

F R E E D O M B U L L E T I N

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LET US TACKLE THE JOB OURSELVES.

For a generation or two the Socialists have told us to look to the State as an all-wise and beneficent saviour that would lead us into a land flowing with milk and honey if only we would trust it with the control of our affairs. "Don't listen to the Anarchists who tell you to rely on yourselves for your salvation," the workers were told; "they are a lot of dreamers, while we are sternly practical." Well, the workers are now in a position to judge of the value of the advice of the Socialists, and they find what a sorry mess the State has made. In this country, even after twelve months under a Labour Government, there are over 650,000 more unemployed on the register than when MacDonal & Co. took office. In British Colonies, where Labour Governments have a majority, the unemployed clamour for work while vast areas of idle land wait to be cultivated. In the United States the American Federation of Labour reports that 19 per cent. of its members are unemployed. Wherever we look we find the same state of affairs—poverty and distress in the midst of boundless opportunities for providing well-being for all. Science and machinery have so increased our power of producing food, shelter and clothing that for a few hours' labour per week all our wants could be provided. Yet the Government declares its inability to settle the problem.

We have allowed a small and privileged class to grab all the natural resources of the world, and they have the power to decide whether we shall have access to them and on what terms. The land, the mines, the factories, and the means of transport belong to this class, and whenever it pleases them they throw the workers on the streets. And the State, which we are told is to be our saviour, stands ready to use the law, the police and the military to protect this class and its privileges. In fact, the State and its official machinery were formed for that definite purpose. If occasionally laws are passed which seem to benefit the workers that is done to maintain faith in the beneficent power of Parliament and to prevent the growth of a revolutionary spirit among the workers.

Why should we look to the State and the politicians for the solution of our social problems? If we are unable or unwilling to tackle the job ourselves, we may be sure that the people who benefit by our foolishness or mental laziness will not help us unless they can help themselves at the same time. Suppose we drop all thought of looking to others for our salvation and think hard and seriously how we shall make the most of the natural resources of these islands. We have a soil which, if properly cultivated, would provide sufficient food for all. We have coal and iron

which for generations made us the workshop of the world. We have scientific workers and men and women skilled in all the arts who could help us to produce all the necessaries of modern life. Of course, we would have to get from abroad much raw material used in scientific production to-day, but that could be obtained by the exchange of manufactured articles.

What is it, then, that prevents us starting on the job ourselves? Not the power of the State, for that institution rests on the support of the vast majority of the workers. They provide the material means on which it relies—the guns, the aeroplanes, the ammunition, and the poison gas. The police, the Army, the Navy, and the prison warders are their sons. The wealth and luxury which the rich squander are produced by the workers, who often lack the necessaries of life themselves. But the real strength of the State and the privileged class lies in the workers' belief, carefully fostered by their rulers, that Acts of Parliament and rolls of parchment have something sacred about them, though their authors may have been dead many centuries. Armed with a roll of parchment a landlord can call on the police to evict hundreds of families from his land; or if he allows farmers to cultivate it or miners to dig coal from it he takes toll of everything they produce without giving anything in return. Because the workers allow this to happen they are crowded together in factories and slums, or tramp the roads unemployed, homeless and helpless. Even those who suffer from this injustice often believe in the sanctity of the landlord's right to do what he pleases with his land, and until this belief is shattered there is little hope of a drastic change. But as soon as the workers realise the foolishness of a few bits of parchment barring them from free access to the soil of their country, down will come the fences and a bonfire will be made of all the title-deeds. Their owners will enjoy equal rights with the rest of the people, but their power to exploit their fellow men and women will have vanished for ever.

If, however, the workers persist in their age-long faith in the law and the State, appeals to those twin deities for an improvement of their lot will be as vain as they have ever been. Their fate rests in their own hands and brains.

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THE FOOD CRISIS.

Agriculture is becoming a live issue in politics. That doesn't mean the politicians will do anything about it, but it does mean that public attention is turning to the basic industry of life; we are puzzling over the discovery that it doesn't pay, that the basic industry doesn't fit into the profit-making machine. Prices go steadily down and are likely to continue falling still further below the level of the cost of production, reckoned even at the low living standard of the smallholder's family. And these are world prices; neither Protection nor any State panacea can adjust them. The so-called depression is world-wide; the so-called over-production is world-wide; the crisis is a world crisis. The politicians are nonplussed; they hang on to the dear old theory that the State will be prosperous when its exports exceed its imports. Every State is being told this; all the States of the world will be prosperous when their exports exceed their imports. And the total excess exports, where will they go? To some other planet; which means to destruction. Already that kind of world-export is going on; food is being destroyed wherever it is not profitable to market it, no matter how many people go hungry and underfed. The world is to be made prosperous by destruction of a surplus which is determined, not by the need of the consumer, but by profit-taking. That is where the economic policy of Conservatives, Liberals, and Labourites leads; the agriculturists of the world in economic slavery and their produce withheld from those who need it, because it does not pay to distribute it. State purchase is now the political Left Wing cry; capitalism in the basic industry has broken down, so let us have more

capitalism, State capitalism, supported by Army and Navy. That will make it still easier to deal with surplus by the most efficient method of destruction, war.

Statesmen, some of them, see the madness into which their theories are leading them, but few of them see the alternative which is taking form under their eyes. A new economic foundation is being built up, slowly but surely, by voluntary co-operative organisation of agriculture, on the one hand, and those who need its products, on the other. Already, too, the bridge between them is forming in many countries and internationally. The Co-operative Wholesale Society and its affiliated retail societies are independent of capitalist and State, and they are dealing with co-operatively organised producers in many lands; if they will keep true to the principles that inspired them, they will in time absorb all the import and distributive business of the country. They overshadow the smaller agricultural co-operative movement in England, as the other industries overshadow agriculture; yet in England alone there are, though few people know it, more than 200 agricultural co-operative societies handling the requirements and produce of their members. The co-operative organisation of all the wheat growers of the world is in sight; the possibility of long-term contracts between them and the C.W.S. and other consumers' organisations, at agreed prices, is discussed. In such ways, eliminating capitalist profits and State authority, the new order is rising in which, by voluntary agreement, production and distribution can be adjusted to the needs of all.

K. W.

TWO WAYS OF LIBERTY.*

There are two ways of liberty; one is of the life that is lived, the other is a fabric of our minds. These two books from America exemplify the two aspects in vivid contrast. The one tells of a life inspired by freedom, and the book itself is a product of such another life, set by hand and printed on a small job press which the compiler found abandoned in a wood shed; the other is, equally in outlook and production, academic. Ishill's book, too, be it said at once, is a beautiful thing, a worthy brother of those other love-children of his press—the poems of his wife, Rose Freeman Ishill, tributes to Kropotkin, to the brothers Reclus and to Edith Ellis, a noble family. Typography (a *tour de force*), paper and binding are worthy of its subject and of its many distinguished contributors. And what a company of bright spirits they are; unnecessary to name them: only ask yourself who of his and this generation on both sides of the Atlantic would appreciate Havelock Ellis, and write them down—48 names, if you can! In their 300 pages you get portraits of the pioneer more diverse than the dozen illustrations given of him from boyhood to bearded age, but conveying in their totality, above all the special greatness and detail of his work, the image of a man living his life in freedom, unassertive as to his right to it because so fully employing it, undisturbed by outside challenge of it.

When, for instance, it was brought against him that he had a predilection for the most questionable aspects of his chief subject, the psychology of sex, he dismissed the attack in a sentence: "Assuredly it is so; if a subject is not questionable it seems to me a waste of time to discuss it"! Through all the persecutions of calumny and censorship he is not known ever to have turned against his enemies in bitterness. He had the serenity of conscious freedom, and he will remain, as Ishill writes in his own fine contribution, "the symbol of a free man, bound to no obligation, but the high and self-imposed one of making the world aware." His libertarianism, the compiler also notes, is of a vaster scope than that which any propagandist has achieved. He is not confined to the material. He is seer as well as scientist. His approach is scientific, but when he has reached firm ground he does not hesitate to lift his head and speak out on the larger issues to which pursuit of his subject has led him; then, in his many other writings, he becomes the "godless mystic" which so many of our greatest scientists are to-day. What his influence has been on contemporary thought may be judged by the character of these appreciations, yet looking beneath this galaxy of intellects one can only conclude, in the words of one of them, "We have still to catch up with Ellis."

The other book, as the Foreword testifies, is "high-minded." It is the "intellectual testament" of a genial and spirited young American who went enthusiastically into the war and came out of it with his health ruined and his mind evidently set upon justifying the democracy for which the world had been made safe. In it he sees Liberty as the motive power and process of social development, and much of his historical analysis is revealing and some of it penetrating. But his anticipations are inspired more by faith in God than by the practice or the vision of liberty, he views the world to-day as overcrowded and

threatened with under-production, and defines the "perennial question" in the domestic sphere to be to find "a mean between unbridled authority and anarchy," yet in answer to his own concluding question, "And the end of it all?" can quote St. Augustine: "Love, and do as you like." Our "godless mystic" restated this golden rule with greater conviction.

* "Havelock Ellis: in Appreciation." Compiled, edited, and printed by Joseph Ishill. Published privately by the Oriole Press, Berkeley Heights, New Jersey, 1929 (\$7.50).—"Liberty in the Modern World." By George Bryan Logan, Jr., The University of North Carolina Press, 1928 (\$2.00).

THOU SHALT NOT READ.

There is a sort of Christian who is never satisfied with the Almighty's handiwork. He feels he just has to improve upon it. On the Ten Commandments particularly. Commandments—for other people to observe—are too gratifying to him for a mere ten to be enough. You can't have too much of a good thing; so why not more commandments? The State is there to hand them over, so more he demands—the more repressive in character the better.

A commandment clamoured for with ever-intensifying clamour is one to the effect—Thou shalt not read. True, this wasn't among those handed to Moses from out of the burning bush, but that was an oversight. And maybe the Israelites hadn't learnt their alphabet, so there would have been no meaning in it.

But the time appears ripe to rectify the omission. So—Thou shalt not read such and such a book, or verse, or newspaper, or advertisement. Or—Thou shalt not look at such and such a play, painting, film, poster, statue. In Russia the Soviet has banned opera. An Italian art exhibition has recently been anathematised by the Church. Works advocating birth limitation are forbidden fruit in Ireland (Oh, the freedom that Home Rule would confer—the pitiful cheating of a race!). News may only filter through from India after being carefully censored and expurgated. In England, many of the public libraries have banned "All Quiet on the Western Front," though in one case, at least, a deputation of ratepayers waited on the Library Committee to ask for the ban to be lifted. (*Asked*, as though it were a favour they begged, instead of a demand protested.) The latest English triumph is a prosecution for selling vulgar post-cards at the seaside. America has decided that

George Moore's "Story Teller's Holiday" is too strong meat for the delicate belly of Uncle Sam. Bowdler sits enthroned.

It is my habit to collect press cuttings dealing with censorship. A foolish habit? Perhaps, though in time I shall have a rare bibliography; but certainly an arduous one. I am finding I must discriminate among cuttings, or what shall I do with them all? Already I have so many that my courage failed me when I thought of consulting them before beginning on this article, in the hope of drawing from them some unifying principle underlying the varied forms of censorship. For censorship to-day is marvellously varied; in its objects as in its forms. It may be political at one moment and within the geographical barriers of one nation; at another moment or within other barriers it may be sex-repressive or militaristic in its purpose; at still other moments and within other—or the same—barriers it may aim at upholding the established order in class distinctions and respect for the State and its officials. You will generally find it upholding the established order of something or other; probably you will find that it is always doing this, and herein discover the unifying principle, though you must not forget the psychological side of the question and fail to take into account that in some of its forms it is a sex-perversion, born out of sex-repression.

It is my purpose here neither to trace this principle nor to theorise as to how the menace of censorship could best be checked; rather, to point out that it is a menace—of a political and social tyranny that is capable of crushing freedom of speech, thought, action, culture.

B. B. W.

THE REVOLT IN INDIA.

The demand for self-government in India can no longer be resisted, and though Gandhi and all his supporters may be thrown into gaol, their influence will prevail. The Muhammadans and Hindus and other communities may quarrel among themselves as to how self-government shall be carried on, but they are united in their demand for it. The Simon Commission's Report lays great stress on the difficulties of working out a scheme which would satisfy the claims of the minorities, but it would be no more difficult for the Indians than it is for the British. Ever since the British went into India the country and its inhabitants have been regarded as a source of profit for British adven-

turers and financiers, and a happy hunting-ground for the young relatives of our ruling class.

With a population of 319,000,000, whose outlook on life is totally alien to that of their white rulers, it was only a matter of time as to when they would seek to overthrow the domination of the white man. The British have never made any real attempt to carry out their promises of self-government to the Indians, and no concessions have been made to them except under pressure. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" has always been their motto, and without Gandhi's "non-co-operation" campaign even the modest instalment of self-government recommended by the Simon Commission would not have been offered.

We have no illusions about the future welfare of India's teeming millions of peasants under native rulers, but their awakening has been stimulated by the agitation for self-government, and they will slowly but surely demand social and economic reforms from their rulers, whether foreign or native.

Britishers should welcome this revolt on the part of India. For over a century half our armaments and most of our foreign policy has been dictated by the necessity of safeguarding our investments and interests in that country. The wars with Russia, with Afghanistan, and with Egypt, were the direct or indirect result of our policy of protecting the frontiers or the routes to India. The Bagdad railway was regarded as a dangerous move on the part of Germany, and our occupation of Palestine and our control of Egypt and the Sudan are dictated by the urgency of protecting the Suez Canal, the vital link with India.

The Simon Commission makes it very clear that "for many years the presence of British troops will be essential," and though the reasons given are the necessity of preserving internal order and protecting the frontiers against external enemies, the real reason is the protection of the £1,000,000,000 of British capital invested in India. But while the army in India is to be controlled by the British Government, the Indian people are still to have the privilege of paying for it. This alone will show the value of the small amount of self-government recommended by the Commission.

THE NEW "FREEDOM."

On May 1st the "London Freedom Group" published a paper which they have called "Freedom." The first intimation we had of the forthcoming publication of this paper appeared in a New York paper. As we had not entirely given up hope of reviving our own journal, I immediately wrote to the Secretary of the Group asking them to adopt another title, but received no reply. In explanation, the first issue contained a long "statement" full of malicious and wilful mis-statements concerning myself. My first decision was to reply personally, but I have been persuaded to allow others to do so. A protest based on a full and complete statement of the facts of the matter, signed by several well-known comrades, has been sent to the Editor of the new paper, and a promise has been given that it shall appear in the August issue. Therefore, for the present we make no further comment.

T. H. KEELL.

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- Now and After: The ABC of Communist Anarchism. By Alexander Berkman. 6s.; postage, 6d. (1 dol. 50c.)
- *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century. By P. J. Proudhon. Paper, 1s. (30c.) cloth, 3s. (1 dol.); postage, 3d.
- What is Property? By P. J. Proudhon. Cloth (1 vol.), 4s. 6d. (1 dol. 25c.); paper covers (in two vols.), 3s.; postage, 5d. (85c.)
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