

# Freedom

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## NOTES.

### The Truce in the Coalfields.

The coal dispute has ended for the time being by the return of the miners on the owners' terms—district settlements and longer hours. Starvation has beaten the workers again, as it is always bound to do in a test of endurance. But British industries have received some hard knocks in the struggle. For instance, in April last there were 147 blast furnaces in operation, producing monthly 539,000 tons of pig iron and 661,000 tons of steel, but in September only five furnaces were working, with a consequent fall in production to 12,000 tons of pig iron and 96,000 tons of steel. The mineowners, however, are determined to get back their losses at the expense of the rest of the community, and are making fabulous profits owing to the scarcity of coal everywhere. In spite of the present abnormal demand, about 100,000 miners are still unemployed, and it is said that when normal conditions are reached again 300,000 miners will be out of work. What is to happen to these men? The Colonies will not take them because they are not agricultural labourers and have no capital, and other industries here cannot absorb them. Even Mr. Baldwin would not expect them to lie down and die in order to save him trouble, and unless some alternative occupation is found for them we hope they will soon begin to make their voices heard. If we were a sensible people we would pull down a few fences and let the unemployed produce some of the food we import from the far ends of the earth. Last year we paid £50,000,000 for imported bacon and hams, £53,000,000 for butter, £15,700,000 for cheese, and £16,660,000 for eggs. We also paid many millions for wheat and flour and meat, besides large sums for fruit and vegetables. We are not so foolish as to say that all these things could be produced here to-morrow, but we can find many authorities for saying that if we set ourselves seriously to the task we could produce in these islands all the food we require. It would certainly be a more congenial occupation than digging coal from the bowels of the earth or sitting on office stools reckoning the profits of our masters and pastors. But those fences would certainly have to come down first, and a lot of other obnoxious things would come down with them.

### A Merry Christmas.

Now that we are approaching the time when Christians unite in celebrating the birth of the "Prince of Peace," it will be interesting to look round and see how they carry out the teachings of their master. After four years of war in which even the greediest of militarists must have been sated with slaughter, and in which Christians killed Christians with great gusto, we still find many of them in almost as warlike a mood as in 1914. In spite of the League of Nations, the struggle for the balance of power in Europe is being waged as before. France makes treaties with Poland and the Balkan States, Germany makes treaties with Russia and Italy, the Balkan States follow the fashion among themselves, and Russia continues the game with Asiatic States. Mussolini says the Allies have broken the promises made to Italy during the War, and, like the ex-Kaiser, demands her place in the sun or promises trouble. He has just made a treaty with Albania which amounts to a protectorate over that country, and this causes such alarm in Serbia that the whole Cabinet resigns. As Mussolini's position is becoming a bit shaky, it is feared he may do something desperate to unite the country at his back; and France and Turkey are massing troops to meet the danger. The outlook is so threatening that the editor of the *Observer* warns Mussolini that if Italy fires the first shot in a new war she will "court the fate that fell upon the Hapsburg Empire after the fatal night of July 29, 1914, when the bombardment of Belgrade was the real beginning of the World War." So it looks as though carols will be sung in Europe this Christmas to the making

of munitions. In China the Powers have financed the rival war-lords against the Cantonese Government, but are now ready to recognise the "Reds," as the press calls them. Lord Inchcape raised a storm by saying that the anti-foreign feeling in China was due to the work of Christian missionaries. On the other side of the Atlantic we find the United States threatening Mexico with an ultimatum. And so it goes on wherever we find a Christian Government. A Merry Christmas, indeed, my masters.

### How Stalin Defeated Trotsky.

The quarrel in Russia between Trotsky and Stalin need not surprise anyone. The growing power of the peasantry was bound to be reflected in the policy of the Government, and Stalin and his supporters know that sooner or later, like Lenin, they must make concessions to the peasantry, and are shaping their plans accordingly. Trotsky and Zinoviev say truly that the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is based on the factory workers, and they are dismayed by the increasing influence of the peasants. They want to tax them by raising the prices of manufactured articles, using the proceeds to speed up industrialisation. They still think a revolution in the West probable, and want to favour the workers as much as possible. The majority of the Communist Party, led by Stalin, have denounced the proposal to increase prices. The peasants, they say, must be encouraged, not subjugated. The quarrel between the two sections was very fierce, Trotsky appealing direct to the workers in the factories. The Government would have been shaken severely if the workers had gone against them, so at the critical moment they announced an increase of wages for those employed in the following industries: coal-mining, ore-mining, metallurgical, chemical, textile, manufacture of china, glass, and matches. This adroit move turned the scale in favour of the Government, and Trotsky was defeated. But in raising the wages of these workers Stalin repudiated his own policy of not taxing the peasants, for increased wages mean increased prices of the goods the peasants buy. However, Trotsky was beaten, which was the only thing that mattered. As the Presidium of the Central Council of the Trade Unions had just previously decided to levy 1 per cent. of the workers' wages during the whole period of the miners' lock-out here, the increase of wages killed two birds with one stone—paid for the levy and knocked out the Opposition.

### Socialism and Liberty.

Sir Henry Slesser, M.P., Solicitor-General in the Labour Government, is much concerned about the question of individual liberty. Speaking on December 12 at Whitefield's Mission, in London, he said:—"A most disquieting development of modern times is the tendency to belittle the importance of freedom and liberty. . . . Personality was a sacred thing which had rights that should not be invaded by the militarist or the reformer. . . . Whatever the political, social, or economic aims and achievements of the age might be, if individual liberty were lost in the process then nothing was gained." This is what Anarchists have been saying for many years, but it sounds rather strange from an ex-Minister in the Labour Government. All the policies of the Labour Party are based on the principle that the State is everything, the individual nothing. There has been much searching of heart on this question, which has inspired a new Fabian Tract, "Socialism and the Standardised Life," by William A. Robson. "Socialism, as commonly conceived," he says, "represents the apotheosis of the Many . . . but it does not follow that Socialism either must or should ignore the Few. By the Few one means the handful of exceptional men and women to be found in every walk of life." So only the Few will have individual liberty, while the Many will be standardised. But who will decide who are the exceptional Few? Sir Henry Slesser's Anarchist views should lead to a fruitful discussion in Labour and Socialist circles.

## An Enquiry on Anarchism.

(The "Iconoclasts" Group, of Steubenville, Ohio, has organised an international enquiry on Anarchism, the replies to which are appearing in the weekly Supplement of "La Protesta," of Buenos Aires. The following is Wm. C. Owen's contribution.)

1. *Anarchism's actual problems, and the measures to be taken for provoking an international Anarchist effort in opposition to the authoritarian reaction.*

To this question I answer as follows. In my opinion, a real and powerful revolt against the present authoritarian reaction can come only when the more active and daring minds, despairing of relief through any of the existing forms of government, become seized with a passion for taking into their own hands, individually and collectively, the management of their own lives. That is to say, it can come only when, consciously or unconsciously, they have become saturated with what is the quintessence of Anarchist thought. Only those so saturated will be able to initiate and bring to fruition the great movement that will eventually emancipate the masses, and it is to the development of real Anarchists in every circle, and wherever bold and active intellects are to be found, that all energies should be bent. Those who do not know where they stand, and those who have not the moral courage needed to take a definite stand, are always a source of weakness, as events since the outbreak of the Russian Revolution have clearly proved. For years our movement has been rent asunder because thousands of our so-called comrades imagined that by some mystical hocus-pocus the emancipation of the workers could be accomplished only by the establishment of a Dictatorship that would trample disdainfully on "the more or less decomposed corpse of Liberty." For the moment I forget whether the phrase quoted was coined by Lenin or by Mussolini, but that is immaterial. Both considered that the masses must be governed with an iron hand, and each received his training in the Socialist camp.

We find ourselves perpetually attacked and persecuted by Socialists whenever they have managed to climb into the seats of power; and instead of being surprised and indignant over this, we should accept it as inevitable, because Socialism is essentially an authoritarian, all-Government creed which teaches consistently that without supervision and control—exercised, of course, by some alleged superior over some alleged inferior—society could not hold together, and mankind would sink into savagery. Our view is the exact opposite of this, and it seems to me that every attempt to mate such opposites can result only in the production of sterile hybrids. To imagine that Socialism is a stepping-stone to Anarchism is to imagine that Despotism will give birth to Freedom, and that figs will grow on thistles. In the near future we shall have to fight Socialism far harder than we have fought it hitherto, and eventually we shall discover that on both sides it is war to the knife.

Men act as they think. They try to bring about the conditions that, as they suppose, will give them prosperity and happiness; and if they calculate wrongly it is because they have not been in a position which enabled them to figure correctly. What chance of thinking correctly has a king, surrounded as he is from the cradle to the grave by flatterers who never tell him the truth? And if the worker can see no farther than the particular occupation to which he is enslaved it is because his eyes have not had the opportunity of taking in a larger view. If he interprets the Class Struggle as representing merely a conflict over wages and hours between himself and his immediate employer, it is because a narrow Trade Union teaching has given him that impression; and it can be removed only by showing him that the real struggle is a far larger one, being between those who at present monopolise the sources of life, and thereby of power over their fellow-creatures, and those who are thus rendered helplessly dependent on them.

From first to last it is a question of education, and it seems to me that we have fallen into a most dangerous habit of minimising the educational value of straight propaganda and exaggerating enormously that of events. We trust that something will happen, but we forget that what results from that happening will depend on the mentality of those to whom it happens. An upheaval among men saturated with a servile philosophy of life will result in Dictatorship, and this is what has been taking place recently in many parts of Europe. The masses have been trained, alike by their former

masters and by a widespread Socialist movement, to believe in Authority; to believe in a State run by men out of their own ranks; to put their trust in official saviours; to have no faith in their own capacity as individuals, and to rely altruistically on the strength and wisdom and benevolence of numbers. That is the most dangerous of teachings, for it plays on two great weaknesses to which all of us are prone. In our moral cowardice we shirk personal responsibility, and are only too glad to shoulder it on to others. In our laziness we leave it to others to think and act on our behalf.

We have to get the masses out of this timidity and this torpidity, and we can do it only by awakening them to a sense of their own importance and individual capacity, and to a recognition of their rights as men. Armed thus, we join battle with Special Privilege all along the line. We attack alike the exploitation of the worker, the subjugation of the individual by the State, military and commercial Imperialism, with its enslavement and annihilation of weaker nations, and all the inexpressible brutalities of a decadent civilisation which, with lofty moral maxims ever on its lips, recognises in practice only the law of the jungle, and reduces to a scientific system the despoiling of all it succeeds in forcing beneath its yoke. The present condition of affairs, in which a large portion of humanity is regarded by those in power as a superfluous nuisance, cannot last indefinitely, but it will continue until it is shaken to pieces—determinedly and, above all, intelligently. We should aim at the bull's-eye. Wars are waged for the annexation of territory, and the entire fabric of the Money Power rests on monopoly of those natural resources which should be for the free and equal use of all mankind.

Mass production, rendered possible by a subdivision of labour which reduces the worker to the position of a mere automaton, is the most marked feature of modern industrial life. As a consequence, this age has gone crazy in its adulation of the *big*. The Labour movement is also stricken with that insanity, and believes it can accomplish anything and everything by mere force of numbers. All propaganda experience gives the lie to that delusion. In actual life we find that quality is far more important than quantity, and that one determined leader or teacher is worth a thousand sheeplike followers. We suffer greatly from lack of funds, but I am very positive that we suffer even more from lack of talent; and lack of talent means lack of hard, honest, conscientious work. The Labour press is poorly supported because, with a few honourable exceptions, it is poorly edited. A Labour or revolutionary paper, being usually the "official organ" of some special "ism," clique, or party, almost invariably booms its owners' cause at the expense of truth, claiming victories where there have been no victories at all, and minimising to the utmost of its power crushing defeats. This is generally done under the delusion that it is necessary to keep up the courage of the rank and file, but such a policy is the most dangerous of boomerangs. Sooner or later the truth comes out, readers become more discouraged than ever, cease to believe in the paper, and cease to support it. A reliable press that commands the confidence of its readers by reporting accurately, that gives evidence of thoughtful study, that analyses current events intelligently, and displays throughout a clear and firm grip of principles—this I consider the first essential to the formation of a strong movement.

No movement can have permanent strength unless, first, it makes a simple and stirring appeal to truths so obvious that the dullest can comprehend them; and, secondly, gets the masses interested in them. In my judgment, we have an ideally simple programme, for the whole body of Anarchist teaching boils itself down to the statement that we seek to put an end to exploitation, and to the economic helplessness which renders exploitation possible, by winning equal opportunities for all. That covers the whole field and opens up the whole attack. We assail thereby the great god of Special Privilege, and, as Bakunin always insisted, Special Privilege is the universal corruptor. We strike at the central position occupied by all forms of government, for their invariable object is the capture of exceptional powers which will enable them to dictate to their subjects. We hit the priests of all denominations, for they strive always to impose on others what, according to their assertion, is the will of God, whose mouthpieces they are. We come into immediate conflict with the law, for that seeks to bind the living and the yet unborn by rules to which their consent was never asked; and the lawyer is always the defender of vested interests and the upholder of things as they are. All forms of dogmatism we attack; and we are bound to attack them, for our object is to set men free. This

age is sick to death with shallow, pseudo-pious, and utterly meaningless talk of construction. How is it possible to emerge into a healthy social life without first destroying the impediments that block the way? How, for example, can men become free economically so long as the earth, on the natural resources of which all life is dependent, remains the private enclosure of the few?

We are essentially destructionists, first and foremost, because our object is to overthrow Special Privilege and give all an equal chance; but I am not so innocent as to believe that we shall bring the masses to our way of thinking by merely making that bald statement. We have to meet them in their separate fields of action and explain to men engaged in widely different occupations how the special privileges enjoyed by the parasitic few reduce all outside their circle to poverty, and keep them in it. I do not believe in Anarchists flocking in a corner by themselves. They should scatter, and the ideal propagandist is the one who can hold his own in discussion with men of every class. We should attend all sorts of meetings, and be able to ask questions intelligently and dominate the debate.

The masses, on whom beating about the bush makes no impression, will always respond to broad, humanitarian truths, but they also want to be shown how these can be put into practice. I think we Anarchists have to explain how we propose to secure to each and every individual equal enjoyment of natural opportunities, and I myself favour the method advocated by Herbert Spencer, under which we should all be joint landlords and joint lessees of the joint estate—our Mother Earth—paying into the common fund whatever the privilege of occupying an exceptionally valuable piece of land may be worth. That seems to me the method an enlightened body of men who found themselves in possession of a virgin continent would naturally adopt. It was advocated and explained with great lucidity, as being a necessary corollary to the law of equal freedom, by one of the most penetrating scientific minds England has produced; and it has to be remembered that Spencer hated the State, and combatted it with extraordinary ability throughout his long career. No one has shown more clearly that it is the child of Militarism, and saturated with the barbaric mentality of coercion and invasion. No one has demonstrated more conclusively that we depart from savagery and advance towards civilisation in proportion as we abandon the coercive State and substitute for it the voluntary agreements of free men. Yet I have known leading Anarchists who considered that the system of land tenure advocated by Herbert Spencer would make the State omnipotent. In my judgment, it would reduce the State to impotence, and I feel very certain that its adoption would be opposed tooth and nail by every form of Special Privilege.

In any event, the Anarchist movement will have to convince the masses that it invites them to a struggle for something really worth the having, viz., their natural inheritance, the Earth, on and by which they have to live. It must be able to convince them that thereby they will come into full and equal enjoyment of the practically inexhaustible resources of a civilisation which, thanks to the discoveries made by Science, is only now at the first threshold of its productivity; and that from such equal enjoyment none who is willing to bear his due share of the common burden of necessary work will be excluded. We must get our own heads, and those of the masses, out of the clouds and down to the earth beneath our feet; and I am fully in accord with Tolstoy, who declared years ago that the land question is now as ripe for settlement as was that of chattel slavery in the United States three-quarters of a century ago. Indeed, it is the ousting of a parasitic landed aristocracy, and the occupation of the land by the actual cultivator, that has given the Russian Revolution its real worth. In any event, economic freedom is unthinkable so long as the masses are barred from access to Nature's storehouse.

Clear thought seems to me the first pre-requisite to a strong Anarchist movement, for a mentally muddled agitation cannot be effective. It all comes down to work, and this, though it may be at first an irksome effort, soon becomes an absorbing passion as new horizons open up and the magnificence of the struggle breaks into view. I have no set plan for the regeneration of the race. In fact, I detest Utopias, regarding them as attempts to dictate to the future, and therefore doomed to failure. Humanity must work out its own life, and all we have a right to demand, and all we do demand, is that every one shall have an equal chance of doing that. For the rest, I conceive this entire struggle as being, at bottom, between Science, whose mission it is to establish realities, and the illusions we have inherited from a past steeped in superstition, credulity, and

submissiveness to Authority—one and all the children of ignorance and of that mental timidity and moral cowardice ignorance begets. Anarchism must ally itself with Science, as against ignorance and superstition, if it wishes to be strong.

Men will sacrifice themselves only for what they passionately want, and they will not have any real passion for Freedom until they come to understand that she, and she alone, can give them what they want. When once convinced of that, they will go through fire and water to get it; but if they remain unconvinced, they will continue immolating themselves on the altars of their ancient gods. What we have to do is to see that the seed we sow is sound, and to scatter it with lavish hand. As to when and where it will take root we should not worry.

2. *Anarchy as a principle of social organisation—is it, or is it not, revolutionary?*

In my opinion, Anarchism is essentially iconoclastic and therefore revolutionary. Its one aim should be to bring about the death of barbaric mentality and barbaric institutions, in order that a civilisation worthy of the name may come to birth.

3. *Being a human idea, is, or is not, Anarchy proletarian?*

Anarchism seeks to do away with proletarianism; that is to say, with the condition of being disinherited. Eventually, as I have little doubt, men of all classes will work for the accomplishment of that object, for even to-day you will find men in every walk of life who are convinced that our present system is doomed. My own guess is that the intellectual proletariat will lead the struggle, as they have led it in the past. They suffer quite as acutely, and they think more boldly than does the ordinary industrial proletariat, who is usually still in the bonds of leadership.

4. *How can children be best directed into courses that will enable them to work out as early as possible their own emancipation?*

Bring up the child in an atmosphere of freedom, and the habit will become to it a second nature. Nothing is stronger than habit. Under present conditions this advice is difficult to follow, but we can all do our utmost to follow it as closely as possible.

5. *Along what paths should Art in America and Europe direct itself, that it may the better saturate the atmosphere with Anarchism?*

It is not Art that has to create the environment for Anarchism, but Anarchism that has to create the environment for Art. Art is a mirror that reflects the Spirit of the Age.

6. *What value should be attached to the individualistic tendencies existent in the workers' movement?*

I wish the ordinary worker had a thousand times more individuality than he displays at present, for at present he believes, as a rule, that he can move only as his organisation or party moves, and he follows his bell-wether of a leader as blindly as does any sheep.

7. *What is the value of tradition, and to what extent should it be followed?*

The test is always whether, as ascertained by research and experiment, the tradition is true to reality or false. Many old things, learned by the race in its age-long experience, are true, and should not be discarded. On the other hand, the mental atmosphere to-day is saturated with all sorts of new ideas which are merely passing fads, snapped up by the idle as novelties, or perhaps even more frequently manufactured by persons who hope to acquire a reputation for originality or to make money out of them. Most decidedly it does not follow that because a thing is new it must be true.

8. *In order to undermine more deeply and dissipate old beliefs that have become fossilised in popular thought, should comrades explain historically the Bible's origin and fundamental bases?*

My own judgment is that the Bible can be read safely, and even profitably, provided it is understood clearly as being merely a fragment of early Jewish history and a collection of Jewish literature. As the Jews, to-day a great and highly intelligent people, were, like the rest of us, originally a mere savage tribe, they inevitably created the sort of god savages always have created. Their rapid progress, especially as evidenced by the writings of the Prophets, who were the proletarian agitators of their day, has always seemed to me well worthy of study. Indeed, I think the origins of great religions should be studied carefully. Their founders knew how to make their propaganda go. I express the opinion that the marvellous influence exercised for centuries by the sayings attributed to Christ is due to their simplicity and to the beauty of their setting. Their endurance through so many centuries is a splendid testimony to the power of style.

WM. C. OWEN.

# FREEDOM.

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## China Breaks Away.

China, almost the whole of China, is now in open revolt. This means that once more, and this time on a vastly grander scale, the entire philosophy and practice of Imperialism is under violent attack. For this reason the present upheaval is of profound interest to all the world, but more particularly to subjects of the British Empire, the most extensive and powerful in history. It goes also without saying that to Anarchists this great development is of exceptional importance, for we are everywhere the irreconcilable enemies of everything for which Imperialism stands.

Our struggle is for the establishment of self-ownership. It is based exclusively on the conviction that men should be masters of their own lives, and all our propaganda is directed toward convincing our fellow-men that only a life that owns itself is worth the living. To the conscious Imperialist all that is utterly detestable. In his view it is the business of the allegedly superior few to rule, and of the inferior many to submit. In defence of that philosophy he has a thousand arguments; but Life is stronger than his eloquence, and sooner or later all Empires crumble into dust.

These movements to shake off the strangling yoke of the oppressor spring from the inexhaustible vitality of the human species, and are essential to its existence. For this reason they are like the movements of the avalanche, which, once set in motion, cannot be stopped. Long before the War the present avalanche had begun once more to move. Discontent, though gagged remorselessly by Authority, was growing constantly more clamorous. Everywhere there was increasing restlessness below the surface, and increasing uneasiness among those who regard themselves as divinely ordered to exploit and rule. The War added huge masses of fuel to that smouldering flame, for it was itself the most convincing demonstration of how stupidly the world was being governed. Almost instantly every one of the nations and racial groups of which Europe is composed asserted vigorously its right to what former President Wilson had styled "Self-Determination"—a phrase denounced by one of his former colleagues as "loaded with dynamite." From Europe it spread East, stirring to the depths the populous Moslem world, and even rousing from their age-long apathy the Egyptian and Hindu. Finally, this new tidal wave of thought swept over China, and there it found the Imperialistic dykes already honeycombed. The situation can be set out in a few sentences, and should be easily grasped.

For something like five thousand years China, though pre-eminently a peaceful nation, maintained her own integrity; a feat unparalleled. She led her own life, devoted herself mainly to agriculture, and maintained thereby an enormous population. As is natural to agricultural peoples, the Chinese had little use for a strong, centralised Government, and they have been described by more than one competent observer as instinctively a nation of Anarchists. They are not much inclined to superstition, their genius being mathematical, and their dominant religious systems are little more than practical moral codes. Their long struggle for existence has made them frugal and industrious; and they are extraordinarily hardy, for the coolie labourers who played so large a part in the construction of North America's railways, showed themselves equally indifferent to the snows of Canada and the scorching heat of Western deserts. Moreover, these coolies came from the Southern and more enervating parts of China; and, although of a low class of labourers, every one of them could read and

write. As a nation they have always displayed a peculiar reverence for learning, and when Western civilisation forced them to abandon the retirement in which they had wrapped themselves for centuries, they sent out to Europe and the United States continuous swarms of educational investigators, charged with the duty of mastering, and bringing back with them for use at home, such processes and methods as might seem worthy of adoption. These student-missionaries absorbed greedily whatever our great democratic writers had to teach them, and notoriously they have played a leading part in the present upheaval.

The Chinese are by nature unusually sociable and vivacious; and those who know them well say that, beneath a mask of self-control, they are the most emotional of peoples. It is probably fair to say that throughout the Russo-Japanese War they showed themselves as contemptuous of death as were the Japanese; and, although until recent years their idea of fighting was to scare the enemy by wearing hideous masks and burning ill-smelling smudges, they are to-day armed with all the most deadly weapons of destruction, as may be verified by anyone who studies our own illustrated papers. Let it be added that, although in the course of her long history, China has been conquered more than once, she has invariably absorbed her invaders, who have become Chinese despite themselves. Probably there is no better test of a nation's innate strength.

There are some four hundred million of these people. They were easy victims when we originally forced their gates by the sword, and we had then no difficulty in occupying their commanding ports, collecting their customs, and treating the vast concessions we wrung from them as if they were British soil. Inevitably other European nations followed suit, for China was a virgin market of incalculable value; but now the worm has turned. What is the British Government, the one most deeply interested, going to do about it? The question is a poser, and at present Imperialists are softly assuring all the world that they believe only in the settlement of disputes by mutual agreements. But they are also sending troops and warships, and louder and louder grows the cry that not only British lives but British vested interests must be protected.

In China there is no longer any central Government—a fact of which our ruling class complains most bitterly—but there is every reason for supposing that the nation itself is almost a unit in the determination to recover ownership of itself, and is bent on turning out the foreigner, whom it has known hitherto only as an exploiter. If that be true, China's present exploiters will kick vainly against the pricks; but the danger is that they will force us British workers, as recognised food for powder, to do the kicking. Should that be the outcome, we shall have to bear the brunt, and we need expect no sympathy from other nations. The might of our Empire naturally makes it hated, for the world is well aware that, by one means and another, it has managed to bring nearly a quarter of the globe under its ownership, direct or indirect. The other nations may not be very wise, but they know enough to realise that the conqueror invariably profits by his conquests, and that as he waxes strong and wealthy those he has conquered grow poor and weak. Is not that the best of all causes for hatred? What more imperative and sacred duty, indeed, can Life impose on any individual, or group of individuals, than to achieve independence, win back lost manhood, and conquer freedom?

This is the Anarchist philosophy, and we Anarchists should openly rejoice that men of all nationalities are moving fast toward its recognition in theory and accomplishment in fact. We should not be despondent because, for the moment, our own particular movement may seem to be disorganised. If we seem lost among the contending multitudes, that is only because the battle to-day is on an incomparably grander scale. It is our thought that is triumphing. It is our passion for freedom that is now taking possession of the nations. Our sun is dawning, but it has still to force its way through many a storm-cloud; and Imperialism, strong in the mental indolence and moral cowardice of masses habituated to centuries of slavish thought, will give us yet the stiffest kind of fight.

W. C. O.

## GENERAL IDEA OF THE REVOLUTION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

By P.-J. PROUDHON.

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## REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS.

My own recollection of FREEDOM goes back thirty-one years, although at that particular time the paper was temporarily suspended. Having first become interested in Anarchism in the year 1894, I began to read the Freedom Pamphlets, and that made me interested in seeing some of the men and women who made history in the revolutionary movement. The result was London took on the aspect of the Mecca, and Kropotkin, Louise Michel, Malatesta, Tcherkesoff, and others the prophets.

A steamship rate war was on in the early months of 1895, so with a fine spirit of adventure I purchased a steerage ticket at the office of the Cunard Line for the sum of \$10.00—yes, \$10.00—and sailed on the s.s. "Umbria" for Liverpool. I carried with me two letters of introduction from Charles W. Mowbray, one of which was to John Turner and the other to some comrade in the East End whom I never saw.

Through Turner, with whom by the way I have retained an unbroken friendship for these thirty-one years, I met the members of the Freedom Group. It seems to me some fifteen or twenty men and women met at the home of Alf. Marsh, on Camden Street, to discuss plans for the International Socialist and Workers' Congress to be held the following year in London. At this gathering were Tcherkesoff, Turner, Marsh, Nettlau, Bernard Kampfmeyer, Tchaikovsky, and a number of others. To me it was both a novel and an inspiring tea-party and made a profound impression on me.

Turner told me of the suspension of FREEDOM because of the illness and final withdrawal of Mrs. Charlotte Wilson from the post of editor, and how it was to be revived within a few months with Alf. Marsh as editor, and himself as publisher. My stay in England lasted only three months, but that was sufficient for me to meet the Kropotkins, Malatesta—perhaps the latter was then a prisoner in Italy and we met later, I forget—Frank Kitz, Sam Mainwaring, Wess, and others now dead or retired. To speak in Hyde Park and other places a few times, and to return to the U.S. with a desire and a feeling I would return to London.

After the visit of Turner to this country we corresponded, and finally he wrote on behalf of the Freedom Group asking me to come over and take charge of FREEDOM printing office. I accepted the offer and started out from Chicago, tramping or hobbing the way; but fate directed my footsteps in other directions, and I failed to reach London until the winter of 1898. Remaining six years and eight months, or until August, 1904, my connection with FREEDOM was active and inspiring. It is hard to speak without emotion of the friends dead and gone with whom I spent so many fruitful as well as pleasant hours; of those afternoons when I came and doffed my uniform—i.e., frock coat and top hat, worn as a salesman for American printing machinery—to make ready the forme for the coming issue of FREEDOM and feed the press, as Marsh, Tcherkesoff, Turner, Nettlau, or at times a labourer hired from the street, would turn the handle and grind out the sheets, and the mysterious Miss A. A. Davies, with gloved hands, lifted them from the press.

What has it accomplished as a result of these forty years of idealism and effort? Does anyone know? Surely not I, unless it be the spiritual uplift I feel every time the names of the men and women who worked for it come to my mind. Looking back over these thirty-one years, at the lives of the men and women who worked for the paper—and I have not mentioned the names of Keell and Owen and others who have kept the light burning these many years—compare the condition of the working-class movement in the early nineties and at the present time, and the spirit of freedom abroad in the world then and now. Did I not walk on shore in those days with hardly as much as by your leave, and last December and in March, 1922, was I not made to feel my stay was limited and under certain definite conditions? It is true England to-day is not worse than other countries in this respect; but in 1895-98 it was far better in the sense of personal freedom, and now there is little to choose between it and other Continental countries. Personal liberty is at a lower ebb to-day in most countries than it was thirty or even fifteen years ago.

My own conception of Anarchism is the same, and yet very different from those far-off days in the nineties, and while in no way agreeing to the theories of Proudhon or Tucker as far as economics are concerned, it is more Individualistic. Individualistic in the sense that Anarchism may be far-fetched as far as society is concerned, but it is a real and vital thing for the individual who feels it and tries to practise it. Activity is life and inactivity is death, so one must go on to the bitter end. FREEDOM has fought a good fight and left its mark on every man or woman who ever worked for it, so that's that, and well worth the effort. It has been the hope and inspiration of many minds, and as such has had an influence far beyond what most people

think. That it may live another forty years, and that long before that time the principles it stands for will have permeated the masses of men and make the world a better place to live in than it is at the present time, is my earnest and ardent hope.

HARRY KELLY.

## HISTORY AS IT IS WRITTEN!

I read in the *Nation* of September 25 an article by Robert Dell on "The Crisis in French Socialism." I do not intend to quarrel with Mr. Dell's conclusions with reference to the quandary in which the French Socialist Party now finds itself. But why misstate so flagrantly the position within the French Labour movement? Speaking of the split within the organised Syndicalist movement of France, Mr. Dell says:—

"The leaders of the C.G.T.U. are mostly revolutionary Syndicalists, Anarchists, or Libertarians of one kind or another—anything, in fact, except Communists. The only attractions for them of the Communist Party are its revolutionary methods, and anti-Parliamentarism. There have more than once been difficulties between the C.G.T.U. and the Communist Party, and I doubt whether their alliance can be permanent."

Nothing is farther from the actual state of things than the above. Nothing but a complete lack of knowledge of the ways, thoughts and activities of the French Labour movement could bring forth such an utter travesty of facts.

The C.G.T.U. was born as a result of the split within the old *Confédération Générale du Travail* (C.G.T.) which, during the war, took up the slogan of "sacred unity" with the French bourgeoisie, becoming, later on, at the Parliamentary victory of the Bloc des Gauches in May, 1924, but the labour agent of compromise of the French Government.

It is true that, at the moment of the split, revolutionary Syndicalists, Anarchists, and Libertarians of one kind or another, together with the Communists, planned to set up, side by side with the old C.G.T., a new *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* (C.G.T.U.) whose aim would be the rewelding of the movement and the reconstruction of their broken unity.

But from the very first the C.G.T.U. fell into the hands of the Communists, and a further split became inevitable. When, on January 11, 1924, a Communist shot two revolutionary Syndicalists at a meeting held by the Communists in the Trade Union Hall of Paris, that split became a *fait accompli*. And since then the C.G.T.U., from which the *Revolutionary Syndicalists, Anarchists, and Libertarians of one kind or another withdrew*, became simply a Communist body, directed by the wirepullers of the French Communist Party, who, in their turn, were but the obedient tools of Moscow politics and intrigues.

It is preposterous to say, as Mr. Dell does, that the attraction for the Syndicalists and Anarchists of the Communist Party was the latter's anti-Parliamentarism. Has Mr. Dell forgotten that that Party has about 30 of its members in the French Chamber of Deputies? Where, then, does its anti-Parliamentarism come in?

As to the difficulties between the C.G.T.U. and the Communist Party, they must have sprung up in the restless mind of the *Nation's* correspondent. There is so little of these difficulties, that the last Convention of the Communist Party of France decided to incorporate in its Central Committee the members of the Executive of the C.G.T.U.—thus deciding for good that the latter body is to be no more than a faithful executor of the Party's orders.

At this moment, Communist Party and C.G.T.U. are but one and the same body, the former representing the head and the latter the tail of the future "Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *à la sauce Moscovite*. It is very much a permanent alliance until Moscow will withdraw its subsidies, when both these bodies will find an inglorious death amid the jeers of disgusted French workers.

The revolutionary Syndicalists, Anarchists, and Libertarians of one kind or another have long, long ago made up their minds about the value of "Communist" propaganda. They are now earnestly trying to build up their own movement, against the governmental C.G.T. of Jouhaux, as well as against the dictatorial C.G.T.U. of Monmousseau. A new C.G.T. may spring up in the near future, independent of any political parties, anxious to bring back the French Labour movement to the days of its revolutionary activities before the war.

But Mr. Dell is quite unaware of all this. And the readers of the *Nation* will still be under the impression that the Communists are anti-Parliamentarians, and that the C.G.T.U. is having difficulties with the Communist Party.

A. SCHAPIRO.

## A PROLETARIAN HELL.

Those now governing Brazil so arrogantly have shown themselves always despotic toward the free-thinker, violent toward those who are struggling for an era of greater justice and liberty, and vexatious towards those whose aspiration is more dignity in social relations and more decency in the administration of public funds. The conception of the Social Question these statesmen have is: "The Social Question is a police question." That is to say, when the worker asks for more bread, better pay, more decent shelter, and instruction that shall be adequate and rational, they give him the sabre, the gaol, insults, the whip, or a horrible death amid the marshes of Oyapock. And so lively and intense is this hatred of the worker who has ideals that they never lose an opportunity to get rid of him, to strangle him, to suffocate him. Without rhyme or reason they persecute him, torture him, deport him, and kill him. But let us give details.

When the military revolution of July 5, 1925, broke out, the Rio de Janeiro police imprisoned, among others, the following comrades: Domingos Passos, Pedro Carneiro, Domingos Braz, Antonio da Costa, Jose Alves de Nascimento, and Manoel Ferreira Gomes. These honest working men had done nothing that justified such an attack, yet they were kept in detention for many months, exposed to the most repulsive scurrilities, and sent later on to the inhospitable Oyapock, where they all died amid the greatest desolation, far from their families and those they loved the most, devoured by malignant fevers and deadly vermin. The same fate overtook Comrades S. Paulo, Nino Martins, Pedro A. Motta, Jose Fernandes Varella, Nicolau Paradas, and Thomas Borche, of the State of Santa Catharina. Sent to Oyapock, they died in want of everything, abandoned by all, without any one who loved them to caress them in their last moments, or a soft voice to cheer them in their doleful hour of need. Furthermore, Comrades Rodolpho Marques da Costa, Antonio Vas, Vicente Llorca, and Jose Manzini, were at the same time deported to their native countries for the sole crime of having interested themselves in the associative movement—in the movement for the recovery by the proletariat of its rights—a thing the tyrants who govern this country, which is worthy of a better fate, do not tolerate.

The life of the worthy toiler, of the revolutionary toiler, of the worker who is proud of himself, of him who reads anything more than the primer of the priest, the employer, and the Government, is being turned into a Calvary in this land of Cruzeiro do Sul. For years and years this country has been in a state of siege, in which there is no liberty of press, while proletarian associations either do not exist, or vegetate in the impossibility of being able to deal with the affairs that interest their members. Press censorship, postal censorship, impediments of all kinds, are placed in the way of a free life, of freedom of initiative, of the unbosoming of ideas and their realisation. Quite recently, in consequence of an open letter in *El Correo*, that was handed over to the police, in which a worker asked that certain Labour papers should be sent to comrades in a neighbouring country, three comrades, José Lozano Mateu, Fernando Ganga, and Ernesto Lopes, were arrested and, after months of imprisonment, deported to Spain and Portugal.

As you see, comrades, by this brief exposition, we live in a country wherein there is not even the most rudimentary freedom of speech, press, or assembly. It is impossible to live thus. Either we are silent, and disgrace ourselves, or we rebel, and have in prospect death, prison, and deportation.

It is urgent that you should come to our aid. We have the boldness to appeal to International Solidarity, that the organisation and the press of all the world may come to our assistance and denounce at the bar of world-opinion the idealist's desperate condition in this country which has been so richly dowered by Nature, and is served so sadly by the despots who have raised themselves to the position of bosses, employers, policemen and governors, that they may extinguish all aspiration for liberty, and all those desires for social betterment and human equality now throbbing in our breasts.

Let the great movement that the heroic figures of Sacco and Vanzetti have awakened, as against the judges in the service of North American plutocracy, be repeated as against those, no less tyrannical, of South America—Brazil's governors—that they may learn that proletarian solidarity is not an empty phrase, and that they may understand that a higher power is rousing itself against their immunity for the crimes they are committing, their outrages on individual and social liberty, and their assaults on idealistic and conscious workers. Let the

universal repugnance of all honest men thunder in anger and indignation against these Brazilian mediocrities, these petty Neros, who have climbed into power solely through the indifference of the working people, and use it to impose on the liberties and well-being of all, for the furtherance of their own interests as the dominant caste and parasitic, despotic species they actually are.

## FASCISM PLUNGING TO ITS DEATH.

The Anarchist press is performing a world-service by its persistent exposure of Fascism, and this should be self-evident to everyone who has thought seriously on the labour question. It should be obvious that we cannot get rid of exploitation until we have abandoned definitely the fatal vice of calling on some fancied God, some self-crowned Dictator, some glib Parliamentarian, or some autocratic Labour leader to get us out of difficulties, for which our own mental indolence and moral cowardice are to blame. Self-help is the first and most inexorable law of life.

Mussolini is at this moment the most dangerous man in Europe, for he is riding for a fall, and, to save himself, will not scruple for a moment to drag us all into another war. For this very reason the dominant aristocracy in every country, and all such Die-Hard organs as the *Morning Post*, are grovelling at his feet, and working tooth and nail to create a Mussolini cult. He himself is already steeped to the lips in blood; his life is in constant peril, and, like all degenerates, he will seek to preserve his life at any cost. It is his boast that he delights in living on the edge of danger, but we doubt if any tyrant ever took greater precautions to guard himself against assault. Consider, for example, that the *Giornale d'Italia*, a Fascist organ, expressed profound astonishment at the latest attempt on Mussolini's life, because it considered that the elaborate precautions taken by the police had rendered such an event impossible. "Understand," it said, "that every house, the windows of which looked out upon the streets through which Mussolini would pass, was examined from roof to basement. For forty-eight hours prior to his passage the tenants of the apartments were not allowed to receive visitors, or even members of their own families, without a permit from the police. Special cordons of gendarmes and detectives watched the street exits, and patrolled the streets from end to end."

These are sure signs of instability and fear. Fear is the goad that is pricking the Dictator and his followers to increasing cruelties; and they have every reason to be afraid, for they have created thousands of enemies in a nation exceptionally prone to acts of vengeance, and they are finding themselves more and more isolated. The Vatican, which habitually takes long views and bides its time, is turning against Mussolini. His agents have made a bitter enemy of France by financing within her borders anti-Fascist and anti-Spanish plots, with the purpose of inducing the French authorities to hand over to Fascist "justice" political refugees. All this has been disclosed by the confessions of Ricciotti Garibaldi, the degenerate grandson of Italy's great hero, and a fellow whose infamous record Berton and other Anarchist editors have thoroughly exposed. Moreover, the sober opinion of all the world inevitably turns against a régime which persecutes such men as Benedetto Croce, and adopts such "emergency decrees" as those recently approved by Italy's shamelessly subservient Senate. The death penalty, which former sovereigns, though themselves the victims of repeated assaults, always refused to sanction, is imposed for any act that may be construed as "treason," and anyone reported as having sent abroad such news of internal conditions as may tend to "impair the credit or prestige of the State abroad" is to be handed over to a military tribunal. In explaining this Defence of the State Bill, Mussolini actually said, on November 20th:—"I ought to add that the special tribunal will be composed of persons selected by myself, and absolutely unexceptionable in every way. This tribunal will not perform acts of vengeance, but of severe justice."

There will be, however, no more smashing of the machinery of opposition papers, and for the simple reason that there are no longer any opposition papers to be smashed. The censorship is absolute; the entire nation is gagged; only the voices of the Black Shirts, slavishly applauding the bombastic utterances of their megalomaniacal Duce, are to be heard. To this pitiful conclusion has the once great and powerful Roman Empire come at last. Economically her credit must sink to zero, for who would trust a Government that is helping itself to millions out of its own treasury, having carefully obtained, in June last, a royal decree that absolves it from the necessity of rendering

any account? Politically she has placed herself at the head of the reaction to Dictatorship, and against that all the forces of an age that is struggling to make Democracy a living reality will be instinctively arrayed. Intellectually she can have no standing, for what news now comes out of Italy is doctored, and even the accounts of attempts on Mussolini's life give only the story as he himself desires it to be told.

For Anarchism as a movement all this is of priceless value, inasmuch as the world at large is being given an object-lesson on the evils of Dictatorship, which is far more convincing than any our own propaganda could have conveyed. Our part is to drive home the lesson. It is the only compensation we can offer to our Italian comrades who have been passing, and still are passing, through the fires of Hell.

## THE PERILS OF NATIONALISATION.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR EDITOR,—With interest I read (in FREEDOM, Aug.-Sept.) Wm. C. Owen's paper, "The Perils of Nationalisation." Toward the end he writes: "If I thought, as most Anarchists still think, that Henry George's teaching would lead to Nationalisation and the complete supremacy of the State, as sole owner of the means of life, I would no more think of associating myself with them than I would think of chaining myself to a leper." Surely this is a remarkable and contradictory position seeing that Mr. Owen supports the Commonwealth Land Party, which aims at the Nationalisation of the land. Its policy is: "Following on the Military Service Act, the Commonwealth Land Party demands, that on an Appointed Date the Crown, as Trustee for the People, shall collect for the People the economic rent of the Land." Here we see Mr. Owen associated with Royalty, authority of the State, and Centralisation. Poor Mr. Owen, the Individualist!

I too believe in the social ownership of the land, and not only the land but all the means of production and distribution of wealth; but not through a capitalist State. Mr. Owen claims that the Socialist philosophy has failed. Where is the evidence? The position of the world to-day proves the Socialist position to be true and the case for Individualism unsound and foolish.

Science has produced a highly internationalised society where production and transport is on a mass scale. If owned by the community and controlled by all, those forces could be used to produce wealth for all with a decreased number of working hours. By those means true individualism would be developed. We can, if given an opportunity, use Parliament to peacefully transform society. The Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party can no more be pointed out as Socialists than the Governments of the British possessions or the "hot-heads" who desire to see us in street battles. His reference to Mussolini enforcing Socialism on a nation is simply a sad misrepresentation of the Socialist position.—Yours faithfully,

SIDNEY WARR.

REPLY.

It seems to me primarily a question of whether you are prepared to face hard facts or are contented to remain a sentimentalist. So long as the masses think they can be saved by high-sounding catch-words we shall go on wallowing helplessly, as we are wallowing to-day. Vague generalities are simply trumpets blaring at the walls of Jericho, and those walls stand utterly indifferent to noise.

Mr. Warr has spoken repeatedly on the same platform as Mr. Peace, editor of the *Commonweal*, and myself, and he should have known long ago exactly where I stand. He has spoken with me repeatedly at the Anarchist Discussion Circle, where I was always blunt in my criticism of Socialism, and for a time we imagined he was with us. Then he came out in favour of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and now I find him declaring that the Labour Party and I.L.P. "can no more be pointed out as Socialists than the Governments of the British possessions or the 'hot-heads' who desire to see us in street battles." Frankly, I don't know where he stands. However, that is my complaint against the entire Socialist movement. I see it working toward one end, the crushing of all individual freedom beneath the heel of an omnipotent State; but I find it zigzagging through a thousand compromises with just those forces which have made the proletariat the helpless mass it is, and mean to keep it helpless.

I am living at present in a little settlement surrounded by a thin strip of wood. All around us are heavily-timbered tracts abounding in that dry wood for lack of which we shiver, our residents

being too poor to pay the exorbitant prices fuel dealers now demand. Everywhere are to be seen notices that "Trespassers will be Prosecuted," and so far as we are concerned those timbered tracts might just as well be in the moon. The felling, sawing, and carting away of a tree is a long and noisy task. Even to attempt it, therefore, would bring immediate arrest, for gamekeepers are always on the watch.

This is typical of the whole situation in this country. A few have been permitted to fence in the natural resources of this small island, and thereby have the remainder of the population, some forty-four millions, completely at their mercy. Like the rest of the Commonwealth Land Party, I am attacking that monstrosity; and, like them, I am attacking it in the name of Individual Freedom—the only kind of freedom worth talking about. It is a definite attack on what seems to us the cornerstone of human slavery. We are quite open about it, for we advocate the extermination of landlordism and the placing of this country's natural resources at the free and equal disposition of every one of its inhabitants, paying no compensation to the present monopolists, and more than hinting that they should be called on to compensate those on whose exploited labour they have lived so long. If I were a coiner of slogans I should concentrate on this: "You forced us to fight for *our* country. Now we take possession of it, as being *ours*."

I am not, and never have been, a believer in Land Nationalisation, for that implies ownership by some governing body which would have the individual as completely at its mercy as the land monopolist has him now. Land, being a gift from the hand of Nature and not the product of human labour, should not be owned, but should be for the free and equal use of all. Henry George expressly condemned all nationalisation schemes, with a great array of arguments, and in the strongest terms. He popularised the proposals urged by Herbert Spencer, surely a most exact and powerful thinker, who was throughout his life the uncompromising foe of the State; declared that we progress from barbarism in proportion as we minimise the influence of the State; denounced Socialism as "the coming slavery," because it would make the State omnipotent; and explained with great clarity that the method of land tenure he advocated was entirely compatible with the law of equal individual freedom. In my judgment his analysis is correct. I think his plan by far the most practicable, and indeed the only practicable, solution of the land question yet advanced; and if I am certain of any one thing it is that the land question must be solved.

For the rest, the Commonwealth Land Party seems to me purely a propaganda party, permeated with that spirit of individual liberty and individual revolt in which I believe. It is voicing hard truths, and voicing them uncompromisingly. It is making a definite and necessary attack; and if ever the disinherited masses should have the good sense to unite on that attack they would bring Capitalism, founded as it is on the monopoly of natural resources, thundering to the ground, would destroy therewith the coercive State, and would open the gate to a régime of individual freedom under which human slavery would be no longer possible.

Mr. Warr is not a courteous opponent, for he writes of me as "Poor Mr. Owen, the Individualist!" As for my being a worshipper of royalty, he may tell that to the marines. Personally, I think the wording of the platform unfortunate; but platforms are never immaculate, and the basic fact is that the Commonwealth Land Party is making a straight attack on the mother of all those monopolies that hold mankind in chains. It is really a revolutionary party, and if ever it should achieve the overthrow of land monopoly there is no earthly reason why the various communities of which the nation is composed should not themselves administer their own natural resources without the intervention of any centralised authority. That, however, is in the future's lap. Land monopoly, the cornerstone of the whole capitalistic system of exploitation, has to be abolished first; and he who imagines that this can be accomplished without a terrific struggle, and without the arousing of the masses to a far greater sense of human rights than now exists, must indeed be ignorant of history and blind to facts.

WM. C. OWEN.

### Russian and Polish Papers Wanted.

Will any reader please put me in touch with any source for obtaining Russian and Polish papers published by Russians and Poles in London about the time of the Paris Commune and after?—J. ADLER, 1917 Club, 4 and 5 Gerrard Street, W.C.2.

## ALEXANDER BERKMAN'S PRISON MEMOIRS.\*

The battle of Homestead in 1892 is almost forgotten now, but that fierce conflict between the locked-out ironworkers employed by Andrew Carnegie and the three hundred armed Pinkerton thugs brought in to terrorise them stirred the American Labour movement to its depths. The hypocritical Carnegie insisted on a reduction of wages and refused to arbitrate, selecting Henry C. Frick to carry out the programme. But the defeat and ignominious surrender of the Pinkertons was a severe check to his plans, and the exposure of his brutal methods created a storm of indignation throughout the country. A young Russian Anarchist, Alexander Berkman, decided to strike a blow on behalf of the workers. He took the train to Pittsburgh, and gaining admittance to Frick's office, shot and severely wounded Carnegie's lieutenant. At the trial he was sentenced to twenty-one years' imprisonment, and these "Memoirs" are a record of the fourteen years he actually served.

When we read this terrible chronicle of prison life, one thing stands out more strikingly than anything else, namely, the amazing vitality of Berkman's revolutionary spirit and idealism. During the whole of those fourteen years, with their daily round of drudgery, mean tasks, petty persecution, and brutality designed specially to break the spirit of the unfortunate victims of our social system, his keepers never quite succeeded in stifling the flame of revolt in Berkman's heart, though he had many fits of utter despair and on one occasion meditated suicide. But eventually he triumphed over all his enemies, and this book, first published in 1912, is a signal proof of his victory.

Whether the prison life here recorded is general in America we cannot say; but if it is, then the sins of society against the prisoners far outweigh their sins against society. The systematic torture and brutality of wardens and gaolers, the bad food, solitary confinement, and constant bludgeonings, would be impossible if it were not for the apathy and indifference of the public. Prison life is morally degrading not only to the prisoners but also to their keepers, whose inhumanity is fostered by the helplessness of those in their hands.

Alexander Berkman's book is the most damning indictment of the prison system we have ever read, and makes us realise how futile have been the efforts of prison reformers. Punishment is a relic of barbarism, and can never be humane.

## "FREEDOM'S" BIRTHDAY FUND.

In our August-September issue we asked for £100 by the end of the year to clear off the debt to our printers and to ensure regular publication monthly in the New Year. As the response was not as good as we hoped, we have since sent out a circular pointing out the dangerous position of FREEDOM. We are glad to say that this has had the effect of bringing in a good sum; but we are still only half-way to our goal. We shall print a January issue, and rely on our readers to make up the full amount necessary to guarantee publication monthly. We hope every effort will be made to increase the circulation of FREEDOM.

The following sums have been received to date (December 12): Previously acknowledged, £10 18s. 9d.—A. G. Barker 10s., Ella Twynam 10s., G. Teltsch 8s. 3d., O. Weik 4s. 3d., H. Compton 2s. 6d., J. Ferguson 2s. 6d., per H. Marquez (Lisbon) 10s., J. Rosende 5s., G. M. 10s., G. L. 2s., Workers' Friend Group £1, Paslovsky 2s. 6d., R. V. £1, E. Hirsh £1 0s. 3d., J. Dick £2 0s. 6d., C. Blandy 2s. 6d., G. P. 3s., M. A. Cohn £2 1s. 1d., J. Spivak £1 0s. 7d., E. A. £1, M. B. Hope 8s., Rochelle 10s., K. Walter £5, A. Bishop 10s., D. H. S. 10s., B. Black 10s., A. J. R. 5s., B. W. Williams 2s., J. Cosson 5s., L. G. Wolfe £2, H. F. Bing £2, H. Briner 3s. 11d., A. Kendall 2s. 6d., J. Smith 10s., D. Dent 2s., A. Hazeland 10s., A. R. Thornevell £1 1s. 6d., M. A. Mainwaring 19s. 6d., H. G. Russell 2s. 6d., W. Fraser 7s. 6d., E. Richmond £2, Leon Malmel £2 1s., M. Peacock 2s., C. W. Veness 2s., Elizabeth £1 0s. 7d., C. Pritchard 4s., A. Banks 2s. 6d., J. Montgomery 2s. 6d., T. Lane 4s., M. Greenfield 10s., A. S. F. and L. N. £2. Total £48 4s. 8d.

## CASH RECEIVED (not otherwise acknowledged).

(October 6 to December 12.)

"FREEDOM'S" SUBSCRIPTIONS.—J. Blundell, G. Robertson, O. Weik, A. Symes, J. Myers, W. S. Van Valkenburgh, C. B. W., F. Vettorelli, M. Slutsky, P. A. Carr, A. C. W., T. Lane, R. Jones, A. J. R., N. J. U., A. Kendall, A. R. Thornevell, M. A. Mainwaring, E. Lavge, K. Shibahara, C. Pritchard, J. Montgomery.

RUSSIAN PRISONERS' FUND.—J. Rosende 7s.

\* "Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist" By Alexander Berkman. With an Introduction by Edward Carpenter. 10s. 6d. London: The C. W. Daniel Company, Graham House, Tudor Street, E.C. 4.

## RUSSIAN PRISONERS' RELIEF FUND.

In view of the renewal of wholesale political persecution in Russia, and because of the increased need of aid, the International Working Men's Association has resolved to organise a Relief Fund for the benefit of Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists in Russian prisons and exile. For this purpose the Secretariat of the I.W.M.A. has nominated Comrades Alexander Berkman and Mark Mratchny as the Secretariat of the Relief Fund.

It shall be the duty of the Relief Fund Secretariat to keep the international press informed of the situation in Russia, particularly in relation to political persecution, and to collect funds and distribute them among our imprisoned and exiled comrades in Russia.

The Secretariat of the I.W.M.A. hereby calls upon all its National Sections, as well as upon all comrades and sympathisers in general, to aid the work of the Relief Fund, morally and financially, to the utmost of their ability. All contributions should be addressed: Secretariat, Relief Fund, Warschauerstr. 62, Berlin O 34, Germany.

Secretariat I.W.M.A.—

B. LANSINK, JR., R. ROCKER, A. SOUCHY.

As the Anarchists have now withdrawn from the Joint Committee for the Defence of Imprisoned Revolutionists in Russia, that organisation—as such—ceases to exist.

Comrades Mollie Steimer, S. Fleshin, and Volin have been asked to help in the work of the Relief Fund, and have accepted. They are now members of the Working Committee.

**West London Anarchist Communist Group.**—Open-air Meetings at The Grove, Hammersmith. Wednesdays, 8 p.m. Sundays, 7.30 p.m. Other meetings announced from platform. Speakers welcome.

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