal type of proletariat before Socialism "comes"; but if this war proves

anything it proves that industrial development is in the direction of rendering a working class superfluous. Millions of workers engaged in unproductive employment and warfare for years shows that, instead of proletarians being the result of the perpetuation of capitalism, we will have flunkies, to use an expressive if vulgar word. A middle class composed of men with independent capital is swiftly passing away and is being replaced by a middle class, many units of which receive salaries and jobs by means of "influence," and the remaining units have their rate of profit fixed by great Trusts, which have destroyed the "inevitable" economic laws of last century. Obeying the impulse of the more modern economic forces, if these forces are unhindered by an opposing Socialist psychology, the working class will evolve along lines essentially similar to those already travelled by the middle class. Great things are piously hoped for by the "Marxists" from a working class mainly supervising machines; but the expected magical results will not materialise if, instead of machine supervisors, the lower class are chiefly on "active service" or on "leave."

The consistent determinist does not really feel this war as an individual; all that matters is the consideration that the war is accelerating the pace of social evolution. In this particular connection the "herd" instinct proves stronger than the law of self-preservation, and self is obliterated from any study of the policy to be adopted by Socialists during this crisis in the history of the world. Such a doctrinaire would express this dreamy mental state in the words: "I am not going to sacrifice the future development of the working class for the sake of their temporary interests"; but it would be more truthful if it was interpreted thus: "I am not supporting aught that would prove my previously aggressively expressed dogma to be wrong."

It is claimed that economic determinism discourages any attempt at premature rebellion, but it cannot be claimed that it discourages the successful (usually because of the prevalence of economic determinism) attempts of rulers to send millions of workers to a premature death, to intensify the misery of the subject class, and to crush prematurely any movement that the rulers believe is detrimental to their interests. To prove that his view of social changes is the correct one the determinist simply enumerates revolts of the past, prates learnedly of objective conditions, repeats a number of times the words "bound to fail," ignores the bayonets and machine-guns instrumental in teaching the practicable idealists a lesson in thoroughness, and the doctrine is demonstrated to fit the facts in a manner satisfactory to the doctrinaires—and the rulers. This display of erudition silences all opponents and the field is left in possession of those hypnotised by a repetition of generalisations. To prove that economic determinism does not fit the facts, it is only necessary to recall that conditions are mechanically more favourable for the inauguration of Communism than ever they were before, but no one can sensibly argue that the worker's psychology is proportionately more favourable—even after the unparalleled sufferings endured by them during the last four years.

Hope for the future lies not in the spread of "economic determinism," but in the assimilation by the thinking minority of the belief that a social revolution is possible and desirable in any community in which there are class divisions, and in which the available social labour can produce more than enough to satisfy social needs. This is the belief of idealists and relieves propagandists of the need to advocate submission to oppression and of the folly of "asking people under present conditions to sacrifice realities for ideal precepts." (Deitzgen).

Unlike Walt Whitman, the idealists do not sing or labour solely for the unborn; they know that Socialism—suited to a brief transition period—is possible now.

R. SELKIRK.

LONDON ANARCHIST GROUPS.

A GRAND RE-UNION

will be held on

EASTER SATURDAY, APRIL 19,

at the

CROWN HALL, REDMAN'S ROAD,

Stepney Green, E.

Dancing 6-30 to 4 a.m.

JAZZ BAND.

ADMISSION BY TICKETS, 1/- EACH.

From Freedom Office or Comrades.

All Profits for Freedom and the Propaganda.

DEATH OF DAVID NICOLL.

David Nicoll died on March 2 at the St. Pancras Infirmary, at the age of 59.

In his early days he was a member of the Social Democratic Federation, but when the split in that organisation took place in 1884 he joined the Socialist League with William Morris and others. Whilst Morris was editor of the *Commonweal*, Nicoll was an occasional contributor to its columns, gradually accepting Anarchist ideas. On Morris's withdrawal from the *Commonweal*, Nicoll became joint-editor with Frank Kitz, the latter's place being taken later on by C. Mowbray. Nicoll was always a vigorous and fearless writer, and after the Walsall trial in 1892, when four comrades were sentenced to terms of imprisonment (three to ten years and one to five years), his indignation rose to boiling point. He denounced the whole affair as a police plot, and said that neither the Home Secretary (Matthews) nor the Judge (Hawkins) were fit to live. As a result of this article the offices of the *Commonweal* were raided, and Nicoll and Mowbray arrested and charged with incitement to murder.

The trial took place at the Old Bailey on May 7, 1892, before Chief Justice Coleridge. Mowbray proved that he had severed his connection with the *Commonweal* previous to the publication of the article, of which he disapproved, and he was acquitted. Nicoll took full responsibility, and defended himself. He exposed the dirty trickery of the police in his own affair, and said his arrest was due to the fact that he had collected a lot of material to prove the infamous conduct of the police in the Walsall case. Justice Coleridge snubbed the police witnesses on several occasions for trying to prove too much; but a Government prosecution means a certain conviction, especially for an Anarchist. The jury found Nicoll guilty, and he was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, "that the law might be upheld," said the Chief Justice, whilst at the same time he complimented our comrade on his ability and his brave and manly bearing before the court.

There is no doubt that his imprisonment affected him mentally, and although he resumed the editorship of the *Commonweal* on his release from prison, the paper never had the same standing as before, and eventually dwindled down to one or two pages, appearing spasmodically, which he sold at meetings and clubs to gain a livelihood. The latter years of Nicoll's life were a tragedy. Unable to do any steady work, owing to his mental condition, he gained a precarious living from small sums given to him by comrades who remembered his past services to the movement. His mental breakdown and death must be laid at the door of that monster of "organised vengeance called Justice."

ITALIAN NOTES.

The Socialist Circle in Civitavecchia held a meeting on January 19 last, in memory of Andrea Costa. The Dock Workers' Hall was packed with over a thousand people, every one of them a toiler. They were there to hear the speech of our Socialist friend, Bombacci, who dealt with the infamous bourgeoisie and against all imperialism, past and present. There was great cheering for the Social Revolution and shouts of "Down with the war against the proletariat!" "Long live the Russian Soviet Republic!" Afterwards our comrade, Milo Augusto, bringing the best wishes from the Anarchist Group, presented the following demands, which were heartily approved by the audience:

- (1) Immediate general demobilisation.
- (2) Withdrawal of all Allied troops from Russia.
- (3) Restoration of the constitutional liberty.
- (4) Amnesty for all political prisoners, reparation to the victims of the "Red Week" and the removal of the ban on Malatesta which prevents him entering Italy.

Giolitti's law of June 4, 1911, established as a "national recompense" to the "Garibaldini" (soldiers who fought under Garibaldi) of the Class 66, the miserable sum of ten lire (six shillings and sixpence) monthly. After an interrogation from the Honourable Muzzi to the Government, the Under Secretary of State replied that such allowance is already increased from 120 lire yearly to 200, and will be further increased to the older men to 365 lire yearly, but commencing from July 1, 1919. Meanwhile the old and glorious "Red Shirts" who fought at Lizza will continue to walk the streets and squares in the nice rain of Italy, begging their masters for a piece of bread to prevent them from starving, and will pray to the "Good God" of the priests to let them live a little longer, just to see the realisation of their dreams of 48 years ago, and to succeed in getting that amount which servants in any bourgeois home get in their first situation. The "Garibaldini" get just one lire a day (ninepence)—this after having made Italy for the bourgeoisie!

COMMUNIST LEAGUE FORMED.

That Anarchist Communist ideas are at last permeating the ranks of the Socialist parties is proved by the recent successful Socialist Unity Conference held on March 16. It was then decided to form a Communist League, and the following constitution was approved:—

1. The struggle of the working class for its emancipation is a political struggle taking place on the industrial field.
2. To bring this struggle to a successful issue the Communist League calls upon the working class to organise into local workers' committees and councils, with the object of seizing the means of production and by a proletarian dictatorship establishing a Republic of Federated Communes.
3. Seeing that Parliamentary action by the ballot-box retards the class-consciousness of the workers, and seeing that the capture and control of Parliament is unnecessary to working class emancipation, the Communist League declares that the Parliamentary vote as a weapon of attack or defence is obsolete, and calls upon the workers to negate and defeat the class legislation of capitalist Parliament by direct industrial action of their political institutions—the workers' committees and councils.
4. A member of the Communist League shall not become a candidate for Parliament or municipal council.
5. At all times the Communist League shall expose the futility of the Parliamentary and municipal franchise.

The conference was organised by rank and file members of the Socialist Labour Party, who, in common with members of other Socialist and Labour organisations, at last begin to realise how reactionary and conservative officials become after they have once tasted power. The delegates expressed the very real need for unity of action among Socialists and Communists, in order that propaganda work can be made more effective. Of course, the League is not an Anarchist organisation, but the repudiation of Parliament is a long step in our direction.

The whole conference again demonstrated the fact that in all Labour and Socialist bodies it is the rank and file membership that initiates, and the official element that retards and cripples action. It was decided to hold a further conference, and various committees were formed to carry on the provisional work of the League. All enquiries should be addressed to F. Burnett, 5, Queen's Road, Peckham, London, S.E.

OUR APPEAL FOR FUNDS.

The response to our appeal has not been so generous this month as we would wish, and we hope comrades will recognise that our need of cash is as great as ever. We wish to reprint Bakunin's "God and the State" as soon as possible, and we specially appeal to comrades to help us in this matter, as it is a book of great propaganda value in our attack on the worship of the State.

Received up to April 2: M. A. Mainwaring, 7/6; C.B.W., 2/-; L. Bioulet, 1/-; E.M., 4/-; W. Underwood, 2/6; Newwirth, 10/-; N. Duenas, 2/-; E. Ratcliffe, 2/6; Belgian Comrade, 2/-; A. O. Moore, 1/-; L. Macartney, 1/-; A. Hazeland 5/-.

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(MARCH 2—APRIL 2.)

FREEDOM Subscriptions.—M. A. Mainwaring, L. Bioulet, J. Myers, N. Duenas (4), E. Ratcliffe, H. R. Francis, A. Hazeland.

NOTICES.

"FREEDOM" OFFICE is open for sale of books and pamphlets every Saturday afternoon, from 3 to 5-30.

"FREEDOM" can be obtained (wholesale and retail) at National Labour Press, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.; also at Henderson's, 66, Charing Cross Road, W.C. Anarchist books and pamphlets are on sale at the latter bookshop.

COWDENBEATH.—"FREEDOM" and Anarchist books and pamphlets can be obtained at the Communist Literature Depot, 128, Perth Road, Cowdenbeath.

CARDIFF.—"FREEDOM," books, and pamphlets can be had from A. Banks, 1, Carmarthen Street, off Market Road, Canton, Cardiff. Call and have a chat. Group being formed.

LIVERPOOL.—Comrade J. Davidson, 36, Great Orford Street, Brownlow Hill, wishes to form a Communist Group. Comrades willing to join please write or call. Anarchist and Freethought papers and books on sale.

WILLESDEN "FREEDOM" LEAGUE.—Discussions on Political and Social questions are held every Sunday evening (7-30) at Hamilton Hall, High Road (close to Pound Lane bus terminus).