

Freedom

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NOTES.

Mr. Baldwin on Reparations.

The Prime Minister's statement in the House of Commons on July 12, though very cautiously worded, is a step nearer the inevitable break in the Entente. Mr. Baldwin says that the occupation of the Ruhr is destroying British trade and making it impossible for Germany to pay her debts, and "an indefinite continuation of this state of affairs is fraught with grave peril." The Paris correspondent of the *Times*, telegraphing the same evening, says: "The French have made up their minds that they are installed in the Ruhr for a long time to come." With such divergent views agreement is impossible, and the Entente is already dead. The Government of France, in alliance with Belgium and Poland, considers it is strong enough to go its own way regardless of consequences to others. If Britain's trade suffers it is because she encourages Germany in her resistance, which France believes would otherwise collapse at once. British statesmen, on the other hand, see that unless they can check the growing power of France their lines of communication with India and the East would be at her mercy, and as a precautionary measure the main British fleet is to be stationed in the Mediterranean. This latter move is also meant as a gentle hint to Mussolini to get off the fence, where he sits prepared to sell Italy's support to the highest bidder. And while all these moves and counter-moves are taking place on the international chessboard, what of the workers who will be used as cannon-fodder when the next war comes? What are they doing to prevent another wholesale slaughter? Is there any sign that the workers of France and Britain will refuse to march when their masters give the order? We cannot see it. What we can see is the Labour Movement taking up the attitude that unemployment and all our economic troubles are due to the invasion of the Ruhr by France. It is a red herring that will divert attention from the monopolists and exploiters at home, but if it is followed it will bring disaster as in 1914.

The Soft Pedal.

Now that the Labour Party hope to be called on to form a Government in the near future they have to be a little less lavish with their promises to the workers. While they were but few in numbers they could promise the moon to the gullible working class voter, as there was no probability of their being called on to redeem their promise. But with the Government benches in sight they must needs be more cautious. The *Labour Press Service*, an official publication, warns Labour leaders that they "should keep well to the front the danger of the Movement committing itself to new projects which a Labour Government might find itself utterly unable to carry through." And Mr. Sidney Webb says: "We have from now onward to work and speak and act under the sense of the liability, at any moment, to be charged with putting our plans and projects into operation." In other words, the beautiful Co-operative Commonwealth of which they have spoken so eloquently at election time begins to vanish into thin air just when the workers thought it was going to be realised, as the oasis seen by a parched traveller in the desert turns out to be a mirage at the moment when he was expecting to quench his thirst. The Labour politicians will be so busy with their ingenious schemes for buying out the landlords with the money they hope to get from a Capital Levy, that they will have little time to think about the affairs of the John Smiths and Sandy Macphersons who voted them into power. One remark by Mr. Webb is of interest to Anarchists. "To-day, I make bold to say, what the world needs is not less government but more." We merely reply: "If you wish to see what Governments can do when they really try, look at Europe." And the sage of the Fabian Society wants to give us more. Not if we can help it, Sidney.

The Dockers' Strike.

Though but an incident in Labour's unceasing struggle with its exploiters, the revolt of the dockers against a decrease of a shilling a day is a sign that rock-bottom has been reached in the merciless cutting down of wages that has been going on during the past two years. The officials of the men's Union were taken by surprise, and ran hither and thither telling the strikers they must keep agreements made with the employers by their own representatives. To which the dockers replied: "To hell with agreements! How can we live on two day's pay a week if the daily wage is constantly being cut? The agreement may have been made with our consent, but consent was forced on us by the threat of starvation." Yes, it is very nice for Trade Union officials to sit round a table and talk about the cost of living of their members, with reporters perhaps taking down their speeches for reproduction in the *Daily Herald* at advertisement rates; but for the casual docker it is a terrible problem. When he gets but two days' work in a week, sometimes not even that, a cut of one shilling a day means that much less for food for the man and those dependent on him; and no agreement will ever be more than a scrap of paper when the belly rebels. There has been so little "kick" of late in what they call the "lower ranks" of the Labour movement that it is quite refreshing to see these men standing out against their leaders, official and unofficial. We hope their example will be followed.

Pardons and Persecutions for I.W.W.

President Harding has granted the release of twenty-seven members of the I.W.W. who were convicted of anti-war offences, but he has made release conditional on their promise to be law-abiding and loyal to the Government and "not encourage, advocate, or become wilfully connected with lawlessness in any form." Some of the prisoners have agreed to the condition and been released, but the others have refused to accept anything but unconditional release, saying they were not guilty of the charges brought against them. Twenty-two are refused release on the ground that their crimes were too serious. The authorities seem to be suffering from I.W.W. on the brain. Many arrests are taking place weekly all over the States, their only offence being the usual activities of workers seeking to better their conditions. In one case a judge said he would only hear I.W.W. as witnesses for the defence. Ten came forward, and as each one declared himself a member of the I.W.W. he was promptly charged with criminal syndicalism and clapped in gaol. This persecution is breeding a healthy disrespect for "justice," and to this extent is having a good result. But to see the people of the U.S.A. allowing the police to search them with the I.W.W. bogey does not give onlookers a very good impression of the mental make-up of the ordinary citizen.

As Mussolini Understands It.

Mussolini, decorated with the Order of the Bath by King George, and praised by Lord Curzon, has been earning his rewards. "I declare that I wish to govern, if possible, with the consent of the majority of citizens, but while waiting for this to form I muster the maximum of forces at my disposition, because it may be, perchance, that force produces agreement, and, anyhow, if agreement be lacking there still is force. We shall put before the citizens this dilemma, either to accept patriotically our measures or endure them. So I understand the art of government."

This declaration by the Chief of the Black Shirts sums up the art of government as practised everywhere, but few rulers put it so bluntly and brutally. In a year or two he will learn the language of the elder statesmen, and then his meaning will be phrased in the polite and polished sentences we know by heart.

RUSSIA TO-DAY.

By A. SHAPIRO.

(Continued from last month.)

First and foremost comes—when we speak of "political" changes initiated owing to the New Economic Policy—the so-called reform of the *Tcheka*. We all know the hideous *Tcheka* is no more. Instead of this institution we now have the State Political Department of the People's Commissariat of the Interior—a sort of "people's" political department!

This new body has the same powers of arrest and detention as the *Tcheka* formerly possessed, although it must be admitted that two innovations have certainly been introduced. These two "legalities" are:—

(1) That the accusation must be presented to the prisoner not later than a fortnight after his arrest;

(2) That the sentence must be pronounced within two months from the day of the arrest.

Now let us see how the introduction of these "democratic" measures actually works out, in reference to "politicals," in a country where Dictatorship reigns. The first of the above two formalities is a mere comedy. Everybody arrested is simply accused of counter-revolution, or of illegal agitation, or of having relations with someone who has been doing illegal work, or of anything that may come into the mind of the examining magistrate; or, even if this is impossible, you are simply accused "by analogy" with this or that political misdemeanour. The new Criminal Code of the Soviet Republic—the pride of the "red" lawyers—has foreseen all these "necessities," and within the prescribed fourteen days you are shown, on a piece of paper, that you are accused of, say, anti-Soviet agitation, as per paragraph so-and-so of the Criminal Code.

Some of these paragraphs are very entertaining. To begin with, the definition of "crime" is instructive:—

"§6. A crime is considered to be every publicly dangerous action or inaction threatening the foundations of the Soviet system, and of law and order as established by the workers' and peasants' power for the period transitional to the Communist order."

It must be said that the Code never mentions Socialists as possible criminals; yet, all the paragraphs referring to counter-revolution are, as a matter of fact, directly hinting at them. Here are some of them:—

"§61. Participation in, or help to, an organisation acting in the direction of support to the international bourgeoisie is punished with death.

"§62. Participating in an organisation . . . in any way that would bring evident damage to the dictatorship of the working class and to the proletarian revolution, even if armed insurrection or armed invasion were not the immediate aim of this organisation's activities, is punished with death.

"§63. Participating in an organisation counteracting, for counter-revolutionary purposes, the normal activities of Soviet institutions or concerns, or making use of these for a similar purpose, is punished with death.

"§64. Participation in the carrying out, for counter-revolutionary purposes, of terrorist acts directed against the representatives of Soviet power or leaders of revolutionary workers' and peasants' associations, even if any one of the accomplices of such an act did not belong to a counter-revolutionary organisation, is punished with death. . . .

"§70. Propaganda and agitation directed toward helping the international bourgeoisie is punished with expulsion from the Soviet Republic, or with deprivation of freedom for a term of not less than three years. . . .

"§72. Preparation and keeping, for the purposes of distribution, propaganda literature of a counter-revolutionary character is punished with deprivation of freedom for a term of not less than one year."

And here is a gem which concerns, among others, our deported Anarchists and Anarchist-Syndicalists:—

"§71. Unauthorised return within the boundaries of the Soviet Republic, in cases of expulsion from it, is punished with death."

Anarchism is dealt with—as all our comrades know by now—under banditism. Here is this paragraph:—

"§76. Organisation of, and participation in, bands (armed

bands) and in . . . attacks on Soviet and private institutions . . . is punished with death.*

Two other gems, to finish with this humorous code:—

"§87. Insulting display of disrespect to the Soviet Republic, expressed in abuse of the State coat of arms, flag, or monuments of revolution, is punished with deprivation of freedom for a term of not less than three months.

"§88. Public insult of a representative of the State in the execution of his official duties is punished with deprivation of freedom for a term of not less than six months."

Yet there may be moments when a workman, or Socialist, or Anarchist must be arrested, and when it is difficult to accuse him under one of the above clauses. The Code shows its real thoroughness in this "by analogy" clause:—

"§10. In case of lack of indication in the Criminal Code of direct clauses for individual species of crimes, punishments, or measures of social defence, those of the clauses of this Code are to be applied which foresee the most analogous crimes in point of importance and character."

This, then, is how the operation is performed. A man is arrested, and if his arrest is due solely to political "emergencies" he is presented within the prescribed fortnight with one of the Code clauses, or without one of them—as is usually the case with arrested Anarchists—and the formality is over. This gives the authorities the legal right to keep you for two months at least. But this second "reform" of deciding your fate within two months is a myth. There is an addendum to that reform which says that when the Political Department finds it necessary, for the safety of the "Socialist fatherland"—or if it has had no time to examine your dossier—it may apply to the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets (the Russian "Senate") for an extension of the two months' term. I have met plenty of political prisoners who had their two months' periods extended for the benefit of the Political Department—and of "Communist" safety, I suppose.

In short, even if there is now the outward sign of legality in the shape of the Criminal Code—and the outer cover is all that the world-bourgeoisie seems to need as bait—there is, in fact, barely any possibility of recognising the difference between the State Political Department and the *Tcheka*. The treatment—or still more often the ill-treatment—is the same. The methods of provocation and threats used at preliminary examinations are exactly the same; the Jesuitism is the same; and the former *Okhraniki*† are the same. No; there has lately been an addition to the family: the famous, or rather the infamous, Sleshteff, the hangman of Crimean fame, who, as one of the nearest aides-de-camp of Wrangel, executed the peasants in batches, and has been received by the Communist Republic of Russia (which includes, of course, the Crimea) with military honours and promoted already, in Soviet Russia, to important military posts (one of which was concerned with the quelling of the peasant rising in Karelia)—this brute is now doing overtime work at the Political Department, where he is, no doubt, denouncing and selling his former associates.

There could be no more sordid degradation of would-be Communism than to have to become a comrade of the man who bathed in the blood of the workers and peasants of the Crimea. And revolutionists who fought for the Revolution—nay, for the Bolsheviks—are being shot as counter-revolutionists.

But since the publication of the Criminal Code the resemblance between the Political Department and the *Tcheka* has become still more striking, and the stark blind alone might just perceive a certain difference. According to the present state of the law in Russia, the Political Department has a right—without trial or hearing—to exile, by administrative order, any prisoner it wishes to choose, for a period not exceeding three years. This is, in point of time and method of punishment, the maximum sentence it can give. In itself, this was a great reform indeed, when one remembers the imprisonments for years and the shootings that went on under the *Tcheka*, without any accusation or trial. One began to hope that the reign of terror and arbitrary misdeeds was coming to an end: So long as a political had the right of a trial, of representation by counsel, and of defending himself, matters certainly looked "democratic."

In September last was issued a supplementary decree giving the Political Department the right, by administrative order—

* The actual wording is always "highest measure of punishment," i.e., death.

† Secret political police agents under the Tsarist régime.

- (1) To confine in concentration camps persons exiled by them, for the period of their exile;
- (2) To shoot persons, if caught "red-handed"—i.e., opposing armed resistance—in acts of banditism, and in all cases where an individual is caught in possession of firearms.

We have thus the legalised shooting by administrative order—i.e., the execution of a man without even giving him the chance of saying anything. This new clause will, no doubt, be now used to get rid of Anarchists quietly.

The Teheka—as we shall henceforth call the State Political Department of the People's Commissariat of the Interior—is certainly installed with a most thorough machinery. It has a Department of Secret Operations under which come all political cases. This department is sub-divided into sections, each section dealing with political cases of a certain tendency. Thus, Section 1 deals with Anarchists, Section 2 with Mensheviks, and so on. There are special sections for Social-Revolutionists, for Left Social-Revolutionists, for Zionists, for Churchmen, for counter-revolutionists, etc. The heads of these sections are usually chosen from among the renegades from the party which the section is supposed to persecute and to prosecute. Thus, the former head of the Anarchist section was an ex-Anarchist, Samsonoff, who has made such excellent progress that he is now the chief of the entire Department of Secret Operations. By this Jesuitic system of appointments, all the political prisoners have the dubious honour of being examined by former comrades; while the latter feel in duty bound to "screw it out" as much as they can, so as to prove their loyalty to their new religion and not be accused of leniency.

The Teheka is still the bugbear of the population—it has the same unlimited powers as before, and is as hated as before. Formerly, under the presidency of Dzerzhinsky, it was accountable for its acts to the Council of People's Commissaries direct. This "exclusive" privilege was considered one of the main causes of its irresponsible and uncontrollable brutality. It was decided to abolish this exclusiveness. The Teheka now is responsible to the Commissar of the Interior, who, in his turn, answers before the Ministerial Council. But, then, it happens that the People's Commissar of the Interior is—Dzerzhinsky! Comment is needless.

The political "reform" trick of the Teheka was not intended for the pacification of the population. It was intended to be a bait for the bourgeoisie, and the less the latter is inclined to be caught, the more the Teheka returns to its old allegiance—that of terrorism and provocation—with the entire disintegration and demoralisation of the Revolution as its one aim.

But the political reformism of the Russian Communist Party did not show itself only in the "improvements" it carried out in the Teheka. It also metamorphosed other branches of activity. We now have—as a result of the New Economic Policy—a new Code of Labour Laws that has superseded the one solemnly issued in 1918, with trumpets sounding the international significance of that Code for the working class. We shall now see whether this new Code, at least, improves the conditions of the country—a thing the former Code certainly never did.

I have before me a copy of the projected Code of Labour Laws as presented to the fourth session of the All-Russian Executive of the Soviets, in October, 1922, and adopted in principle by the latter, small editorial changes being referred to a special Commission.

To begin with, the principle of compulsory labour that was the basis of the labour laws of Soviet Russia under "Communism" has been retained. It is expressly stated in the new Code that whenever labour is needed for the carrying out of important State tasks, all the citizens of the Soviet Republic can be engaged to perform, under compulsion, this or that task. It is thus clear that although the workman, under the New Economic Policy, can pick and choose his occupation, he does not free himself from the obligation of having to work for the State if and when the latter thinks so fit.

Experience has shown abundantly, during the past few years, that compulsory labour never leads to increase of productivity; on the contrary, the tighter the screw of compulsion, the smaller the results. Yet Marxism will not easily give up its prey.

When it comes to agreements between workers and employers—agreements between Labour and Capital (whether private or State) are now compulsory, too, in Russia—we see the thin edge of the bourgeoisie capitalist wedge being driven rather cleverly into State Socialist economies. We all know the value of the strike as a weapon in the hands of the working class. We know the danger of

a strike announced so many days or weeks in advance to the employer, who then has plenty of time to prepare for emergencies. We know how we all fought against written agreements with employers, and how we all agitated for the sudden strike without notice being given to the exploiter.

But "revolutionary" Russia knows no strikes—officially—and the Soviet Government will interfere even with strikes against private capitalists. Unable to make strikes illegal openly, it introduces compulsory notification in advance of any breach of agreement.

Thus, if the agreement is signed between the employer (or the State) and the Trade Union, any desire to "reconsider" that agreement must be notified to the other side a fortnight in advance (§24 of the Code). In cases when a working agreement (between a number of workers and an employer) has been signed—these agreements, as distinct from the collective agreements, are entered into without interference from the Union—the workers must notify the employer three days in advance, while employers (clerical staff) must notify no less than a fortnight in advance.

It is significant that no advance notification is required from the employer (or State). All that is necessary is to give any of the reasons enumerated in the Code, one of which is "in cases of diminution of production."

It is clear, therefore, that the workers of Russia are not free to break the agreement compulsorily forced upon them by Trade Unions entirely dependent on the Government's goodwill, while the employer, or this same Government, need only find a pretext of "diminution of production"—rather a frequent occurrence—and expel any workman that may become disagreeable to them.

(To be continued.)

HOW OUR BULGARIAN COMRADES DIED.

Although Stamboulsky has been wiped out—hoist with his own petard, so to speak—in memory of his victims, our Bulgarian comrades, the following scene, extracted from a detailed statement on the Jamboli events, ought also to be recorded in FREEDOM (see last month's issue):—

"On the day following [the raid on the meeting], March 27, military patrols search the houses inhabited by Anarchists; thirteen comrades are arrested and led to the barracks. There, at five in the morning, they are led into the courtyard, ranged in a file, and an officer shouts to them: 'Those who are Anarchists step three paces forward.' All the thirteen comrades take the three steps, and comrade Theodore Darzeff, with a presentiment of their coming fate, said to the officer: 'An Anarchist never blushes at his ideal'; and turning towards his comrades, he told them: 'Comrades, we have lived and acted as Anarchists, let us die as such and give an example to those who will come after us.' The same instant they fell, mowed down by a machine gun, crying 'Long live Anarchy!' To make sure that their victims will not come back, the soldiers thrust their bayonets into the bodies of the massacred. By a wonder one of them, Kiril Kehayoff, succeeds in crawling away whilst the murderers dig a grave. He enters the town and tells the story to the passers-by. He shows them his fifty wounds and is led to the hospital. Two hours later an officer with some soldiers calls there and tears the dying comrade from the hospital. He is led to the barracks and there killed by the officer with his revolver. Thus all living testimony is suppressed.

"During March 28 fourteen more comrades are arrested and murdered in the same manner. One of them, Pano Botehko, a working tailor, aged 30, has his eyeballs gouged out before he is killed. Nearly all of them were mutilated. . . . Three of the massacred were pupils of the Normal School of the town, almost children, from 16 to 17 years of age."

And so the long story goes on.

Two, if not three, Anarchist papers were published in Bulgaria during the last few months of Stamboulsky's rule—the *Workers' Thought*, perhaps also the *Anarchist*, and a new review, *Free Society*. These comrades will have seen, no doubt, that the still surviving victims are now rescued from their goals.

One Stamboulsky has gone, but how many are left!

N.

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A Dodgers' Conference.

The Labour Party, according to a recent statement by the editor of its special organ, the *Daily Herald*, has four million members. Such a body, representing those whose work keeps this nation in existence, ought to be a tremendous power. In reality, however, the forces now governing us laugh at the empty eloquence Labour's present oracles pour out so freely, play on the cowardice of their personal ambitions, sweep aside contemptuously their timid policies, and go their own way unmoved. Our rulers understand with whom they have to deal, and know that office-seeking leaders, gladly though they would wound, will never dare to strike.

Let the record speak for itself. Let the twenty-third Annual Conference of the Labour Party, held in London, June 26th to 30th, be its own judge. For the moment we are content to forget the long years of heart-breaking effort and hope deferred; the many who, strong in the possession of a great ideal, have fought and fallen, with no thought of self; the unassuming heroism that is the true history of the Labour Movement in this as in other countries. All that is of the past. The men who made that movement knew they were battling for a future they themselves could not expect to see. To-day that future is arriving. How has it shaped itself? What, as shown by this latest Labour Party Conference, has come out of those long years of struggle? That is the question.

Mr. Sidney Webb, as Chairman, opened the Conference, and his address began as follows: "At the root of all our present troubles is the state of warlike tension from one end of Europe to the other, which is plainly the outcome of the unsatisfactory treaties by which the war was ended." That sentence unquestionably had been carefully considered, and the *Herald* singled it out for special notice, emphasising its political importance. In our opinion, as a political pronouncement it is a worthless platitude, and as an economic statement it is about as far from truth as anything could be. The troubles of this country's disinherited have not their root in what a few politicians did at Versailles, but in the fact that they are disinherited; in the cruel irony that in a country they are taught to call "their own" they own not so much as the few feet of soil in which finally they find their graves. Mr. Webb's fine phrases on brotherhood, services to humanity, and so forth, cannot alter that grim fact. He who is not prepared to tackle it should have no place in the Labour Movement, and Mr. Webb is not so prepared. He even denies its importance, and proposes apparently to put off its consideration until the Day of Judgment.

Naturally, the new Chairman, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who is also Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party, backs up his predecessor. He also apparently has no idea that Europe is in the grip of Militarism because her masses are helpless; and that until they shake off the yoke of Monopoly, political and economic, helpless they must remain. He tells the Conference that the putting an anti-war party—of course, his own—in power is the best way of preventing war; and when certain delegates, who do not believe in Mr. Snowden's proposition to pay the landlords two and a-half times the value of their holdings, raise the land question, Mr. MacDonald promptly smothers discussion. The Party, he explains, has a land policy of its own, and is "working out details"; it has "an advisory committee on land and agriculture," and also "a committee considering the problems of agriculture for immediate use in the House of Commons." Moreover, there are "two committees of agricultural

experts that he had appointed to provide him personally with information to use in the House from time to time." There is also, if you please, an "official pamphlet"!

That eminent Christian, and still more eminent financier, Mr. George Lansbury, takes up the cry. He speaks on behalf of the exalted Executive, and ridicules a Republican resolution which a country branch had the temerity to urge. In his judgment, "the question is of no earthly importance, because it is not royalty and nobility, but the capitalist system, that makes people poor." Whereupon the *Herald* comments: "And so the Republican resolution was laughed away." Our congratulations to the Aristocracy. Behind the kindly shelter of that vague abstraction, the capitalist system, Special Privilege may continue to revel as it will. So long as Messrs. Sidney Webb & Co. remain in authority no contumacious hand will be stretched out to unhorse those riding on the workers' backs. Land Monopoly, everywhere the sacred ark of the Ruler's Covenant, is safe.

As a statistician, Mr. Sidney Webb is compelled to admit that "the almost universal attack on wages during the last two years has cost our wage-earners something like £700,000,000 per annum"; but he opines that the existent magnitude of unemployment is "exceptional and transient," and he insists specifically on "the inevitable gradualness of our scheme of change." For our part, we can well imagine that he and the university contingent, the official editors, official secretaries and organisers, and all the camp-followers with which the army of Labour has now burdened itself, can afford to wait, waging meanwhile that far-away warfare in which the fighters are immune from danger. Unfortunately, the masses, situated very differently, cannot afford to wait; and we suggest that they should now insist on getting something substantial for their money. They should insist on realities, and should refuse to be fobbed off any longer with those vague schemes and rosy pictures of an utterly uncertain future which politicians and confidence men employ habitually for the enslavement of their dupes. Vast masses of our population are to-day hanging on by their very eyelids to existence, and it is not by listening to Mr. MacDonald's orations on peace, or Mr. Webb's views about the League of Nations, that they will bring security into their lives.

As we see it, a crisis is approaching which neither conservative Trade Unionism nor still more conservative State Socialism is in the least prepared to meet. Events will not wait on the leisure of comfortably placed reformers; and we have much hope that Labour, when it finds the ground giving way everywhere beneath its feet, will have the sense to take its head out of the clouds. Then Special Privilege will be sent flying, and Labour, itself attending to its own business of recovering its lost heritage, will come at last into its own. Nothing less is worth working for, or deserves a serious thought.

International Anarchist Congress.

The Committee of Initiative of the French Anarchist Union now propose that the Congress, postponed indefinitely on account of passport and other difficulties, be held on September 16. As a Congress is not possible in Austria, Germany, or Switzerland, the Committee have decided to hold it in Paris. They recommend retention of the original programme, under which the following subjects were to be discussed: International Anarchist organisation; our attitude toward Syndicalism, the Revolution, and political parties; the land question; an international language; free social experiment; violence; passive resistance, etc. It is suggested that the date now named will give organisations sufficient time in which to prepare reports. Correspondence should be addressed to PIERRE MUALDES, Rue Louis-Blanc 9, Paris (X).

ANARCHISM VERSUS SOCIALISM.

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REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT.

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THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN JAPAN.

In the middle of 1918, with the rise in the price of rice, which is our staple food, workers and peasants rioted throughout Japan, and bitter fights took place everywhere. All the country was put under martial law, and arrests and persecutions abounded. The rioters had no leader and were not in touch with one another, but they were so revolutionary in spirit that the Empire was brought to the brink of revolution.

No wonder that Socialism, which had been silent since the Kotoku affair, returned to life. In 1920 the Socialist League of Japan was established. Anarchists, Syndicalists, Marxists and Communists, all co-operated in forming it. The organising committee was composed of thirty persons, from among whom H. K. Yamakawa, Kenji Kondo, and Tatsuo Mizunuma were appointed as a national executive committee.

The first congress of the League was arranged for December 10, 1920, at Kanda, Tokyo; but the authorities prohibited it. Scores of workers and students were arrested in Tokyo, and many were punished severely. Amidst the greatest difficulties the League, with Sakutaro Iwasa at its head, continued its activities and called a second congress, on May 9, 1921. Similar results followed, and the Government ordered that the League be dissolved.

It was apparent that the League had two tendencies. One was traditional Anarchism or Anarcho-Syndicalism, the other the new Communism. The Anarchists had great influence in the League, having all its national secretaries, except Mr. Yamakawa. With the development of the League, their influence increased; but the Communist opposition became more bitter. So, without Government violence, a split was inevitable. For example, when the League held a mass meeting at Osaka, K. Arabata, who was a Communist and the representative of the Osaka branch, refused to participate. The Anarchists had adopted a rather friendly attitude toward the Communists, but the latter were determined to have a split.

The Nippon Rodo So-domei (Japanese Federation of Labour) has been, and is, under the control of the reactionary "Labour Lieutenants." It has been at grips with the Kumiai Domei (Trade Union League), for the latter, composed of the revolutionary Unions, sought to oust the university-graduate Lieutenants. Last year the So-domei refused to take part in the protest against the anti-Socialist Bills, which protest had been started by the Kumiai Domei. The Bills contained the notorious clause: "Any one who seeks to advocate the abolition of the present social system of private property shall be imprisoned for a term not exceeding seven years."

The Lieutenants and Communists had as their common enemy the Anarcho-Syndicalists, whose principles were: "The workers' emancipation must be effected by the workers themselves"; and "We must create within our own organisations the germ of the future society." Communism was well suited to the Labour Lieutenants' purpose of subjugating the workers to their yoke and of driving out the "radical Syndicalists." The Communists declared that the masses had to be led by far-sighted "Dictators"—by the Lieutenants who, at heart, did not aim at the abolition of the present social system of private property.

Besides, Communism brought back to life the old-fashioned Labour politicians who had been buried in oblivion. The politicians declared themselves Communists, and openly, in the name of political action after the Russian model, held up their reformist plans in the Labour movement. Some of them even received money from the Kakushin Club, the bourgeois radicals, for their universal suffrage movement. Indeed, they all united in attacking Anarcho-Syndicalism, but their own quarrels among themselves are shameful. They all denounce each other. Nowadays, in Japan, there may be a hundred small Communist groups, each consisting of four or five persons, and all at daggers drawn. This is characteristic of the Communist movement in Japan.

Meanwhile, the Bills against Socialism, which the last House had refused to pass, were reintroduced, with certain amendments. The Kumiai Domei again started a vehement protest, and Communists, Socialists, and even the So-domei had to follow the lead. On January 21 of this year a council of all the Trade Unions of Tokyo met at Kanda, to consider the Bills. After animated discussion, the resolution drafted by T. Mizunuma and E. Wada, Kumiai Domei men, was passed unanimously. It read as follows:—

"The Government has enjoyed powers which keep us slaves

and crush our movement; but even those powers proved insufficient to suppress the revolutionary ideas so deeply rooted in the workers' minds. Consequently the notorious anti-Socialist Bills were brought forward. Against these we must protest with all our combined forces. Of course, the bourgeois Government has in its hands power to suppress our movement. Government is always the great enemy of the workers' emancipation, so we must struggle to the death against Government and authority, against the bourgeoisie."

On February 11 a great mass demonstration was held in Tokyo, in which 20,000 workers took part. The Government at last withdrew the Bills. It is the first time in Japan that workers, by their organisation, have forced the Government to give way.

E. K. NOBUSHIMA.

P.S.—In my first letter (*Freedom*, May issue) the "Kumiai Domei" was translated as the Association of Trade Unions. The Trade Union League would be, however, more correct.

Free Speech Fight at Hammersmith.

For some time it has been evident that an attempt would be made to stop the meetings held by our comrades at The Grove, Hammersmith. In fact, a police inspector stated he would do all he could to make it awkward to hold meetings there. But as this spot had been used as a meeting-place for 35 years, some special reason had to be found for stopping them. Recently the General Omnibus Company started running buses down The Grove, and what more natural than that the police should decide that the particular spot where the meetings are held was an ideal stopping-place for the buses. When the comrades refused to give way, the police arrested our comrade P. F. Meachem and charged him with obstruction. The case was heard at the West London Police Court, and although the police witnesses contradicted each other and their "terminological inexactitudes" were exposed by Meachem, the magistrate fined him 10s., with 30s. costs. Declining to pay, he served ten days in Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

Our comrades continue to hold meetings every Wednesday and Saturday at 8 p.m., and on Sundays at 7.15. Comrades and sympathisers are asked to rally to the support of the local group. The residents of The Grove protested strongly against buses in that thoroughfare, and the company have withdrawn them. The police inspector is now busy trying to find a fresh excuse which will "make it awkward" to hold meetings there.

Against Governmental Repression.

We have received from Buenos Aires notification of the formation of a Committee for International Agitation against Governmental Repression. The Committee hopes that similar groups may be formed elsewhere, in order that there may be a world-wide opposition to the persecutions inflicted on Anarchists in every country. With any such movement we are necessarily in profound sympathy, and most gladly would we co-operate, as urged by the Committee's letter. Unfortunately, the address, as written by the Secretary, is not quite legible, and we are even in doubt as to his name. The address of the Committee looks like—Calle Pasayo Centenario 1041, Nueva Poupeya, Buenos Aires. It is all-important that names and addresses should be written clearly. Bad writing in the body of a document we can usually make out by the context, but in the case of names and addresses this is obviously impossible.

Workers Not a "Class."

Said Bakunin, more than fifty years ago:—"There is another expression with which we Anarchists, who desire frankly the complete emancipation of all the people, have no sympathy. It is the expression which represents the proletariat as a *class*, and not as a *mass*. Do you understand what that means? It means nothing more nor less than a new aristocracy, that of the factories and cities, to the exclusion of the country proletariat, in all its millions. These latter, in the view of the gentlemen who constitute the German Social Democratic Party, are to become the subjects of their so-called People's State."

SOME EVILS OF LAND MONOPOLY.

It is so often asserted that enough food cannot be grown in Great Britain to feed the population, that it has come to be widely believed. This belief helps to perpetuate our dependence on overseas supplies and gives support to "Empire settlement" schemes for sending unemployed men to cultivate the soil in the Colonies. . . . Something more than records of past crops is required to convince any intelligent person that it is impossible to do better in the future. Against such assumptions it is interesting to place the considered opinions of some of the recognised authorities on land cultivation.

Peter Kropotkin in "Fields, Factories and Workshops" says that if the cultivable area of the United Kingdom were cultivated as it is cultivated in the best farms of this country, and meadows at present almost unproductive were utilised for market-gardening, enough food would be produced to feed eighty million people.

Professor Biffin, of Cambridge University, who is regarded as one of the greatest living authorities on wheat growing, told the Bedfordshire Chamber of Agriculture recently that England was easily the best wheat-producing country in the world, with the average of 32 bushels to the acre against the world average of a little more than 12 bushels.

This view is supported by Sir William E. Cooper, who declared in "England's Fatal Land Policy" that by putting the already "cultivated" area of the United Kingdom to its best use, all the wheat, potatoes, fruit, hops, flax, etc., required could be produced, and employment would be given to nearly seven million people instead of two millions.

Mr. A. D. Hall, F.R.S., who wrote about the possibilities of greater production in his book, "Agriculture After the War," said: "It is not true that live stock can only be maintained upon grass land, or that an equal head of stock can be kept upon grass as upon the same land under the plough. All land is more productive under the plough and will maintain more cattle and sheep upon the crops that can be grown than upon the grass which is produced without cultivation. . . . A given area of land will produce when under the plough, in addition to its usual yield of wheat and barley, just as much cattle food as the same area under grass—100 acres of arable land will employ as many as four men, while 200 or 300 acres of grazing can be looked after by a single man. During the 40 years under review 3,000,000 acres have passed from arable to grass, and 261,000 men have left agriculture."

Professor Bottomley stated in 1916 that there were in the country 17,000,000 acres of uncultivated land—an area more than four times the size of Yorkshire and larger than the productive lands of Holland, Belgium, and Denmark put together—which only needed labour and manure to become highly productive.

In Scotland one-fifth of the whole area (nearly 4,000,000 acres) is devoted to deer forests. Much of this land was at one time put to better productive uses and could be better used now, but in recent years gamekeepers have increased to 5,910 while there has been a decrease of 4,505 farmers and graziers and 49,428 farm servants.

To this testimony as to the possibilities of greater food production in this country it is interesting to add that in 1919 the allotment holders of England and Wales produced no less than 1,270,000 tons of food from 180,000 acres. . . .

There is abundant evidence to support the belief that it is possible to grow food enough to make us independent of outside supplies. . . . There are millions of acres of fertile soil lying waste or inadequately used which could provide useful employment and add to the prosperity of the whole community. At present it is practically impossible to bring the people and the land together, as many thousands of ex-servicemen and others have discovered. Earl Haig said in 1917 that 17,000 men out of 97,000 canvassed meant to work on the land when released from the Army. Yet in 1921 only 14,198 out of 48,686 post-war applicants for small-holdings had been provided with land.—ARTHUR H. WELLER (*Middleton Guardian*).

THE KRONSTADT REBELLION.

By ALEXANDER BERKMAN.

A moving account of the revolt of the sailors, soldiers, and workers of Kronstadt against the domination of the Communists, and of its bloody suppression by the Russian Government.

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"Freedom's" Position Still Acute

The flow of donations to the FREEDOM Guarantee Fund has fallen off considerably and is now but a tiny stream, this month's list being the smallest for some time. It certainly is undignified that the only Anarchist journal in the English language should have to appeal continually for funds to carry on. We ask comrades and readers everywhere two questions: Is it your wish that FREEDOM should appear regularly? If so, what sum can you spare to help it to do so? We are willing to do the work, but our group is not strong enough either numerically or financially to carry the whole of the burden.

The following sums have been received to date (July 11): G. P. 2s., J. W. Fleming 5s., J. Nielsen £1 7s. 6d., Norwich Comrades 4s., H. A. Bertelli 2s., E. F. Dean 1s., A. D. Moore 2s., N. B. Ellis 10s., N. Duenas 2s. 6d., G. Wickel £1 6s., L. G. Wolfe £1.

Anarchist Discussion Circle.

Every Saturday evening, 7.30, at the Minerva Café, 144 High Holborn, W.C. (entrance at rear of the building). Open to the public. See *Daily Herald* (Saturdays) for subject of discussion.

Pamphlets on the Russian Revolution.

The Crushing of the Russian Revolution. By EMMA GOLDMAN. 4d.; postage, 1d.

The Russian Tragedy: A Review and an Outlook. By ALEXANDER BERKMAN. 6d., post-free.

The Russian Revolution and the Communist Party. By FOUR WELL-KNOWN MOSCOW ANARCHISTS. 6d., post-free.

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FREEDOM PRESS, 127 OSSULSTON STREET, LONDON, N.W.1.

REBUILDING THE WORLD: An Outline of the Principles of Anarchism. By JOHN BEVERLEY ROBINSON. Price 3d., postage 1d. From Freedom Press.

ALBUM OF THE FUNERAL OF PETER KROPOTKIN in Moscow. February 13, 1921. With an Introduction by R. Hoeker. Contains 31 photographs, including two of Kropotkin taken after death. Price 1s., postage 2d. From FREEDOM PRESS.

PAMPHLET AND BOOK LIST.

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