



Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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NOTES.

War Aims.

As we write this a gigantic struggle is in progress on the Western Front, a few miles or so being taken and retaken at a truly awful sacrifice of men on both sides. The most hideous weapons of destruction are being employed, the hand-to-hand fights bringing out all the primitive, brutal instincts of man. The battle for this particular piece of ground may last for days, and at the finish be hailed as a great victory by both sides; but the real result will be the killing or maiming of perhaps a hundred thousand men in the prime of life, few of whom could have given a really intelligent reason as to why they fought. The Austro-Germans and Italians have been similarly engaged in the mountain passes or on the river banks, and as the Allies rush up reinforcements so will the Austro-Germans be reinforced, and again the struggle will be renewed. In Mesopotamia and in Palestine the same thing is happening as on the other battle grounds. Bloodshed everywhere. Now, after more than three years of these horrors, an aged peer writes to the *Daily Telegraph*, and suggests that the Allies should state clearly their war aims. In view of the publication of the Allies' secret treaties by the Russian Revolutionists, the Allies' war aims seem clear enough, but it will be observed that there is no mention of Belgium or Serbia in those treaties, but there is mention of carving up Albania and Dalmatia and Asiatic Turkey, with slices of Africa thrown in as "compensation." When we read these secret treaties and compare them with the highly-moral aims proclaimed from the thousands of platforms in this and other countries, we think of the poem we printed in *FREEDOM* early in the war, supposed to be a dialogue between two dead soldiers, with a refrain at the end of each verse: "Why are we dead?" But we hope that the soldiers now alive will begin to ask themselves the question: "Why are we dying?" Then the war might stop.

Why America Came In.

If only we are patient and observant enough it seems that truth, like murder, will out. The capitalist press and the Allied statesmen have been busy during the past few months booming America as having drawn the sword in order to "make the world safe for democracy." In a leading article in the *Daily Chronicle* of October 31, headed "The Finance of the War," it is stated that the Budget expenditure figures "enable one to realise the truth of Mr. Bonar Law's public statement some time ago that the American intervention had saved the finances of the Alliance from the very gravest dangers." Writing more recently in the same paper, the redoubtable Mr. Sam Gompers declares that "the entrance of the United States into the war was not prompted by a policy of aggression, acquisition, or conquest." No, for the very obvious reason that America merely sought to protect the enormous sums loaned to the Allies. To the American financiers who control the Government, honour and democracy are quite abstract terms; but it is vital to them that dividends and interest on loans should become concrete realities. So the campaign of lies was started and that blessed word "democracy" used by America to hide her moral nakedness. But it is consoling to know that she is now in such a goodly company of expert liars that she will experience no difficulty in feeling quite at home.

The New Censorship.

One of the most serious blows against the very little freedom left to us has been struck by a regulation under the Defence of the Realm Act, making it unlawful "for any person to print, publish, or distribute any leaflet relating to the present war, or to the making of peace, unless

(a) There is printed on every copy of the leaflet the true name and address of the author and of the printer thereof; and

(b) The contents thereof have previously been submitted to and passed by the directors of the Official Press Bureau, or some other person authorised in that behalf by the Secretary of State."

The regulation goes on to state that it shall be an offence to have on any premises the copy of any leaflet or pamphlet unless it shall have first passed the Official Censor. The new Order is certainly indicative of the temper of our masters. Desperate times demand desperate remedies, and the drastic nature of this fresh addition to our fetters suggests the mortal fear in their hearts. For some long time it has been increasingly evident that pacifism was spreading, and that coupled with the economic outlook, war-weariness, and perhaps, above all, the success of the workers' revolution in Russia, has nerved the Government into this fresh exhibition of paternal care.

Government not Necessary.

A vindication of the Anarchist contention that government is unnecessary, reaches us from an unexpected quarter. The special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, writing from Petrograd and commenting on the fact that no central organisation or government existed, remarks that, "It is a matter of continual astonishment that anything or anyone works at all, that shops and banks do open, that we can send and receive telegrams, that draymen rise in the morning early and go about their daily work. The Russians are certainly at bottom a most extraordinarily law-abiding people, considering the continual opportunity for and provocation to excess." All of which goes to prove what a useless sort of institution a government is after all. In fact, there is no service a government claims to do for us that could not be better performed by ourselves.

A Sinn Fein Victory.

It is to Ireland that we in this poor benighted country have to look for inspiration to-day, for it is there that we can see the good results of direct action. Following the example set by Thomas Ashe and his fellow prisoners in Mountjoy Prison, many other political prisoners in the South of Ireland adopted the hunger strike, with the result that on November 17 some sixty prisoners were released from Dundalk prison. They are now agitating for an improvement in the treatment of prisoners still incarcerated, and by all accounts are likely to be entirely successful. Thus the death of the heroic Thomas Ashe has not been in vain. The brutal treatment meted out to this political prisoner has fired the imagination of all humane people, and even led the jury to censure the Castle authorities and the Deputy Governor of the Prison. But though the authorities may continue to remain unperturbed for some time to come, it is increasingly evident that the tragedy of Ashe has led to a strengthening of the whole Sinn Fein movement. The determined opposition to British rule, which is everywhere in evidence, and the success attending the direct actionist methods of the Sinn Feiners, suggest that the Irish are nearer to the realisation of their hopes than the British are aware of.

War Aims at the "Pictures."

No one who knows what costly things government departments are will be surprised at the small item of £3,798 paid as expenses for attendance at the Albert Hall War Savings' Meeting addressed by the Prime Minister. As usual, it is simply a case of "don't do as I do, but do as I say." We hope the effect on the public will not be lost, however. Nor should the objects of another excellent organisation be overlooked. The War Aims Committee has been formed because, according to Mr. Lloyd George, it is "of real national importance to keep public opinion informed in regard to the issues at stake." In order to carry on the necessary propaganda, the cinema is to be used to illustrate the objects of the National War Aims Committee. Another touching example of paternalism! The people must not be allowed to read peace leaflets in case they become corrupted and decide that the war must end one day, but as compensation they are to have some really nice dramatic pictures, all about the Allies' righteous cause and our noble war aims. It would take a very vicious and ungrateful people not to appreciate the wise forethought and concern for their welfare displayed by our very just and considerate Government.

THE RUSSIAN VILLAGE COMMUNE AND THE REVOLUTION.

"Our peasants' outlook on the land question is probably centuries ahead of the rest of Europe."—TOLSTOY, 1910.

"There is no voting in the Mir village commune, no chairman, no secretary, no special time of meeting. Whenever a matter turns up that concerns the whole village the men and women gather together at some place of their own choosing—in summer time this is out of doors—and they talk and talk over the affair until they arrive at an agreement. *Unanimity* is indispensable in the Mir decisions."—MADAME KROPOTKIN.

Stout hearted, indeed, is he who, after long use to the amenities of Western Europe, essays to live in provincial Russia. No one, not even a Russian, unhardened by familiarity, but would exclaim at the extremes of poverty to be met on every side. True, there is poverty in England, but it is not so wide-spread, sanitation also is more or less approximated, and the standard of life is generally much higher than in Russia. The majority of the population have to live on the magnificent yearly income of about £5. Although Russia is a great grain-exporting country the peasants lack a sufficiency of food, and what they have is of very poor quality. The houses are wretchedly primitive, and the carts and farm implements reveal a scarcity of iron, unimagined in England. In mid-winter one's heart aches to note the dearth of woollen garments. More than half the country folk are illiterate, and under the old régime should any liberal landowner have wished to remedy this, and privately opened a school in what ostensibly passed as a good barn, he had to bribe the local police not to mention the matter to the authorities. The education officially provided was bad, and the teachers (generally priests) were worse. The Government, in fact, hindered rather than helped education, preferring the peasants to be ignorant and hopeless. Yet, in spite of their poverty—an outcome of crushing taxation and the appropriation of the best land by the State and the nobility—the peasants, who comprise four-fifths of the Russian people, possess in their social economy the making of a great co-operative commonwealth.

Unlike the English village, the village in Russia has never been a mere group of isolated families, but an association of very thorough-going co-operators. Except their huts and households almost all their property is held in common. Besides this the land is generally reapportioned after the interval of a certain number of years, to ensure equal opportunity for all. However, under no circumstances does the land become the property of the individual, it always belongs to the commune. The powers of the Mir—that is, the equal association of the peasants of a village—are various. It elects its own Elder every year, and treats with the Government and other bodies, as a single community; it manages its own taxation, forest, and fishing rights, or can open a school, or support a doctor or midwife, or undertake any public works. The Mirs of the locality also elect judges for their district, who administer justice according to their own customary law. The peasants do not seem to have had a very high opinion of official justice. A mujik proverb runs: "The baron is always in the right when the peasant sues." The peasant judges are wont to deal with the weak and the fallen as "the unhappy," thus illustrating the truth of Gogol's dictum: "The Russian, alone of all nations, is convinced that there exists no really bad man." Several villages form a canton, and the canton assembly enjoys similar powers.

The English Press of recent years has made much of the apathy of the village communes; the peasant is represented as being merely content to scratch the soil, and pray to the Almighty for a good crop. But this is not a true picture, and was doubtless inspired by the reactionaries, who strenuously tried to break up the communal system, because of its democratic tendencies. Certainly, in many districts the peasants have been depressed by adverse conditions—conditions created by Tsarism—but progress has been made. Recent observers of Russian agrarian conditions assert that the Mirs are steadily advancing. More scientific methods of agriculture are gradually being adopted, particularly in the collectivist villages. In the very small areas where the communal system has been abolished, disorder and intense dissatisfaction with the new conditions are rife. An improvement in agricultural tools may also be noted; thrashing and winnowing machines have long ceased to be curiosities. The peasant is said to "thirst" for lectures and literature on farming topics. The example of the urban workmen in their efforts for self-education is also eagerly responded to in the countryside. Peasants, even fathers of families, can be seen seated on the benches of a secondary school, after a hard day's work. Needless to say,

the popular universities and reading circles, whether in town or village, incurred the severe displeasure of the authorities, who suddenly became wonderfully solicitous for the poor folks' health, and closed them on the plea that they did not satisfy sanitary requirements.

How will the Revolution affect the Mirs? Undoubtedly it will be a great stimulus, and long overdue reforms will be obtained. It is quite possible that the peasants will be strong enough to obtain very important advantages; certainly they will be a powerful factor in the State, because, if united, they can wield economic power as well as political. It is for this reason that the autocracy always kept them ignorant, impoverished, and separated. It was to insure this, that when serfdom was abolished, the peasants were dispossessed of part of the communal lands, and being unable to fully maintain themselves on their allotment, they were forced to work a portion of their time for the barons at whatever wages they could get. It was for this that Stolypin, after the disturbances of 1905-6, vainly tried to abolish the communal system and create a class of peasant-proprietors, at the expense of the poorer peasants, who were to become dependent labourers to the others. Report has it that the peasants are already claiming the estates of the great landowners, which argues that they know what they are about. The mujik saying, "Seven with the spoon to one with the plough," shows that the peasant is fully alive to the fact that he was cruelly exploited.

One of the most remarkable speeches in the first Duma came from a humble peasant-deputy, who in vigorous homely phrases thus depicted the peasants' lot: "The peasants," he declared, "were like poor, blind Samson, whom the bureaucratic Philistines had deprived of strength, sight, and freedom. Would the Samson mujik continue to endure their persecutions, or would he, feeling his strength, return, stretch forth his hands, and cause universal destruction?" The petitions of the peasants were then brutally rejected, but Nemesis followed in the disturbances of 1906-7, the unrest just preceding the war, and finally in the *debacle* of Tsarism.

In conclusion, let me reiterate the significant pronouncement of Karl Marx, that the Russian Commune might help that country to avoid the worst evils of Capitalism in its transition to Socialism.

IVAN IVANOVICH.

AMONGST THE POETS.

Slaves of the Sword and other Verses. Paper, 3d. net.—*Songs of the Wayside.* Cloth, 1s. 4d., post paid. By S. J. Looker.

We confess that the unrhymed quatrains of "Slaves of the Sword" are just a trifle too startling to read evenly: the mind is distracted from the verses by the peculiar rhythm, and we suggest an alteration to assonances would lend fluency. "Contrasts" is easily the best piece of verse in the book. "The Real Desire of Men" and "The Martyr" are well-executed pieces. We quote from the former:

"Yet is the wish of men for home and peace,
Friendship and joy, and something out of life,
From the dull cares of toil seeking release
That is not found in the loud crash of strife.
And men are longing not for power or fame,
Only relief from toil, and rest from pain."

"Songs of the Wayside" contains poems in much the same strain, with a greater leavening of the love of Nature. There are some good sonnets between the green covers, notably "Not in the Trench" and "Chatterton." There appears to be one drawback in his verses that the poet might eliminate with advantage: it is a too slavish labouring in a Wordsworthian rut. The books are obtainable from the author at 18, Allen Road, N. 16.

The Battle Fiends. By E. H. Visiak. 1s. net. Elkin Matthews, Cork Street, W.

Those who imagine from the title that the book deals with the antics of the war-crank will be disappointed. "The Battle Fiends" contains some hefty lines, such as in "The Dreamer."

"To Some War Rhymers" finds the poet in excellent fettle, as also in "Scatterbrain" and "The Passing of War." He has the felicity of expressing much in a few short lines without a jarring rhythm. "At Dawn" is an excellent example of this. Buccaneers and pirates roll over his pages with much allegorical wisdom in satirical strain. His tilt at "Party Politics" is a goodly quatrain:

"Strong language seems the strength of politics,
These folk belabour so with wordy sticks:
Though Samson's strength lay in his hair, alas!
Their strength lies in the jawbone of an ass!"

L.A.M.

THE LABOURER'S HIRE.

(Continued.)

Although the beginnings of Capitalism can be traced back to the middle of the seventeenth century, or even to Elizabethan times, when the merchant class increased in wealth and power, yet its great effect upon the mass of the people was not felt until the many and various new inventions of the eighteenth century made the factory system possible. It was these inventions and the application of mechanical processes that altered the whole face of industry, and, by destroying home industries, forced the worker to seek employment in the factory. Miserable as had been the lot of the home worker, it needed the factory of the late seventeenth century to make him realise what utter poverty and degradation meant.

While England was busily engaged in extending her conquests overseas, and seeking new markets for the enormous surplus of manufactured goods that the factory system had made possible, the wage-slaves within the factory were tasting the bitterness of exploitation such as had never before been experienced. Let all those who desire to understand how our commercial supremacy was established, make themselves acquainted with the history of the factory system, and they will see that our so-called greatness was founded upon the countless miseries of men, women, and children. It is to the credit of the workers that they endeavoured to band themselves together into unions and associations in order to wrest concessions from the masters, but as they grew in power, so was the machinery of the Legislature put into operation against them. Even where the law appeared to favour the workers in their demands, the judicial interpretations during the last quarter of the eighteenth century declared most of their combinations to be illegal. On the other hand, it is true that English Parliaments from the time of Elizabeth onwards had introduced Poor Laws, by means of which the poor worn-out human machines, broken on the wheel of industrialism, could retire (wherever disease, overwork, and starvation had allowed them to survive) to the insanitary workhouses, where a bad and starvation diet usually quickly speeded them on their way to the pauper's grave awaiting them.

Nor did the agricultural labourer fare any better. From time immemorial he had been oppressed and exploited by the lord of the manor and the squire, but bad as his condition appears throughout history, he reached the lowest depth of poverty and degradation after 1765, when the supremacy of the factory-owning class made the strangling of agricultural interests a commercial necessity. It was naturally enough of no vital importance to this class that their operatives, who toiled all day producing clothing, boots, etc., for export, should lack the commonest necessities of life. Commodities thus produced when exchanged for foreign wheat and other articles of consumption returned an enormous profit, and that was sufficient justification in the eyes of the commercial class that was rapidly piling up huge sums. This wealth is actually being used to-day in a war waged solely for the purpose of retaining old markets and securing new ones. Thus it was that this just and benevolent class, which really ruled England, provided ample laws with which to deal with any sign of revolt on the part of their wage-slaves. The Combination Laws of 1799 and 1800 decreed that the death penalty should be meted out to all convicted of rioting, firing ricks, etc., while the penalty for destroying threshing-machines was transportation for seven years.

For years previous to the passing of these laws, legislation had aimed at keeping wages down, the terrible condition of the labourers being slightly palliated by the sale of flour at less than market price, and by doles given in the shape of charity and parish relief. But for the Poor Law the condition of the labourer would soon have become impossible. It was the natural outcome of the wage system, and as usual aimed at keeping the workers in servile dependence upon their masters. In this crime against the labourers of England, squire and parson joined with the commercial class, and readily agreed to any law which aimed at the subjection of the masses. As some indication of the spirit of the times, the dignified statement as to their grievances made by the Norfolk labourers may be quoted. This was answered by the Treason and Sedition Acts of 1795. Under these Acts 50 persons could not meet except in the presence of a magistrate, who had power to dissolve the meeting and arrest the speaker. As showing how terrible was the condition of things in an agricultural county, we may mention the case of Hampshire, where, it is said, most of the population had made itself liable to the death penalty. But that was in 1831, more than half a century after the industrial development of England had commenced on a large scale, when indeed we were earning the right to that flattering description of England as the workshop of the world. We were, in fact, the most economically developed country, yet the great

bulk of the people were always on the verge of starvation, starvation that in the eyes of the ruling class could only be cured by the enclosure of the common lands, and other such devices of robbery. The magnitude of this crime against the people can be understood when we realise that between 1760 and 1844 some 4,000 Enclosure Acts were passed, and about six million acres of commons enclosed. The loss of pasturage resulted in increased discontent and agrarian outrages. As usual, the propertied classes fell back upon all the forces of the law and the military, and stigmatised the labourers as "Huns." But that was in the early nineteenth century, before commercial rivalry had discovered that the libel adequately described men of another race. This only shows what an unoriginal people the British junkers really are. The irony, however, lies in the fact that the very descendants of the so-called British "Huns" should now be fighting their masters' battle against the "Huns" of Germany. Which further shows what an unintelligent people the workers are.

(To be continued.)

THE RIVALS.

Old Law, cheek-stained and charcoal-eyed,
Lay in her chambers, ill,
While unctuous servants vainly tried
Her cold alarms to still.
Nine judges sat about her bed,
And each one coughed and shook his head.

Doctors of Law, profound, intense,
Compared her temperature;
Anointed college presidents
Advanced their favourite cure;
And one, who scorned banalities,
Applied hot technicalities.

They rummaged through the statute books,
They scanned the Constitution;
At last, with swift exchange of looks,
They hit on this solution:
"Her malady, 's blood! is raw
Popular contempt of Law!"

"You lie! You lie!" The patient raves
And bolts straight out of bed;
While criers, clerks, and fat tipstaves
All blush a rosy red.
For Law had ne'er before, you see,
Exposed herself so nakedly.

"Contempt of Law! Contempt of me!
Is that your reckoning?
My rival, Justice, then must be
Abroad and beckoning—
Will't never be my fate to miss
That meddling jade, my Nemesis!"

"To arms! All ye that serve me still,
This wanton hussy snare!
How can ye, while she roams at will,
Stand dumb, with vacant stare?
Go! Fetch the wench whose balanced scale
O'erthrows us all should it prevail!"

They scoured far on land, in ships—
And trembled lest they miss
The blindfold maid whose fragrant lips
The people yearned to kiss.
They found her in an alleyway,
And strangled her at break of day!

* * * *

Since then, they say, there's been no flaw
In popular respect for Law.

—Paul Hanna, in "Life."

RAID ON "SATIRE."

Owing to a slight disorganisation caused by the raid, some *Satire* readers and agents may not have received their usual copies. Please write at once, giving full name and address, to "SATIRE," 127, OSSULSTON STREET, LONDON, N.W. 1.

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THE STATE AND THE C.O.'s.

The debate in the House of Commons on November 21-22 on the question of refusing votes to conscientious objectors proved conclusively that Parliament has now adopted the German theory that the safety of the State is the supreme law, and that the State is entitled to claim the life and property of every person in the community. Some members, notably Lord Hugh Cecil, fought against this theory, and pointed out its German origin; but the arguments they used were not very convincing. Even Lord Hugh would only grant relief to the religious conscientious objector. As for what he called "seditious objection," he had not the smallest sympathy with it, "and if in any way it were possible to say in respect of those who offered to military service, not a conscientious objection, but a seditious resistance, I should be the last to deny that the State had a perfect right to punish them for that sedition." Therefore, he admits the supreme law of the State in the case of Anarchists and Socialists, but claims that the religious objector is shielded by "the higher moral law."

Now we Anarchists maintain that unless this claim of the supreme law of the State is overthrown entirely there can be no liberty. Whether in Germany or in England, the effect is the same. It means that the politicians who may be in office at any given moment have the right to call us from field, farm, or factory and force us to fight in any war they undertake. We know that this has been done many times in the past, as in the case of the press gang and the Militia Ballot, but it is now for the first time put forward as a definite claim, to be applied to everyone.

Let us examine the claim in detail. It is presumed that there is something sacred about "the State," and it must be preserved at all hazards. But when we look into it closely we find there is no more sanctity about it than there is about any other of the idols that have been worshipped in the past. If the State is sacred, then all the persons who compose it are sacred, and they must be infallible: their decisions must also be sacred. Was the Crimean War sacred? The late Lord Salisbury said we "put our money on the wrong horse" in that war. Was the Boer War sacred? Ask Lloyd George, who opposed it with as much energy as he has supported the present war. And yet if the theory of the "supreme law of the State" applies to this war, it must also have applied to those past wars.

But perhaps this sanctity lies in numbers. If a majority of the people are in favour of war, does that make the "supreme law of the State" apply? According to our democratic politicians, the will of the majority is the supreme law. Yet one of Northcliffe's papers said recently, speaking of the pacifists, that even if they converted the majority of the people, the Government would still carry on the war. So the supreme law does not rest on majorities. Then whence comes its sanctity? It does not come from the politicians (there is certainly nothing sacred about them), and it does not come from the people. We therefore are driven to the conclusion that there is no sanctity about the supreme law of the State, and that it is simply one of those phrases with which our rulers maintain their hold on the people.

In years gone by our rulers reigned by "Divine Right," but when King Charles's head was cut off, divine right was cut off also. Then was invented the formula of Parliamentary rule: the will of the people. But the people knew there was nothing sacred about themselves, so the politicians invented "the State," and gradually the idea of sanctity has grown up round the State until

now it is a word to conjure with. In reality, however, it hides the same sort of despotism and tyranny as "Divine Right." They both represent Might. They both mean that the men in power are determined to maintain their power at all hazards, and woe betide those who stand in their way. The fiction of "the State" has covered and is covering all the evils of Capitalism, which will gain a fresh lease of life from the recent increase of so-called "State Socialism," which is in reality State Capitalism.

In being deprived of the vote, the conscientious objectors will lose little. Many of those who objected at first on religious grounds have had their eyes opened as to the nature of the beast known as "the State," and are under no illusions as to its sanctity. Many thousands of other people are also aware of the dangers ahead, and now know that the great fight of the future is not in favour of State control, but against the State and all its works. Under the mask of the State they recognised all the old tyrannies of the past, masquerading as a benevolent friend of the people; but now the mask is thrown aside, and it appears as an even more powerful and monstrous despotism than before. The State is Capitalism, the State is Exploitation; with these monsters there can be no compromise. If Liberty is ever to shine its light over the world, the State and its claim on our manhood and womanhood must be crushed.

RUSSIA AND THE ALLIES.

The struggle for control of the Government of Russia has taken another dramatic turn. Kerensky, the "strong man," the "saviour of his country," is in hiding, and the Maximalists, with Lenin and Trotsky at their head, are now supreme in Petrograd and Moscow. How long they will remain so depends on the support they receive from the Army and the peasants. The Maximalists have made a strong bid for the peasants' assistance by promising to hand the large landed estates over to agrarian committees, a very clever move, as the majority of the soldiers are peasants. While our press says there is no strength in the Leninites, they overlook the fact that their success took place after a long and severe struggle in which all parties fought tooth and nail to gain victory. If Russia were left alone, it is probable that the Leninites, with some Moderate Socialist support, might hold the reins of Government for some time, and negotiate a peace with the Central Powers.

But the Allies are getting ready to prevent such a move. The mere mention of a separate peace brought cries of "Treachery!" from the people who consider the Russian peasants pawns in their game of war. And when Trotsky published some of the secret treaties, exposing the schemes of conquest arranged between the Tsar's Government and the Allied Governments, their rage knew no bounds. Now they are openly threatening to "punish" Russia if she withdraws, as it is stated that she would then become a "vassal" of Germany. "Japan, in that event," says an American paper, "might be forced to take the Siberian cities and a considerable portion of territory west of the Pacific." In fact, a Swedish paper speaks of the Japanese occupation of Vladivostok as having already taken place. How highly moral are the aims of the Allies compared with those of the Central Powers!

The real fact is that Russia has not the material means for carrying on the war. The war is a legacy of the rotten and corrupt regime of Tsars, and when the Tsar Nicholas and his autocratic clique were driven out of Russian life, the war, as far as the Russian people were concerned, came to an end. They have neither the will nor the means to continue, and the Allies are considering their own selfish ends when they try to put new life into Russia's army. The money they lent to the Tsar's Government was to be wrung out of the workers, with high rates of interest, and if they lose the lot it will be a lesson to them. We hope the workers of all the belligerent Powers will repudiate all the War Loans.

Meanwhile, is there no means of calling the attention of the workers of this country and of France and America to the crime now contemplated against the Russian people? Millions of her population have laid down their lives in this senseless struggle, and now when they cry "Hold, enough!" the Allied Governments threaten them with a new spur to goad them on. It is constantly stated that the principal aim of the Allies in this war is to allow every nationality to decide its own destiny. Then let it apply to Russia.

The pact of "no separate peace" was made with Tsar Nicholas, not with the Russian people, and in ignoring it they will show their complete repudiation of all his actions. The Russian people are now in need of a convalescent home to regain their strength and vitality.

RAIDS AND CENSORSHIP.

At the present moment in every Allied country there is a very strong minority working for peace by negotiation. We do not refer to the ordinary pacifist and anti-war organisations, but to influential commercial and political groups, similar to those who inspired Lord Lansdowne's letter, who fear that if the war is to be continued until the Central Powers are completely beaten from a military point of view, the process will so exhaust the Allies that recovery may be impossible for many years, during which riots and revolution will break out, and Capitalism itself be in danger. Carson, Milner, George, and Co., however, are prepared to "damn the consequences," and carry out the policy of the "Knock-Out Blow." To do this, all peace talk must be stopped, so a beginning has been made by attacking the smaller bodies, and if the people do not protest, it will be much easier to terrify the more influential ones.

During the past month raids have taken place all over the country, the victims including the No-Conscription Fellowship, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Women's Peace Crusade, National Labour Press, our friend, T. Keeley (a printer at Hackney), and many others. About 20 raids have taken place, and hundreds of thousands of peace pamphlets and leaflets seized by the police, who also took all the business books and letters they could lay their hands on.

Of course, it was hardly to be expected that we should escape, and on November 20, during our absence, Scotland Yard men came to FREEDOM Office, forced the window catch, and sneaked in to seize all copies of SATIRE on the premises, going out through the window again. The police also raided the printers of SATIRE and took away one of the type formes. Still Scotland Yard was not satisfied, and on November 30 they raided the lodgings of the editor of the paper (L. A. Motler) and seized all they could lay their hands on: back numbers of SATIRE, business books, correspondence, files, typewriter, drawings and blocks, £7 10s. in cash (evidently from Bolo Pasha), and many other things. As the police came with a warrant our comrade will probably be called on soon to show cause before a magistrate why the whole lot should not be destroyed. One amusing fact in these two raids is that the officer in charge sent a report to the press each time, giving his name as the dashing hero. More medals!

Highly pleased with their pamphlet-stealing campaign, the Government issued a new Regulation under the Defence of the Realm Act, by which all leaflets and pamphlets relating to the present war or to the making of peace must be submitted to and passed by the Press Bureau before being printed. This outrageous Regulation has brought forth a storm of protest, and the Northcliffe gang, feeling the force of public resistance to the measure, are now saying that it is not necessary to go so far. If it continues in force, the Cabinet will be able to stifle all criticism, and only propaganda in official favour will be heard. Of course, in a war to "save the world for democracy" many drastic steps may be expected, but such a censorship as this exposes the hollowness of our rulers' cry about fighting for "honour and liberty," etc., etc. Let us hope we have now heard it for the last time.

NEWS AND VIEWS.

E. Armand, the Editor of the Anarchist-Individualist paper, *Par delà la mêlée*, published in Orléans, has been arrested as aiding and abetting in desertion from the army. An article on "l'affaire Armand," by Pierre Chardon, in *Ce qu'il faut dire*, has been wholly suppressed by the French censor.

Two Anarchists, Francis and Marie Mayoux, have been sentenced at Angoulême to six months' imprisonment and a fine of 100 francs for publishing a pacifist brochure: "Trade Union Teachers and the War." Their son, brought up on the same charge, was acquitted as having acted under the instigation of his parents. Further reference to this case censored.

Two chauffeurs, arrested for conveyance of pacifist literature in their taxi-cabs, have been sentenced, one to six months' and the other to four months' imprisonment; in addition, their licenses as taximen have been permanently suspended so far as Paris is concerned.

The Paris police, like their London confrères, are busy raiding all likely and unlikely places of sedition. Recently they paid a

visit to the offices of the *Canard Enchaîné*—a satiristic Socialist weekly—and another to the private apartments of one of the staff of *Ce qu'il faut dire*, who writes under the pseudonym of "Mauricius," and who was editor of the defunct *Anarchiste*. Both raids, as might be expected, had no result except annoyance to the suspects.

A recent issue of the *Irish Printer* appeared with its first matter page blank, except for the following: "The members of the Dublin Typographical Society employed at our printers have, under instructions, refused to print our leading article without its first being submitted to their Executive for censorship. This we have emphatically declined to do; and the paper goes to press minus what is, in our opinion, an honest and fair statement of the position in Dublin at the moment." The *Sales and Wants Advertiser*, from which we take the above, heads this "An Amazing Censorship!" Evidently the masters do not see the humour of the situation when the workers take a leaf out of their own book.

This possibility in the direction of Press control by the workers should be borne in mind when the class war breaks out, as it continues to do in spite of this war for freedom, honour, etc. Note should be taken of the action of the authorities in the last engineers' strike, when only Press Bureau views were allowed, and the authorities placarded the walls of munition and other engineering works with "official" posters, presumably printed by Trade Union workmen. This strike would have collapsed earlier had not the strikers kept up communication by means of motor bicycles and the like. A "Strike Bulletin" was also issued, giving details of the progress of the strike. L.A.M.

THE WAR PREARRANGED.

In these hard times, when all the human troubles are settled by committees, it is no wonder that, after three years of fighting, a new influential Committee has been established to find out the cause of the war and the aims we are after. So, being up to date, it is permissible even for a humble individual like myself, although not being a Cecil or a man with a special training in the political game, to make a few remarks on the subject.

What was the cause of this war? Why have peoples and nations living in peace all of a sudden taken to fighting one another with such vehemence? Have the Capitalists, our rulers, fallen out between themselves about the division of the spoils? Probably it may have been one of the reasons, but it cannot be the only reason. Capital of late had practically a free hand in every country—it was international. The competitive Capitalist system is certainly the cause of this war, but not only because of the difficulty of dividing the products of exploitation, but of the difficulties of continuing the system of exploitation of the workers. Over-production naturally brings in its tail unemployment. A small number of unemployed is rather healthy to the system—it keeps wages down. However, when the number greatly increases, it becomes dangerous and uncontrollable. The workers generally can stand a lot, but there is a limit to human endurance. Hunger and famine make for revolutions, and a revolution, like a volcano, cannot be controlled.

What is to be done? Feed the multitude? It creates a precedent. It acknowledges the principle of the rich being responsible for the welfare of the poor. It might lead to the idea of equal distribution of wealth amongst the producers. That would not do. Capitalism as a system would collapse. Unemployment must be controlled; work must be found for all those that are able and willing to work. While they are working they do not think, and are quite easily manipulated by their leaders and the politicians. For that purpose a war, a great war, an international war is the thing. It destroys wealth, clears old rubbish away at excellent profits, creates an atmosphere of hate, mistrust, and division amongst the oppressed, and fills their heads with all sorts of patriotic nonsense that is likely to last for a long time. The Capitalist system gets another lease of life till the next crisis, when the same dodge can be worked again with the same success. But if the workers were to see through the game, the people who have played it so well would learn to rue the day. And there are a few signs that a glimmering of the light is beginning to penetrate the gloom, and the Capitalists know it, and are getting ready to meet the storm.

NIKROS.

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

CHRISTMAS, 1917.

For Peace on Earth man sighs—and nurtures Hate,
Bellona's ever blind and abject slave.
Soon "Peace on Earth!" will reign in lonely state,
The epitaph upon a dead World's grace.

KOSMOP.

FACTS ABOUT THE BRITISH EMPIRE

Frederick the Second once remarked that if his soldiers reflected not one of them would remain in the ranks; it is likewise equally true, that if Governments allowed their subjects to become acquainted with the true histories of their own and other countries, they would never even think of entering the ranks. If, for instance, the average Briton was well acquainted with the present conditions in most of the vast territories of the Empire, he would never believe that our Government entered this war wholly and solely for the liberation of subject races. He has been taught that the rôle played by Britain in history is that of a knight-errant, ever ready to champion the cause of the weak and oppressed. To him the Elizabethan admirals were great heroes, and not, as was often the case, merely pirates and slave-traders. To him the struggle with France a century ago was not a struggle for economic supremacy, but a war to liberate Europe from the monster, Napoleon. His views of our occupation of India, Egypt, Burma, etc., are quite childish. The Crimean War, again, was not of course undertaken to check Russia's Imperialist aims, which conflicted with ours, but (according to the *Times* of that period) to save Europe "from the menace of Asiatic barbarism," and finally the righteousness of the Boer War was too obvious to mention! But, what do the real facts reveal? Can the Empire pose as a benevolent concern?

The following excerpts are taken from "Imperialism: a Study," by J. A. Hobson, M.A. This book was written some years before the war, and according to Lord Morley, who contributes a foreword, the work is ably written and true in its statements:

"Since 1870 about 40 separate areas have been annexed by Great Britain. This New Imperialism (with the exception of Boer S. Africa) has established no single colony with responsible government or representative institutions (p. 24).

Almost the whole of this new territory is tropical or nearly so, and therefore precludes genuine colonisation by the British (p. 25). . . . A moneyed interest within the State usurping the reins of Government, makes for imperial expansion, in order to fasten economic suckers into foreign bodies so as to drain them of their wealth, in order to support domestic luxury (p. 389). . . . Although the New Imperialism has been good for sectional interests, it has been bad for the nation (p. 51). . . . The stamp of 'parasitism' is upon every white settlement among these lower races; that is to say, nowhere are the relations between the white and the coloured people such as to preserve a wholesome balance of mutual services (p. 295). . . . The ancients carried off the lower races to become slaves. . . . we moderns wish the lower races to exploit their own land for our benefit (p. 264). . . . When the settlement approaches the condition of genuine colonisation, it has commonly implied the extermination of the lower races, either by war or private slaughter, as in the case of the Australian Bushmen, and Hottentots, Red Indians, and Maoris, or by forcing upon them the habits of a civilisation equally destructive to them (p. 226). . . . The nation must take warning. Nature is not mocked; the parasite is doomed to atrophy, decay, and final extinction (p. 389)."

In other words, the British Empire, suspiciously like the Turkish, consists of a comparatively small warlike and aggressive race, of some 55 millions, who dominate and exploit populations of some 430 millions. The vast majority of its subjects have considerably less political freedom than the subjects of the Central Powers, and yet, thanks to the general ignorance so cleverly organised by the press and government, the Empire is able to pose as the protector of small nations and the champion of Democracy! It is high time the British took to heart the Scriptural injunction: "First cast the beam out of thy own eye, and then only shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote from out of thy brother's eye."

S. C. P.

SUBLIME AUDACITY.

In his reply to the Bolshevik demand for an immediate armistice, the British Ambassador at Petrograd put his tongue in his cheek and said:

"The Governments which, like His Majesty's Government, derive their powers direct from the people, cannot take a decision on a matter of such supreme importance without first assuring themselves that the decision will meet with the approval and sanction of the people. They cannot, therefore, return an answer off-hand."

It almost takes one's breath away! Were the British people asked whether Russia was to have Constantinople or France to have the west bank of the Rhine, or Italy to have Dalmatia and pieces of Africa? Do they know the terms of the new treaty by which America and Japan will receive "compensation" in China? We know that at the present moment if any Englishman were to publish a leaflet with those treaties on them he would be sent to prison very quickly under the Defence of the Realm Act. The day before we declared war on Germany, Sir Edward Grey stated in the House of Commons that when he arranged the Alliance with France a few years previously he only consulted two members of the Cabinet. When Sir George Buchanan made that reply he really showed the profound contempt in which most of the ruling class hold the people.

OUR APPEAL.

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NOTICES.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP.—Rooms, 10, Windsor Street (off New City Road). Meetings will be held every Sunday evening during the winter at 7 p.m.

Dec. 2.—William Livingstone. Subject: See Local Paper.

" 9.—Miss W. Barlow: "Militarism and the State."

" 16.—John Winning: "The Harmonial Philosophy."

" 23.—Robert Selkirk: "Harmony of Thought and Action."

" 30.—See Local Paper.

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS.

Send postcard for list of books and pamphlets.

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