

# Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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## NOTES.

### Conscription for Conscription's Sake.

The triumph of repression has been attained, and the complete shackling of Labour is hoped for, by the enactment of the Conscription Bill, alias the Military Service Bill No. 2. Conscription for the single men between the ages of 18 and 41 years is now to all intents and purposes the law of the land; the proud claim that "Britons never, never, never shall be slaves" has gone the way of many other of the so-called liberties of pre-war days. The Bill was introduced by Asquith in an apologetic speech, in fulfilment, so he stated, of the pledge given upon the opening of the "Derby Scheme," and as an act of military necessity. We are not particularly concerned with the fulfilment of either of these obligations; the former being, as we have already pointed out, merely a sop to elicit the sympathy of the married men toward Conscription, and the latter being, upon the Government's own showing, a palpable excuse under which any treachery might be enacted. "Compulsion," they say, "or we lose the war!" Could anything be more grotesque? Something like six million men are either serving, have expressed their willingness to serve, or have been medically rejected. France has millions in the field, Russia yet more millions, and still we are asked to believe that the whole future of the war hangs upon the conscription of the unenlisted single men of Great Britain, a matter of a couple of hundred thousand men at the outside! If any reason were needed for suspecting the aims of the Conscriptionists, this aspect of it alone would be sufficient. But we are not concerned with military necessity. We are concerned with the fact that a handful of plutocrats, designated a Government, can order the enslavement of any man to a military machine for a purpose against which his whole being revolts. It is the opportunity of those who love freedom to make a stand for their ideals, and we believe, as a noble peer stated, that the "powers that be" will rue the day they legalised compulsory military slavery.

### The Industrial Side.

The compulsion of men to take up arms and to serve in the Army, when their whole body revolts against such action, is only one of the insidious evils of the Conscription Act. Our opposition to any and every form of military service is long-standing and unabated. But there is another and almost graver side to this Act, and one which is not so widely understood as it should be. It is the power given under this Act to conscript men industrially. Assurances have been given, and we are informed that no form of Industrial Compulsion is implied; this is only one of many assurances given. But we must remember that tribunals and military authorities do not go by Ministerial assurances, they go by what the letter of the law reads. We were alive to this danger when the Derby scheme was initiated with its repeated insistence upon the necessity for starred men to attest. Therein was the first scent of coming danger, and it has turned out too true. Under the provisions of the Conscription Act, all single men between the ages of 18 and 41 are to be "deemed to be enlisted" upon a certain date. This includes the starred man, who must obtain an exemption certificate, which is to be conditional upon his keeping his job. Thus the worst feature of the Munitions Act is made more effective, and the threat of Lloyd George to get the men he wanted by one method or another, is brought into practice. For any offence against the boss or the foreman, for being outspoken or disliked by any one in authority, a workman will, if he is discharged, be automatically called to the colours, unless he obtains work in a starred occupation in the meantime. Appeals to tribunals can be judged beforehand. We know the constitution and bias of these bodies. Thus the shackling of Labour is made complete, and this is, as we have said, the worst feature of the Act. We can, moreover, foresee the possibility and probability of all

these features remaining as a standing menace, not only to our freedom of conscience, but to our freedom of action. We can, and must, make it inoperative ere it be too late.

### The Passing of the Labour Party.

With the passing of the Conscription Bill through Parliament we shall henceforth associate the passing of the Labour Party. We have never been under any delusion as to the value of Parliamentary representation as a method of safeguarding the workers' interests. The action of the Labour M.P.'s during the past month, and in fact during the period of the war's progress, justifies our attitude, and will help a long way toward disillusioning many former supporters of Parliamentary methods. One by one, Acts of an infamous nature, vitally affecting the lives and working conditions of the workers, have been passed through Parliament, and each and all have received either the active support or silent acquiescence of the Labour representatives. Lloyd George at Glasgow, in fact, saddled the responsibility for the Munitions Act upon Brownlie (chairman of the A.S.E.) and Arthur Henderson. It can never be expected that any man or body of men can represent the views of others and act for them when those views run contrary to their own. This was demonstrated by the Labour Conference, where by an overwhelming vote it was decided to oppose the passage of the Conscription Bill. What happened? Most of the £400-a-year leaders voted for it, some abstained (thereby demonstrating their courage), only the sane few who had stood out all along voting against it. It was left to a Liberal lawyer to put up the biggest fight against the Bill. That stalwart of Labour, Henderson, Right Honourable at £4,000 a year, made a vigorous speech in its favour, and was patted appreciatively on the back by the Prime Minister! Can any one now doubt our claim, that to free ourselves we must be our own representatives? The workers cannot and should not control, or aspire to control, the State machine. They should smash it by resisting its repressive power and cultivating the spirit of self-reliance in place of reliance on leaders.

### The Power of the Individual.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, all the dictates and enactments of all the Parliaments of the world are so much waste paper when faced with unwilling subjects determined not to obey. This is being amply proved by the working of the Munitions Act, which even that wonderful magician Lloyd George has failed to make a full success. The case is put succinctly by Harold Owen in an article on the "Dilution of Labour" in a recent issue of the *Daily Chronicle*:—

"With the trade unions, as represented by their headquarters officials, the battle has been won—on paper. But though the generals of the army of Labour have capitulated to the national need, and though the great bulk of that army is working loyally and steadfastly in this great alliance of all classes of the nation, yet there are enough of the rank and file standing out to frustrate the compact and to vitiate the general effectiveness of Labour's acquiescence. The battle may be won in the headquarters of the union in London (where representatives of Labour have met representatives of the nation face to face and have learned to look at the problem through the eyes of statesmanship and by the light of our great national need); and the local leaders may, or may not, have accepted the settlement reached by their head officials. But the problem only begins after these 'settlements' have been reached.

"The trouble is not with the Amalgamated body of this trade or the United body of that, but with plain William Smith and Albert Thompson or Evan Williams or Andrew Macpherson in the workshops. The trouble is not with the organised union, but with the individual artisan. He carries his conception of the principle of democratic government down to the point when government vanishes altogether. He will be represented only by himself, and if he and his mates, acting under the spell of the shop steward, do not

assent, it is irrelevant to him that others have assented in his name. With him no writ runs. There is thus a double rejection of authority—the authority of the State, through the mouth of Parliament and of statesmen, and of their own trade unions, their own 'spokesmen.' Twenty men can paralyse into impotence a workshop where everything is ready to enable it to do its bit as a unit of the national capacity."

And what has been done with the Munitions Act can be done with the Conscription Act.

We mentioned briefly last month that the official report of the visit of Lloyd George to Glasgow was not exactly so truthful as it could have been. The Glasgow Socialist paper *Forward* went further and proved it by publishing a report of the proceedings in detail. The paper was promptly suppressed, at the instigation of Lloyd George. Not, mark you, for the offence of publishing the report, but for inciting people not to obey the Munitions Act. The paper has been allowed to reappear upon the editor giving the following undertaking:—

"We, the undersigned, on behalf of the *Forward* Printing and Publishing Company (Ltd.), hereby undertake not to issue or publish any matter calculated to prejudice the military interests or safety of the country in the present crisis, or to impede or to interfere with the production or supply of munitions of war, or cause disaffection with the Munitions of War Acts or with the policy of the dilution of labour, and to stipulate with any company by which the matter is printed that in case of doubt such matter shall be submitted for approval to the Press Bureau.

"(Signed) THOMAS JOHNSTON, Editor.

"E. ROSSLYN MITCHELL, Solicitor."

And as comment thereon we append the following, not from an Anarchist source, but from the Jingo London *Evening News*!—

"Every newspaper and every journalist in the country should note, as a serious indication of this Government's real designs on the public Press, the Prussian document which the editor of the Socialist journal *Forward* has had to sign before receiving permission from the military authorities to resume publication. . . . Almost any criticism of Ministers or military operations could be brought into the terms of the document drawn up for the editor of *Forward's* signature. If the Government and the military authorities are to make newspapers undertake not to say this or that, the thin end of the wedge is already driven in."

But the thin end was driven in by the Press Bureau as soon as the war started.

The two vital questions of the hour to all wage-slaves are undoubtedly the dilution of labour and the passage into law of the Military Service Bill. Both are destined to make history. One has only turn to the capitalist Press and note the barometer readings of the possessing class. The nervous fear that Labour may after all refuse to be chloroformed into obedience to the will of the State is again, as prior to May last, clearly indicated. The frank appeal to Labour—when as a result of the Government taking the leaders into their confidence, the Munitions Act was passed—has, after some nine months of the application of judicial pressure, failed lamentably. The Press is full of the wailing of the patriots who are busily engaged in making huge fortunes out of war material. Labour is again exhorted not to show a recalcitrant spirit, but to be sweetly reasonable. Having discovered that the coercion supplied by means of the Munitions Act has only stiffened the back of the toiler, the opposite line is now taken, and the *Daily Chronicle*, in common with other organs, declares:—

"There has been too much loose thinking and talking about industrial compulsion, too much disposition to treat skilled labour as if it could profitably be coerced. The best results cannot be got out of a skilled artisan by any sort of force. You might bind him to his lathe or his bench, but no bonds could make his hands produce the maximum quantity and quality of output which is what his country needs of him. Dilution of labour . . . can only fully succeed if a persistent effort is made to keep on the right side of the workmen and avoid getting on the wrong side, to secure the speedier hearing of grievances and their more efficient redress, to avoid needless provocations and irritations, to appeal constantly to their best instincts, and never to appear to assume or suggest that they are normally actuated by the worst."

Sweet words these, my masters, and plain proof, if proof indeed were needed, that the Munitions Act, far from having drawn the claws of Labour, has only had the effect of permanently unsheathing them. There is no doubt that the reception accorded to Lloyd George by the Clyde workers has very largely contributed to the sweet reasonableness of this inspired article.

The Madrid journal *El Pais*, referring to the recent Zeppelin raids on Paris, says that "there is no difference between them and Anarchist outrages." Whereat we smile. If mere indiscriminate slaughter is Anarchism, then the whole of the armies of Europe, so busy slaying each other, must be composed of Anarchists. Our ha'penny Press quotes with serene complacency the story of some Russians who overpowered a German sentinel guarding a railway, and by signalling to an approaching train loaded with troops that the line was clear, sent the whole of them to a ghastly death. Further, some time ago the *Daily News* informed us that some 600 people were killed by the Allies' bombardment of Zeebrugge. Bringing events down to date, there are the recent Allied air raids on Monastir, Doiran, and Gevehli, where several civilians were killed. Then there is the Lille explosion, attributed to another air raid. Anarchist "outrages" pale before these grim and ghastly carnages. Whereas most victims of Anarchist attacks have been the brutal butchers of the ruling classes, who are in great measure responsible for unmentionable deeds of horror, the victims of this war are usually members of the working class. The killing of Tsars, Kings, and Presidents brings the revolution no nearer for us. But so long as the people are tyrannised, tortured, and hounded to slavery or death, so long will there be individuals courageous enough to hit back with terrible effect. As Elbert Hubbard said, "So long as Governments set the example of slaying their enemies, so long will individual men and women slay theirs."

To those who still believe that any good thing can result from legislation, we commend the following:—"The Law Officers of the Crown have given it as their opinion that it would be illegal for any Trade Union to pay strike benefit in such a case [a strike among munition workers], and the trustees of any such Union would make themselves liable for proceedings to be taken against them." Get laws placed on the Statute Book and all will be well, say the Labour leaders. But the history of Trade Union law is a history of fraud. Even where an enactment has appeared fair on the surface, judicial interpretation has "downed" the worker every time, and kept him permanently enslaved. What magnificent faith must hold the dupes of man-made law to the shibboleths of the Labour politicians!

No more best dairy butter for the worker. The decree has gone forth in the Government's best judicial style, when, as a result of the earnest deliberations on economy, the Government Committee on Production laid it down that, "in view of the pressing emergency, any further advances of wages (other than advances following automatically from existing agreements) should be strictly confined to the adjustment of local conditions, where such adjustments are proved to be necessary." This decision was arrived at after they had "had regard to the general advances of wages that have already been given since the beginning of the war, and to the measures already taken to tax or limit the profits of undertakings." Thus is the net drawn a little tighter. With the increase in commodities at the astoundingly high figure of 44 per cent. and still showing a tendency to soar upwards, small wonder is it that Labour grows restless and, like *Oliver Twist*, asks for more. In spite of the patriotic example set by the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General in foregoing a fractional depletion of their £20,000 and £18,000 yearly, will the worker patiently watch the dwindling of a wage that before the war was all too tragically insufficient for decent life?

"No more manly or moving expressions of high patriotism have been heard in the House of Commons at any time than were heard from the Labour benches last week," states the *Telegraph* for January 12. When such an ancient enemy of the worker delivers itself in these terms, it is quite time that treachery is suspected and those vitally concerned took immediate steps to dissociate themselves from the "high patriots." For when the Capitalist Press talks of Labour being the "traitor at the gate," we are then inclined to believe that the "traitors" have left these luminaries to shed their patriotic light upon the steadily freezing atmosphere of the House and the Press. What the Press will record when the traitors actually get over the gate is best left to the imaginative few.

ANARCHY.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal.—*Century Dictionary*.



## LETTERS TO AN AMERICAN COMRADE!

London, January 25, 1916.

MY DEAR—It's lucky for you that you are not what you call a Britisher, otherwise you would not have been able to go back to New York, where you arrived all safe, I hope. Here, as an Englishman, you would have had to remain, in the land of the free, and under the beautiful Compulsion Act, would have eventually been run in as a soldier and sent off to shoot those to whom you bear no ill-will and who have no anger against us. It's lovely to be a free-born Briton, isn't it.

You promised to write me in return for each letter I write you, which was a mean agreement on your part, compelling me to write first, and often if I am to hear from you often. Well, there isn't much news to send, and I suppose if there were our good despot the Censor would blot out anything interesting. Comic, isn't it? Unless you are a Member of Parliament, you must not dare to criticise anything done or said by our so-called democratic Government, which is now, and doubtless will be for many years after the war, as autocratic and despotic as any Government ever was. Oh! what a happy land is England; a right little, tight little island out of which I may not go without my rulers' permit, and in which I may not do or say or write anything which offends their mightinesses. And they are so easily offended, poor touchy creatures! One must not even report a meeting at which his highness Lloyd George I. speaks, unless his utterances are greeted with cheers and laughter. What a lot of flapdoodle that man has at his command, and what a greasy tongue! Luckily, the workers are beginning to see through him, to mistrust his fine promises, and to look carefully at any gift he may offer them. His gifts are costly—to the recipients, by whom invariably they have to be paid for.

The "conscription" farce, nick-named "compulsion" because it sounds nicer that way, has reached the end of the first act. You remember, I daresay, our chats about it, and how you laughed at the Labour mis-leaders and the way in which they were being bamboozled. But the tragedy is, and it makes the blood boil, that the workers are being let in right and left. They had not much liberty before the war; they have none now; they cannot call their lives their own; they are reduced to the level of cattle by their masters. And for what price have they been induced to barter away their hard-won rights and the power which the Trade Unions had won by many a bitter struggle? The price is *soft words* and pie-crust promises; no more. Everything, they are told, is to be *after* the war as it was *before*. Is it? Shall we get our freedom back? Not much. The excuse will be made that we must never be caught again in a state of military unpreparedness, and so the gay game of compulsion under one name or another, and stupendous expenditure on the manufacture of armaments and munition (and profiteering in the same) will be carried on. And will the dear, kind, self-sacrificing employers let things be as they were before? Not much. They will try to take advantage of the over-crowded labour market; they will try to retain women and unskilled workers at cheap rates instead of paying skilled labour as they did before; they will speed-up so as to make fortunes more quickly before the German can get in again, and probably will do their worst to return to Protection, so as to be able to raise prices all round.

Oh, it will be a joyful time for the worker after the war is over! Will his leaders help him? Some don't know how to, and others don't want to. Perhaps the men will wake up to the fact that the only way to right their wrongs is to lead themselves, to employ themselves, and to work for themselves. Perhaps they will wake up to the fact, which we have been dinning into their ears so long, that their chief enemies live in their midst, reaping rewards they have not worked for.

After all, the Censor does not do you and me much harm, for the only war worth writing, talking, thinking about is the war between Capital and Labour. It may be, after all, that this appalling European crime of war between Governments will lead quickly to the end of the war which has been waged for centuries between employed and employers. With the worker lies the power to do and to be what he wills. The attitude of our present tyrants proves that up to the hilt. You don't shackle and bind down men of whom you are not afraid! The Government, acting at the bidding of Capitalism, and calling it Patriotism with a huge big P, are making the best of their opportunity to render the wage-slave helpless, now and for ever. But "for ever" is a long time, and, may be, when Johnny comes marching home again from the war he will not be quite so willing to obey orders from his taskmaster as he used to be, and will ask what he is going to get for all his

sacrifices on the altar of Capitalism, and will see that he gets it.

It is the English way to underrate his enemy; the English worker has, I think, always underrated *his* enemy—the capitalist. Capitalism is well dug-in, its entrenchments are of the strongest, it holds all the best strategical positions, it is fully armed and fully financed and fully organised. But our politicians and Army men tell us to-day that *money* and *numbers* must win in the long run. So be it! Let us remember that. The workers have the number and are the source of all the wealth possessed by their foes. Yes, many of us are hoping that *this* war will lead to an intensification of *that* war; that the end of Capitalism and Capitalist Government is in sight. But don't let us underrate the cunning of the enemy, who will employ every trick and every lie he can to mislead and betray the workers.

There, old chap, what do you think of that for a letter? It does me good to blow off occasionally. You return the blow.—  
Your sincere comrade,  
W.

## WAR'S AFTERMATH.

While the nations are at war, it is thought sufficient that we concentrate our energies on the sole purpose of bringing the war to a successful termination. A successful termination—for whom? Not for the millions who are dead; not for the workers who must pay for it all; not for those who mourn at home; but for a certain sect, the war-mongers. This sect comprises journalists, churchmen, and statesmen, and also, most powerful of all, financiers. When the war is over, we will find that the journalists have obtained glory, the churchmen have had a splendid opportunity of venting their wretched spite on some poor "sinner," and the statesmen have succeeded in fastening the chains upon the workers more firmly than before. And all this for the benefit of the capitalists. Assuredly, then, from their point of view, the issue will be a victorious one, no matter how the battle trends. There is, however, another aspect of the case, more complex and far more pitiful.

The worker reads his newspaper, and smiles when he ascertains that the country is spending five million pounds each day on the war, and feels proud that he belongs to such a wealthy land as Britain. It is with something of a shock, however, that he learns that the cost of his food has risen another 25 per cent. or so, and he begins to have grave doubts as to the extent of his real wealth. But enough for the day is sufficient for him, and he cares not a fig for the morrow, till it comes.

So we have the two real factions in the country. Labour being exploited right and left, and Capitalism executing the great robbery with heart and soul. This is a continual state of war, and the affair on the Continent is a mere sideslip. Very costly, it is true, both where wealth and lives are concerned, but still—a mere sideslip. When the soldiers return home, the great game of robbery—termed "business"—will be renewed with greater activity than before.

Some fine morn we will wake to the sound of great rejoicing and be informed that the war is over. Another Cabinet meeting will be held, and a reshuffling of official positions in the Government will take place. The landlord will demand extra rent, the grocer will demand higher prices, and meanwhile the bonfires will be lighted joyfully, because the war will be over.

If German shipping is impeded or destroyed for a year or two, we will hear no more of German militarism. There will be no discussion as to whether the Kaiser is insane or anything else. The present cry, "Capture the enemy's trade!" gives the game away completely. It is not a fight for mythical liberty, it is not a war against militarism; it is wholly a fight for markets, a fight for the monopoly of overseas trade. When the din of battle has died away, the war will still proceed at home. The industrial war never ceases. The workers want better wages, and the capitalists want more profits; and so the wrangle goes on. It will be the same after the war for "liberty" has ended. The only difference will be that the poorhouses will be overflowing, maimed and broken beggars (one-time soldiers) will be crawling around, and the cost of living will be higher. Battleships will still be built, armies will still be raised—not against German militarism then, but merely for the purpose of combatting progress in the ranks of the workers. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," the proverb says, and Capitalism believes and acts accordingly. When the workers know a little more, strange things will happen—for their good. Labour has the power to end this brutal system of warfare. Labour alone can make certain that exploitation shall cease, that no more valuable lives shall be wasted as cannon-fodder. When the workers understand their power, *and use it*, society will be reshaped on nobler lines, and the present tragedy will be looked back upon with horror and shame.

R. S. Wood.

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## The Fight Against Conscription.

In spite of the overwhelming votes against Conscription given at the two Labour Conferences held last month, the Military Service Act is now law, and the Government intend to put it into practice when the appointed interval has passed. This means that in the first week in March the Government will send its agents throughout the length and breadth of the land to tear men away from their everyday occupation and force them to become soldiers. These men may be opposed to military service on social, political, or religious grounds; they may be possessed of a shrinking, sensitive nature, totally unfitted for the rough and brutal work of a soldier; they may be geniuses in art, or science, or literature; or they may be men who have caught a glimpse of what society might be if the monopoly and exploitation of the present day were swept away, and who feel a fierce hatred of the tyranny of Capitalism and the State. But whatever may be their reasons for not volunteering to bear arms, these will have no weight with our rulers, who, knowing that their wealth—wrung from the blood and sweat of men, women, and children—is in danger, are prepared to sacrifice the manhood of these islands rather than lose it.

Since August, 1914, the most reactionary crowd that this country has ever been cursed with have been steadily gaining influence in governing circles. They viewed with hatred and wrath the steadily growing intelligence of the Labour movement; the great strikes of recent years had been a warning to them that their privileges would some day be taken away; and they have waited for an opportunity to strike a blow at Labour which they hoped would paralyse its power for many years to come. This war has been a godsend to them. Immediately it started, they poured forth clouds of that poisonous gas called "Patriotism," under the cover of which they have been enabled to carry out their evil work. Whilst the workers were busy fighting the Germans and others on the many battlefields of Europe and Asia, their real enemies were busy forging new chains for them on their return. Truly it hath been said, "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth."

Conscription! That was the word that made the exploiters' eyes sparkle. Once get that firmly fastened on the workers, they thought, it will be something with which to stem the rising tide of revolt, hold the workers in check after the war, and form mighty armies with which to safeguard their riches and find new areas to exploit.

This scheme must be smashed at all hazards. We are under no illusions as to the "liberties" of the people of this country, but military control of the workers, with its blind and degrading obedience, would be a step backwards that might not be retraced for years. The workers must not take that step! But they will have to fight in a more serious fashion than they are doing at the present moment if they want to prevent being forced to do so. It is not enough to pass resolutions at Conferences. Resolution—not resolutions—is necessary. They have only to decide definitely that they will not have Conscription, and fold arms for a day or two, and the thing is dead. It is not for them to consider how their masters will win their war—for it is their war. The only war the workers need worry about is the war against their exploiters—the landlords, financiers, capitalists, politicians, and all the parasites who infest society. These are face to face with them in this country, and as long as they are in existence there can be no liberty.

Do not think that Conscription will be confined to single

men. As soon as the Act was passed, the Conscriptionists said, "Now for the married shirkers!" And the *Manchester Guardian* of February 2 said:—

"The War Office acknowledges no limit to its demand for men, and it already has clearly in mind the idea of demanding both the conscription of married men and the raising of the military age."

The idea that you can satisfy the appetite of Militarism by sacrificing the single men is therefore shown to be a foolish one. Resistance to Conscription must take place here and now, and all and every means are justifiable. Let the workers show the same courage in the factories that their mates have shown on the battlefield, and their enemies at home will be routed.

Down with Conscription! Resist! Resist! Resist!

## "Military Compulsion Involves Industrial Compulsion."

The following Manifesto published by the National Council against Conscription was presented to the delegates to the Labour Party Conference held at Bristol on January 26-28. We hope it will be reprinted and spread broadcast:—

"FRIENDS,—We have no doubt that, when you are assembled at Bristol, a carefully-prepared attempt will be made to induce you to withdraw your opposition to the Government Bill for Compulsory Military Service. You will be told that it effects only 'single shirkers' and that the amendments introduced in Committee have removed all danger of Industrial Conscription. This is not the case. Under the third Clause of the Bill, *even as amended*, if an exempted man is dismissed by his employer, or for any reason loses his job, and cannot re-sell his labour power in an exempted trade within eight weeks, he will find himself a soldier and be at once enlisted in the Army. His liberty will be taken from him, and he will have to perform any service the Government may impose upon him. In short, the active Trade Unionist will be at the mercy of employers who, by refusing him work, will be able to force him into the Army against his will. Mr. Asquith himself has said that it is 'not a very easy matter' to prevent the abuse of such power by unscrupulous employers. It is not merely difficult, but impossible. To this extent, at least, military compulsion involves Industrial Compulsion.

"You will be told that the Prime Minister has pledged the Government not to use the powers inherent in the Bill for Industrial Compulsion. But neither he nor the Government can prevent employers from abusing the powers which the Bill undoubtedly gives them. Moreover, no pledge has been given that further legislation will not be introduced if this Bill is allowed a smooth passage. If we once yield on the principle of Compulsion, such legislation will be fatally easy. Once admit, even by acquiescence, the claim of the State to Compulsory Military Service from any class of men, and you cannot logically defend the voluntary principle in industry. If Military Conscription is right, upon what solid ground can munition workers, transport workers, railwaymen, miners, or those engaged in any vital industry, claim to be exempt from Industrial Compulsion? Unless you resist Compulsion now, you will be left without a case against Industrial Compulsion when this Government, or its successor, demands it. 'You have compelled men,' it will be said, 'to go into the trenches to fight; you cannot refuse to compel other men to back them up in the mine, the railway, and the workshop.'

"Remember that, if now you admit the right of the State to compel the unmarried man to fight, your own claim to dispose of yourselves in your own interest and that of your fellows and your dependents goes completely by default. The spirit in which the Conscription Bill has been forced upon the nation and the open avowals of those who regard it as simply a first step should open your eyes to its real purpose. Industrial Conscription will follow, unless the most strenuous resistance is offered here and now.

"The Minister of Munitions himself has told you that in France no Munitions Act is necessary, *because France has Compulsory Military Service*. This shows that, in the opinion of at least one prominent member of the Government, military Compulsion involves Industrial Conscription.

"Just as the present Bill follows logically upon the Registration Act (despite all pledges to the contrary), Compulsory Industrial Service will assuredly follow if we allow ourselves to traffic in the liberties of the unmarried men.

"There may be some to whom the present Bill seems a small thing, upon which, having made its protest, Labour can afford to give way. The numbers directly involved may be only a tithe of the population, but Compulsion itself is a fundamental issue upon which we must make a stand if we are not to surrender every argument—moral, intellectual, or legal—that we have ever advanced in support of civil and industrial liberty. The moment to resist compulsion is now, when it is being introduced for the first time, and not later, when it is merely being extended. We have given up many liberties during the war: surrender on the question of Compulsion would mean the loss of liberty itself. We appeal to you, as free men, to preserve our national freedom."



## The Bondage of False Ideas.

Anarchists have always criticised the existing social and political institutions, persistently and vigorously. They have invariably denounced, in the strongest terms, the ideas and policy of the ruling classes as being in every way detrimental to the welfare of the community. But never has there been greater justification for such criticism than at the present time. We have now reached the end of the most bloody twelve months in the world's history. The slaughter of human beings by the million has gone on during the past year without any cessation. Smiling country-sides have been changed into burnt and blackened wastes; towns into shell-torn heaps of ruins. Throughout the year the entire energies of the most "civilised" nations of Europe have been concentrated solely upon massacre, ruin, and destruction.

Who is to be held accountable for all this "frightfulness"? The German militarists? Certainly they must bear their full share of blame for what has happened; but they are by no means the only guilty criminals. There is not a single member of the governing classes throughout the world—capitalists, diplomats, priests, pressmen, and politicians—who has not contributed in some measure to the work of turning Europe into a shambles. The war is the outcome of the policy of aggressive imperialism which has been consistently pursued by the ruling classes everywhere for many years past. To condemn the war is to condemn capitalist civilisation with all its institutions, ideas, and outlook. It is impossible to dissociate the effect from its cause. The only way to prevent future wars is to destroy Capitalism; root and branch. That which has produced such fearful results must itself be entirely evil and utterly alien to the progress of the human race. Hence, in the words of the immortal Voltaire, we must "destroy the infamous thing." It is this strong and definite conviction and uncompromisingly hostile attitude towards capitalist society as a whole that marks the dividing line between Anarchists and many who believe themselves to be Socialists, whilst not realising what is implied in Socialism. These latter honestly think that the reform of society is all that is necessary to do away with Capitalism and its attendant evils. They labour under the dangerous delusion that the State can in some way be used as an instrument with which to emancipate the workers from the slavery of the wage system. As well might they think that the institution of chattel slavery could have been used to liberate the negro slaves. Slavery had to be abolished before the slaves could be relatively free.

So, since it is the State that enslaves the people in an ever increasing degree of abject servitude, the State itself must be abolished before liberty can be secured. There are some who question this contention. Such critics are easily answered. Let them study the legislation of the past ten or twelve years, and they will see that it has steadily tended to restrict the liberties of the individual in the interest of the governing classes. If still unconvinced, let them review the actions of the Government from the outbreak of the war to this hour; from the initial step of the appointment of the Press Censor to the Defence of the Realm and Munitions Acts, and the Compulsory Military Service Act. Is there any freedom left? Does not every journalist, outside the Harmsworth Press, write with the possibility of prosecution hanging over his head? The right of free speech, even in private and domestic circles, is gone. Public meetings are broken up, and men and women are hounded out of employment for the crime of daring to hold opinions contrary to those held to be right by the powers that be. And all this is done by the State!

Socialists and others who urge "the need for constructive work," ignore utterly the fact that no real reconstruction of society can be effected so long as the governing classes control the lives of the people through the State so absolutely as they do to-day. They forget, also, the lessons of history. The divine rights of kings and popes are things of the past in most countries—we have the divine right of plutocratic oligarchies instead. But the former antiquated systems of government were never "reformed," but destroyed, as the result of the efforts of earnest men who were tortured and killed by the powers of "law and order" of those times.

The first and greatest step on the way to liberty is to free the minds of the people from the slavery of false ideas. Until that mental liberation is accomplished, little of any real value

will be achieved. Hence the need for incessant propaganda—and that for some time to come must be of a destructive nature. For example, take the once universal religious custom of murdering children and presenting their mangled bodies as sacrifices to imaginary, bloodthirsty gods. Since those days progress has been, more apparent than real. In sending forth their sons to the battlefield the modern religious and patriotic parents have merely changed the names of the gods, to whom they still sacrifice their children, from those of Jehovah and Moloch to those of Fatherland and Empire. The essential point to be clearly grasped is, that in consenting to the death of their offspring, the people are still mentally enslaved by a false and horrible idea. They still "offer their sons and their daughters unto devils"—only they call these imaginary spirits of evil by different names. When people realise that it is as unnecessary as it is abominable to submit thus to a universal slaughter of the innocents, war will become impossible, and human life will be the sacred thing it should be.

It is an astonishing thing that the crying need for this destruction of false ideas has not been realised and used more effectively by Socialists. No man will welcome and spread the theories of Communist Anarchy or Socialism generally, so long as he has one orthodox prejudice or idea tucked away at the back of his brain. He must be thoroughly convinced of the falsity and absurdity of current notions on society, religion, etc., before he is capable of grasping the true facts of the situation. The capitalist class, on the other hand, are keenly alive to the necessity of inculcating what they consider to be right ideas into the heads of the workers. The present social system would not last very long if only the workers did their own thinking, instead of accepting unquestioningly the views prescribed for them by the master class. The cult of militarism, for instance, is just as assiduously preached in England as it is in Germany. There is not a single evil of that militarism that has cursed and enslaved modern Germany, which is not reproduced in England. Imaginary scenes and incidents which never occurred are depicted in the illustrated papers for the sole purpose of stirring up hate against "the Hun." German submarine crews drown helpless non-combatants in liners, and are rightly denounced as murderers. Allied airmen kill equally defenceless German women and children by dropping bombs on German towns, and are praised for their skill and daring. The German patriotic press take exactly the reverse view of the same incidents, and inculcate their false ideas into the heads of their people. The facts are identical in both cases. The people have murdered one another at the instigation of their respective Governments, who use the incidents to strengthen their own positions. We hear but little just now of "the Gospel of Hate" and "the Religion of Valour." Possibly that is because the writings of English authors on these subjects are becoming more widely known, and are incidentally proving that militarism as a philosophy, as well as an active policy, is by no means such a monopoly of the enemy as our facile pressmen would have us believe.

The issues that confront us at the present moment are too serious, and at the same time too simple, to admit of quibbling and confusion. The position of the man who wants to defeat the Germans and destroy militarism, whilst he ignores the militarism of England; who objects to war in general but thinks that he is justified in making an exception in the case of this war, is too absurd to require any laboured refutation. To anyone thinking seriously and honestly upon the problems of religion, nationalism, and militarism, there is only one of two alternative conclusions at which he can arrive. These opposing views find clear and precise expression in the columns of the *Morning Post* and of—FREEDOM. The present course of tragic events will compel the people to adopt one or other of these points of view. Between these groups must arise a life and death struggle. The time for compromise and hair-splitting is gone. Christianity, Patriotism, and Militarism are fused into one set of ideas. They stand or fall together. Confronting them are the relentlessly hostile forces of Anti-clericalism, Anti-patriotism, and Anti-militarism. To the first-named trinity of ideas Europe owes all its present misery and abominations. With the three-fold weapon of hostile criticism Humanity is arming herself to fight for her deliverance. The effective use of these methods of propaganda will lead the way to a realisation of the ideals of Freedom and Brotherhood. The position is not so hopeless as it appears to be. Peace talk is in the air. Covert negotiations are reported almost daily. The same feeling of war-weariness is manifest everywhere. All enthusiasm for the war has utterly died out—killed by months of deadlock, high prices, taxation, and military inaction. The people are asking for a lead against Conscription. Shall they ask in vain?

OTTO LEROY.

## WILL SCIENCE ABOLISH WAR?

The history of human advancement is the history of getting rid of conflict. At first every man fights for himself. Then groups form, to preserve what they have got; to develop the arts of peace, and defend themselves against the world outside. Then larger groups, then nations, then groups of nations; and finally I think we may with reason hope it will be the world. Man will cease to fight his kind, and will at last realise that if he will fight the other things that oppose his progress—ignorance, poverty, disease, and famine—within his own world he may be at peace. But in this long journey from animality to humanity the chief driving force has not been man's will, but his intellect. Man has proved himself quite as brutal as the other brutes, in that he has preferred to fight his kind until science has compelled him to combine and keep the peace. The conflict of his evil will has been subdued by the fruits of his intellect. He has been conquered by his own inventions. He has been bludgeoned into peace by the death-dealing machinery of his own hands. Science has said: "At the bidding of your intellect I have given you these inventions; now you shall keep the peace, or be destroyed. Dare to use your knowledge, with evil will and against your kind, and you shall be exterminated. Exterminated by the works of your own hand."

The last great struggle destined to make this clear—to demonstrate it—is even now proceeding.

I say to demonstrate it, for man's evil will cannot allow him to seek mutual aid and co-operate with his fellows until he has demonstrated by experience—and this time by the experience of a world-wide war—that fighting is a failure. Of course, all along through the ages the few idealists, poets, seers, and saints have preached co-operation and mutual aid. But they have been scoffed at, starved, and crucified by the race. Further on, the men of evil will—kings, statesmen, and warriors—have misconstrued the words of the wise and good to pervert the people and pursue their fighting. And the race, until forced to co-operation, has preferred to fight.

Not a very rosy picture for the school of idealists who believe that man is an angel fallen from God; but a very hopeful one for the others, who believe that man has come up through the brutes and is travelling onward to something better.

Science will destroy war—so much we can now see. Where the sun reaches all there is no shadow; where knowledge reaches all there is no domination; where military science equalises power there can be no defeat and no victory. Here there can be only all-round exhaustion. And where there are no laurels, no reputations, no glories to be gained, such a game is not played long. Such a game is doomed.

When Watt discovered steam as a motive power, and Stephenson applied it to locomotion, if these results could have been shut up within the confines of the British Empire, we could have dominated the world, and, like old Rome, have compelled the world to feed us. But these inventions, as soon as they came, were spread world-wide. The same applies to electricity, gas, telegraphy, aerial science, marine science, and every invention of chemistry and physics. Rome dominated the world while it held all knowledge bottled up within itself. With all the old Empires it was much the same. But modern knowledge cannot be bottled up within a class or a nation or any group of nations; and therefore no class or nation or group of nations can long dominate. As the old Book puts it, knowledge is destined to cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. Therefore history will not repeat itself, and the human race will not much longer be divided into bullies and slaves. Knowledge will overspread the whole world, and give power to the whole world; and with world-wide knowledge and power will come world-wide peace.

All this, in relation to war, Jean de Bloch saw; and as chairman of the Hague Conference and in his monumental book, "The Future of War," he struggled hard to prevent his fellow-men from making their last experiment. But the average man is a fool and a brute, and will not be reasoned with, but must have his last experiment, which is now costing millions of lives. Throughout his book Bloch proves that the future war will be an armed siege: that men will dig themselves in, that they will become proverbially the modern cave men, that the length of their lines will prevent them from bringing their forces to bear on any given point, so as to score a definite victory, and that the end must be all-round exhaustion. "Instead of a war," he writes, "fought out to the bitter end by a series of decisive

battles, we shall have as a substitute a long period of increasing strain upon the resources of the combatants—a kind of stalemate in which neither army will be able to deal a deadly blow . . . . . that is the war of the future—scientific slaughter, not fighting, not battles, but bankruptcy." "In this future war every body of men appointed for defence, and even for attack, must entrench. It must dig, so to speak, its line of battle in the earth . . . . . must raise a whole series of defensive points and burrow in the earth like a mole. . . . . The firing lines will advance one after the other; yet with all this movement in the armies there will be a belt separating them from the enemy, as by neutral territory." In estimating the cost of this mad game between five great Powers, Bloch puts it at something like £4,200,000 a day. Not so bad as a prophecy. In fact, the whole great book of over 3,000 pages reads like an amazing forecast of what is now taking place.

What Lamarck was to Darwin, Bloch is to the Norman Angell school. We may be proud that Bloch was a man from the people. Beginning life as a humble Jewish pedlar in the streets of Warsaw, he rose to attain an international reputation as an economist and financier. Apart from his voluminous writings and economics, he spent much time on philanthropic work, particularly on behalf of those of his own race who were the victims of anti-Semitic prejudice. He married a rich and talented lady, and his home was for some while the great intellectual centre of the peace movement.

In "The Future of War" he claims to have established two propositions:—(1) That in a great European war the cost of the process will be equally ruinous to both combatants; (2) that the perfection to which weapons of war have been brought will prevent either side gaining a decisive victory on the field of battle, and that the struggle will be terminated by an uprising in one or other of the countries of the starving proletariat. Bloch supported these propositions with 3,000 pages of argument. Good man! Marvellous lover of his kind! But Bloch could not save them from the harvest of their misdeeds. Wrong economic institutions once planted in the soil of society must grow, and war must reap the harvest. Robbery, like murder, will out.

The anti-social seed from which grows all the crop is the act of man selling himself to his fellow man. Commit that act, and you sow a world-wide Armageddon, which in due time is sure to come out. No Union of Democratic Control can prevent it. It is all very well as a salve, as a plaster to soften the boil and make it less irritating. But this deals with effects and not causes. Even the people, with the most enlightened diplomacy and with the fullest knowledge of treaties and international relations, cannot prevent war if they allow robbery. There must be no deceiving of ourselves in our eagerness to meet effects. The cause of modern warfare is exploitation: firstly, of the people at home; and secondly, of territory and markets abroad to feed and expand this exploitation at home. So long as exploitation lies at the base there can be no peace!

It seems to me that after their world-wide experiment (which Bloch was optimistic enough to think might be avoided) and its end in an inconclusive peace and an utter exhaustion of forces, the capitalists of the world, and the governments and rulers who are their bumbailiffs, will hasten to make peace with each other, and will begin to prepare for their last battle with the workers.

The curtain will fall on the last scene of patriotism and nationalism; it will rise on a new act. The strange type represented by Henderson, Brace, and Roberts, rushing to and fro between the camps of the masters and the workers, and trying perpetually to reconcile the irreconcilable, will have entirely disappeared. As also will the Lloyd Georges. The business will be no longer how to equivocate, compromise, and befog each other in order to palliate and mend a bad system; the business will be how to crush the workers on the one side, and how to end the system on the other. The masters will be put in dead earnest to produce the pure economic man who shall live upon sawdust and shavings; the workers will be out in earnest for freedom. The business will no longer be politics, but organisation. The workers will no longer have against them individual capitalists, but the organised Capitalist State—the Capitalist State linked up and federated all over the world. Against this the workers must be quick to place their own power equally well organised, or drop into the most hideous form of slavery the world has yet known. The battle in the last act will be the workers of the world against the masters of the world; and if the workers are quick to learn from their masters, and organise with the same skill, the last battle of Freedom may be won without a blow.



## THE RICH SCENT DANGER.

The wealthy classes are well aware of the danger they will run when the disillusioned soldiers return from the war, and notes of warning have already been sounded by some of them. Lord Rothschild, speaking at Aylesbury on January 29, referred to the high wages which many men are earning at the present time, and said that "a very large proportion of them would find it very hard to go back to their old wage when the war was over." Unless the Government were prepared with a remedy, they would find, not "a series of strikes on Trade Union lines, but a series of strikes of individuals," which "were much more difficult to deal with than those of organised Labour." He then went on to say:—

"He knew it had been stated that the most serious question at the conclusion of the war would be providing for the wounded and disabled, or those men who were coming back and had no work to go to directly, but he thought that would be mere child's play to the question of finding means to combat the discontent produced by the sudden—and necessarily sudden—reduction in the wages of a large section of the men who had remained at home owing to the cessation of all production of war materials and munitions."

Lord Northcliffe is another rich man who expects trouble. In an interview with the representative of the *Los Angeles Times* on November 5, he also refers to the high wages now being paid, but, contrary to Lord Rothschild, he said, "In my opinion, these wages will never be lowered. . . . A million and a half of young men who have been through hell for their country will come back and demand better working conditions as the price of their sacrifice. *They will not put up with any nonsense.*" He also told the interviewer that the war would have its influence on America. "For months your people have been reading about the shedding of blood. This constant diet of war is sure to bring about an internal upheaval. The American Revolutionary war was the precursor of the French Revolution."

We hope that these prophecies will come true, but we also hope that the workers will revolt for something more solid than a question of wages. Let them combine and sweep away the capitalist system which is the cause of all their sufferings.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE "DOWN TOOLS" AGITATION.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—The aftermath of the "Down Tools" agitation against legal Conscription will be detrimental to the Revolutionary Movement. What an effective war-cry against our propaganda we have provided the capitalist Press with! "Those are the men who advocated leaving you defenceless at the mercy of the enemy," will render fruitless many Socialist speeches. Perhaps the "Down Tools" advocates have got many effective points home against the rulers in this campaign, but the same time and energy spent on making public the Dardanelles' blunders (which the strike agitation has "red-herringed") would have given better results and no catch-phrase against rebels. *The strike cannot prevent industrial conscription, only the Revolution can do that.* "The Revolution is the only hope for the workers, all else acts against them," is a truism which reconstructors of the International must keep in mind. If they cannot act in conformity therewith, let them become patriots, there is no middle course. It is pathetic that, so soon after the brain-stimulation caused by the failure of the International, Revolutionists should be supporting a reformist step. How can revolutionists wax sarcastic over the intelligence of "step-at-a-timeists" when they themselves repeat the parrot-cries of reformers?

Our cry is, "Stick to your tools and sack the capitalist!" A voice in the wilderness it may be; but it is only by consistently repeating it that it will become aught else. Certainly, advocating a suicidal strike is not our purpose in life and cannot bring appreciably nearer the day of the Revolution. The future of our movement should determine our position in regard to Conscription. Whether we should become a unit in the Army or a target for the firing party depends on how we think martyrdom or permeation of the military machine with our views will hasten the realisation of revolutionary ideals.—Yours fraternally,

R. S.

### COMMUNIST COLONY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—Comrades interested in starting a Communist Colony in Western Australia have met and discussed the scheme. Finding that practically no male comrade is able to leave England before the end of the war, it was decided to start a colony in this country. This would give us the opportunity of learning each others ways; we could get the necessary experience, and comrades would find out whether this life suits them or not. It is not necessary to have any money to join, but comrades must be willing to give what they can and be willing to work. Knowledge of Communism is essential. We propose starting as soon as possible, and on a small scale, as funds are restricted. Market gardening and poultry farming might most profitably be taken up at the beginning. I hope to be able to give some definite information of solid progress in next issue of FREEDOM.—Yours fraternally,

HAROLD BANKS.

## THE NEW SPIRIT OF LABOUR.

The supreme egoism of old age is demonstrated by Frederic Harrison in an article in the *Daily Chronicle* for January 28, under the title of "An Appeal to Trade Unionists." The writer, dominated by the old school of thought and the necessity for leadership and obedience to constituted authority, makes a personal appeal to the workers which in point of fact savours rather of patriarchal times than of the present century with its acute form of industrialism and rebellious toilers. It reminds one rather forcedly of the historic King Canute bidding the waves to recede.

In his brief resumé of labour fights in which he has been the central figure and the hero, Mr. Harrison outlines his work for Trade Unionism, without which, he claims, Trade Unionism would now be a wreck. He asserts that the Military Service Bill is not Conscription or anything like it—only the brass collar of industrial serfdom, we suppose—and ends by fervently and pathetically beseeching the Trade Unionists of Britain not to disillusion him, but to do what the workmen of other belligerent countries are doing, "which is to make cherished ideas, habits, rules yield to the supreme need of Home and of Country." Despite his long list of work performed and sacrifices made, Labour appears unmoved, and one has to tell this disillusioned man that fifty years of industrial oppression, even with Trade Unionism as a weapon of defence, has taught the worker to get rid of sentiment about Home and Country, and to acquire facts calculated to develop a new Unionism which puts no faith in leaders, but believes in achieving its own emancipation.

The fact of which Trade Unionists of the old school take no cognisance is that Trade Unionism is not only a wreck, but a dangerous wreck. It has been very clearly stated by Arnold Bennett in the *Daily News* of January 18: "The official representatives of Labour have accepted and even championed the Bill [Military Service], but it is the non-representative character of the representatives of Labour which is the most disquieting feature of political life to-day." And carrying the analysis a step further, Harold Owen, writing in the *Daily Chronicle* of January 22 on the necessity for the dilution of labour, says:—"The trouble is not with the organised union, but with the individual artisan. . . . If he and his mates, acting under the spell of the shop steward, do not assent, it is irrelevant to him that others have assented in his name. With him no writ runs. There is thus a double rejection of authority—the authority of the State, through the mouth of Parliament and of statesmen, and of their own trade unions, their own 'spokesmen.'"

This sums up very neatly the spirit of the modern Trade Unionist, who, tired of being dragooned by politicians and Labour leaders, has quite unconsciously come to accept the Anarchist point of view in his rebellion against authority and leadership. The evolution of Capitalism, and all the speeding-up and the scrapping of human material which it implies, has developed in turn that spirit in Labour which is destined to defeat the enemy in the industrial war that is always being waged. That is why the appeal by Frederic Harrison will fall on deaf ears; that is why the profiteers are growing restless and have introduced Conscription, which willy-nilly will be used for industrial purposes. Yet in face of all the sinister designs and machinations of the enemy, Labour can emerge victorious if only it is realised that each individual worker has his destiny in his own keeping, and by acting courageously now against those laws meant to enslave him, render them impotent. He can collectively and individually oppose the State and Government, defy the law and make it a dead letter.

But before he can do these things revolutionary ideals must inspire him. He must be prepared not only to destroy constituted authority and all it stands for, but construct upon a broad human basis a society that shall leave the individual free to live and develop upon his own lines. He must start in the workshops, fields, and factories, and by means of co-operation learn the lesson of Communism. This united with the Anarchist ideal of freedom will provide him with the key that shall undo his chains. The evolution of industry and its centralisation has already rendered Trade Unionism obsolete, and no appeal in the capitalist Press from bygone heroes can ever resuscitate it or infuse into it that vitality necessary to the overthrow of Capitalism. We claim that Anarchist Communism alone can achieve this.

M. B. H.

### INTERNATIONAL MODERN SCHOOL.

We have to inform the comrades that owing to a polite but forcible "notice to quit," Ashburton House, Globe Road, E., our activities therein have been disbanded. The lads have been busy distributing anti-conscription leaflets; whether this has anything to do with our ejection we do not know. However, as nearly all our members are now rubbing shoulders with the workers, and will shortly be eligible for cannon-fodder, their energies are not dead, but transferred to Marsh House, where we hope the young blood will infuse further activity into the anti-conscription campaign and so justify their existence.

JIMMY.

The receipt of a free copy of this paper is an invitation to subscribe. 1s. 6d. per annum.

## FRENCH ADVOCATES OF PEACE.

The following extracts are taken from a letter received by a comrade from a member of the Permanent Delegation of French Peace Societies at Paris, under date August 18, 1915:—

"DEAR FRIENDS,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of yours of July 13 with the various pamphlets... you are emphasising with courage and force the great truth which dominates them... the need of protesting against the war. At the present time in our country the majority—those at least who are talking most—are glorifying, urging, and prosecuting the war for various reasons, most of which are monstrous sophisms. Those whose hearts are still true and reason clear must arise with energy against war and its evils if they have any of their energy left; for excess in condemnation of war is much less dangerous than excess in its justification.

"You observe that wars will never cease so long as armaments are made for them. True, there is nothing to be surprised at that men should wage war from the moment that they prepare for it. Armed peace is *an inclined plane down which they slide into the abyss!*..."

"You object to forced labour to the State. Frenchmen would have a difficulty to understand you. When they support for a number of years the heaviest burdens... their time, their money for war, they are unable to realise that they could be delivered from their chains! They think that in a free country the people are always and everywhere at the disposal of the Government. ....

"You have still in England a sense of industrial liberty [Have we now?] which has disappeared in France, in Germany, in Austria-Hungary, in Italy, and in various other small military States. *Guard that liberty well if you would keep it; none can say when you would recover it, if you should lose it!*....

"Since August 2, 1914, France has been under censorship and in a state of siege. It is forbidden for Frenchmen to meet, speak, print, and—perhaps even to think!... liberty is out of the question. It is from *England* that we must expect advice, encouragement, and example!"

### MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(January 7—February 3.)

**FREEDOM Guarantee Fund.**—J. S. Richfield 2s, J. M. H. 1s 6d, A Lover of Humanity 2s 6d, C. B. Warwick 1s, T. F. Roberts 5s, E. Robinson 1s, E. Michaels 1s, C. G. F. W. D. 16s 1d, W. Evans 1s 4d, Heron 2s 6d, R. Peary 1s 6d. **Marsh House** (socials and sale of refreshments and literature), week ending January 1, 15s 7d; January 8, 17s; January 15, 11s 3d, January 22, 11s 5d; members' subscriptions (January), £1 3s.

**FREEDOM Subscriptions.**—L. Turner (2) 3s 5d, M. Matling 1s 6d, J. S. Richfield 1s 6d, P. H. B. 1s 6d, Antonio 1s 6d, G. Wallace 2s, P.O.B. 684 4s, R. Canarina 4s, W. Warren 1s 6d, J. M. H. 1s 6d, J. Hayes 1s 6d, Yu-Sen 3s 2d, A. C. F. 1s 6d, C. Lewis 2s, E. D. Hunt 1s 6d, O. W. Jang 1s 8d, F. E. W. 1s 6d, A. Howard 1s 6d, J. W. Clarksom 1s 6d, S. Sergi 1s 6d, G. Guerrasio 1s 6d, J. Copey 1s 6d.

**Political Prisoners' Fund.**—Previously acknowledged 9s 6d, A. H. Russell 1s, Bristol Group 7s 6d, F. Crowsley 5s, D. Howells 1s, A. Cavallina and C. Bonfanti 2s 6d, P. Egerton 2s 6d, Comp. 1s; total £1 10s.

### Marsh House.

Saturday, February 5—Whist Drive, 8 p.m.

Thursday, February 10—Discussion, 8.30 p.m.: "Individualism *versus* Communism."

Saturday, February 12—Grand Puppet Show, 8 p.m., admission 6d. (preceded at 7 p.m. by Members' business meeting).

Thursday, February 17—Discussion, 8.30 p.m. sharp: "Organisation on the Basis of Industry"; opener, W. W. Craik, Central Labour College.

Saturday, February 19—Whist Drive, 8 p.m.

Thursday, February 24—Discussion, 8.30 p.m.; opener, H. Bertoli.

Other Saturdays and every Sunday—Social evenings.

### "FREEDOM" MAY BE OBTAINED of

**London.**—HENDERSONS, 66 Charing Cross Road, W.C. (Wholesale).  
NATIONAL LABOUR PRESS, St. Bride's House, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street, E.C. (Wholesale).  
B. RUDERMAN, 71 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, E.  
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