

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

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WHEN GULLIVER AWAKES

W. C. OWEN.

The few words to which I necessarily am limited cannot be better prefaced, as it seems to me, than by a repetition of what I have myself just written in a contribution to an American paper, the *Mutualist*, of Peoria, Illinois. In that article, after showing that in great struggles small efforts are simply crushed out of existence, and declaring that I never have been able to believe that anything short of irresistible pressure will overthrow the obstacles that now bar the road to Freedom, I say: "In my view, the Great War, by begetting a general unrest which it will be impossible to lay to sleep, has done much to clear the way; and I incline to the opinion that the next act in the great drama of evolution will be the fall of the British Empire, the props of which are being eaten away at innumerable points by that growing spirit of revolt which is essentially the Spirit of the Age."

My only object in quoting this very ordinary passage is that it may explain my astonishment at the apathy and pessimism apparently now so general in Anarchist circles. I cannot understand this blindness to the magnificence of the world-struggle to escape from human slavery, as it has developed within the last few years, during which it has escaped from the narrow circle of the schools and has attained the maturity of a movement to which the oppressed and disinherited of every nationality are now lending ear and beginning to respond. To this the ruling class everywhere is wide awake, and it is leaving no stone unturned whereby it may hope to put the masses off the scent and postpone the great revolutionary change which, conferring on all men real equality of opportunity, will make them masters of themselves and rescue them from slavery. The reformers are our worst enemies, for, pretending to relax the bonds by which the Lilliputians hold him down, they induce Gulliver to abstain from the struggling which alone can enable him to rise. Of them I am far more afraid than I am of the bludgeoning by governments, for these latter fan to flame the smouldering embers of revolt. The kindly slave-owner was the one who prolonged the life of chattel slavery in the United States. The brutality of those who regarded their niggers as mere cattle was the thing that killed it.

How exactly did the far-seeing genius of Jonathan Swift portray, in the fable to which I have referred, the situation as it faces us to-day! So long as Gulliver, barely half-awakened, lies quiet, the Lilliputians swarm unconcernedly all over him; but when he rubs the sleep out of his eyes and makes a determined effort, all the threads by which his captors sought to

enchain him snap at once, and his would-be prisoners flee in wild alarm. The point is, of course, that Gulliver rises as a whole. Had he contented himself with lifting a little finger or wagging a big toe, he would have lain there till he rotted; and that is about all Labour, or at any rate Labour as we know it in this country and in our Colonies, is doing at present. It parts the skilled sheep from the unskilled goats, and is almost as deeply enslaved to caste as is our landed aristocracy; from which springs quite naturally its worship of its own official hierarchy and its persecution of the heretic. In our Colonies it draws most rigidly the colour line, and habitually it dislikes the foreigner and favours anti-alien laws. Naturally also it is indifferent to the fate of its fellow-toilers in India, Egypt, and other subjugated countries. Thus Gulliver deliberately dismembers himself, and by his own act makes rising impossible.

Mere grumbling is despicable, and I criticise solely in the hope of being able to show how wide and fruitful are the fields of activity now opening before us. Individual freedom, and the activity that comes with individual freedom, are to Anarchism the very breath of life. As a party movement we have never been a success, but I claim confidently that as individual rebels, inspired with a passion for liberty, we have had much influence in the past, and should have far more in the future. The conventional lies of our civilisation—the economic lie, the political lie, the religious lies, and so forth—which we have attacked so vigorously, are falling more and more rapidly into disrepute, and as the defence weakens we should push on even more strenuously with the assault. For if we will but look even an inch or two beneath the surface we shall see that the whole world is growing sick of shams, is eager for realities, and is rousing itself at last to shake off the yoke of age-long slavery.

Toward that epoch-making effort every one of us can lend a hand; all by talking to their acquaintances and workmates, many by writing and speaking, everyone in some way or another. Gulliver has to waken into active life; not in spots, not here and there, but in every fibre of his being.

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LEST WE FORGET

Chicago, November 11th, 1887

JOHN TURNER.

It is forty-one years since the execution of our Chicago comrades—August Spies, George Engel, Adolph Fisher and Albert Parsons—yet the horror of the tragedy remains as vivid as on the day of the ruthless and cowardly murder of the four innocent men. A piece of class terrorism, the whole conspiracy was projected into the midst of the growing industrial upheaval taking place throughout the United States. Beginning with a general strike for the enforcing of the eight-hour day, there followed many sectional strikes on the question of wages. The police had embittered an already highly-charged atmosphere by baton and bullet. Pinkerton gangs had been at their dirty work in Chicago. Six persons had been killed and many injured in indiscriminate shooting by the police. Into a meeting held to protest against this a body of armed police marched and began to attack the crowd. Almost immediately a bomb was hurled. It fell among the police, killing one and fatally wounding seven others.

Not being able to fix the crime on any of the men arrested, the charge of "constructive murder" was at last made against eight of the most active Anarchists. Even this charge could not stand alone, for the State Attorney, appealing to prejudice, declared, "Anarchy is on trial." Of the eight men tried seven were sentenced to death. Oscar Neebe was given fifteen years' penal servitude. Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab were reprieved and their sentences commuted to penal servitude, while Louis Lingg cheated the executioner by blowing out his brains with an explosive cigar.

Six years later, after the corruption in the case had been exposed, Governor Altgeld, in a long judicial review of the trial, declared that all the men had been

wrongly convicted, and set Neebe, Fielden, and Schwab unconditionally free.

These men were heroes as well as martyrs; their only crime was their exposure of the legal exploitation under the "Star Spangled Banner," and their indictment of those who profit by existing social conditions. That words can sear and sting is shown in the hiring of thugs, of the employment of armed police, of bought witnesses in this infamous trial. Hoping that it would strike panic into the hearts of the workers, the employing class, backed by its prostitute press, clamoured for the executioner, as if they thought that—

"A dead man cannot chatter within his confined shroud."

Yet many must have been impressed with the manner in which the victims of their lust for wealth and power met their fate.

The recent doing to death of Sacco and Vanzetti shows clearly that there is no diminution of either the wish or the power among the master class to go to any length in order to maintain their position as ruthless exploiters. Anyone who has the temerity to challenge that power runs the risk of not only being got out of the way, but of his death being used to intimidate his fellows.

John Dewey, writing in the *New Republic*, of November 23rd last year, said: "Sacco and Vanzetti are dead. No discussion of their innocence or guilt can restore them to life. That issue is now merged in a larger one, that of our methods of ensuring justice." And while we pay our tribute to our brave Chicago Martyrs we realise that justice can only come when the cause of present social inequality has been replaced by a love of liberty and the natural fraternity that would ensue.

'WARE THE STATE!

A Policy for To-day

It was once confidently believed by Anarchists that an Anarchist revolution was possible and even probable in the not far distant future. Kropotkin, in his "Conquest of Bread," and Morris, in his "News from Nowhere," sketched in the broad outlines of the shape such a revolution might conceivably take. Alas for the dreams of youth! The revolutionary movement has aged a lot during the last fifty years, and it has grown up into a vastly different kind of person than the sponsor of its early days expected. In its youth it talked of Freedom, Liberty, Independence; now, having come to years of discretion, its talk is all of standardisation, compulsion, restriction, centralisation. The youthful rebel broke many idols in its enthusiasm for a better world to live in: grown up it has gathered together the remnants of the shattered gods and with these works feverishly in the building of a new god that it may worship. Some

build one way, some another; but always the idol represented is the same; always there emerges from the piled-up fragments the hideous effigy of the State. Here is a new god to succeed the old, here a young Zeus to dethrone the Titans and take their place. At the feet of the old gods many sacrifices were laid. It shall be the same at the feet of the new god. The gods change, but not the sacrifice.

Revolutions and the rumours of revolutions are everywhere, but nowhere is there any Anarchist revolution; nowhere even any rumour of an Anarchist revolution. All revolutionary movement is directed towards a strengthening of the power of the State, with a complementary weakening of the power and independence of the individual. The Country, the People, the Empire, the Proletariat, the Community, such well-nigh meaningless abstractions are the war-cries of to-day; but the individual, the unit com-

prising these abstract collectivities, that is the thing unreckoned, ungloried, and unsung. This, it may be said, is only a temporary retrogression. Time is relative, and the life of a man is short and the duration of a retrogression may extend into thousands of years. It is small comfort for us to have to content ourselves with the belief that our children, or our children's children, or some more remote posterity, may one day wake up in a world where a man may be as wholly and gloriously free as the progress of science can make him. We have our lives before us, our own brief lives, and we want to live these under the best conditions we can obtain. No State can help us, however cunningly constructed; all it can do is to throw us sops, of doubtful efficacy, as part consolation for our stolen independence.

Already, in the pre-revolutionary period the State increases its strength. Act of Parliament succeeds Act of Parliament with almost monotonous regularity, each one either compelling the subject to some new duty or restricting his activities in some new sphere. Ministries of Health, Ministries of Education, Ministries of Labour, Ministries of Agriculture, one and all encroach further and ever further upon the independence of the individual. Man is an accommodating being, and he accepts these conditions and adapts himself to them, consciously, or probably more often unconsciously, until his whole outlook becomes altered and he regards what once he would have considered as an outrage upon him as a mere matter of course.

The State machine is being perfected. When revolution comes in England this machine will be seized on by whatever party gets into power and employed as a means—ineffectual means—of attaining the ends of its new masters. The stronger the State is allowed to grow before the revolution, the stronger will it become after the revolution. Therefore, the Anarchists to-day, recognising how far distant an Anarchist revolution must be, cannot do better than, as far as lies in their power, resist all further growth of the State. Revolution, when it comes, may prove a catastrophe; we have nothing to gain by blinding ourselves to this possibility. If it takes the form of the State bureaucracy that it threatens to take, it cannot but prove a catastrophe. Instead of hastening the free society, it will push it further back into the future.

Independence cannot be achieved through the State, but only through the demolition of the State. The more we impede the State's growth to-day, the less difficult will it be for us to free ourselves when opportunity has been created. Such opportunity may not come in our lifetime; at least we will achieve something if we can make it less harmful than it would be, and will be, if allowed to grow unchallenged. We cannot bring about an Anarchist revolution, but we can, in however small a degree, direct our efforts towards minimising the threatened bureaucracy, intolerable enough already, but likely to become far more intolerable in the future.

B. B. W.

BARGAINING WITH EMPTY HANDS

We wonder what Trade Unionists expect to gain from the formation of the National Industrial Council formed at the instigation of Lord Melchett (Sir Alfred Mond) and his friends. Do they expect that in future they will get more wages for what they produce or work shorter hours at the expense of their employers? On the one side we see a group of millionaire capitalists controlling world-wide resources and enormous capital. On the workers' side, what do we see? A body of men and women who live almost from hand to mouth, with so little spare cash that two or three weeks' idleness finds them bankrupt and begging relief from the Guardians. If 100 per cent. organisation were worth anything the miners would have been the most prosperous body of workers in this country. But look at them to-day. Probably, taken as a whole, the most poverty-stricken of all. Their splendid organisation, numerically, was helpless when Sir Alfred Mond and his fellow mine owners closed hundreds of mines when they found that no dividends were to be got out of them. They were *their* mines and they did as they pleased with them, regardless of the suffering their action brought to the miners and their families. In other industries it is the same. Profits are the only consideration. If there are no profits to be made, the employers close down their works and put their employees on the streets. The workers are helpless to prevent it. "Rationalisation in industry" will mean starvation to many thousands of workers, and all that the workers' representatives on the National Industrial Council will be able to do

will be to soften the blow to those thrown on the streets, and get a few more crumbs for those who are retained. But these extra crumbs will be gained from the greater intensification of production.

The root of all our evils is the ownership of the land and all its resources by a comparatively few privileged persons. As long as the workers look at the problem as merely a question of hours and wages and leave the monopolists in control of the natural resources of the country, their bargaining power is very poor. They may go on strike occasionally, but the monopolists can afford to sit in their clubs and offices and wait for starvation to force the workers back again, as they did with the miners. Even if a Labour Government nationalises the land and all its natural resources, the position will be no better for the workers. They will buy out the monopolists and collect their dividends for them, dividends which must be earned by the workers, who will then be controlled by State officials, who will have to drive them as harshly as before in order to satisfy the greed of the stockholders.

Until the workers decide to throw the parasites off their backs and work as equals, sharing the product of their labour as equals, they will have no relief from their present troubles. The old relationship of employers and employed, master and man, must be abolished. But as long as the workers retain their present slave mentality they will be treated merely as hewers of wood and drawers of water for the select and privileged few.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS & AGENTS

Since FREEDOM suspended publication last December we have been sending the "Bulletin" to all FREEDOM subscribers. A few—a very few—have sent donations or subscriptions to the "Bulletin," but the majority have failed to do so. We hope this intimation will be sufficient for them to realise that we cannot do so indefinitely, and we hope that all of them will send us a minimum of 2s. subscription for the journal.

Our regular FREEDOM agents have also received the "Bulletin" in the same quantity as they previously received of FREEDOM, but, alas! their payments, in the great majority of cases, have not been so prompt as before. We ask them to send us cash as soon as possible, because the "Bulletin" costs money to produce, and they can hardly expect to receive it as a gift. Please let us hear from you quickly.

TO NEW AND OLD READERS

We have a large stock of pamphlets on hand which we wish to sell as quickly as possible to provide funds for re-starting FREEDOM. We will send a selection to the value of 1s. 3d. for 1s. post free. You can select them yourself or you can leave the selection to us. This is an excellent opportunity for comrades to introduce our literature to new readers. Postal orders or stamps accepted. A complete list of books and pamphlets will be sent on receipt of name and address.

LONDON FREEDOM GROUP

Keeping to our arrangement to meet fortnightly, the alternate meeting to be of a social character, our members dined frugally at the Chinese Restaurant on Thursday evening, October 11th. The speeches all struck the right note and everyone went away feeling that at last we are going to have an active movement in London. A fortnight later, October 25th, we followed with a well-attended meeting at which John Turner spoke on "The Growth of Anarchism." He showed that side by side with the idea of dictatorship the ideals of liberty were growing. The discussion that followed developed the contention of the speaker. Again the meeting broke up in an optimistic mood, and this in spite of the fact that I had been obliged to ask the members to get their hands down to the tune of nearly £2. We have agreed that the contribution to our funds for propaganda (this apart from support of the *Bulletin*) shall be 1s. a month (minimum). Let this be an intimation to our comrades who cannot attend meetings.

We are hoping to hear from our provincial comrades that they too are getting to work. It is enough that two or three are gathered together in the name of Liberty. Courage and sincerity will, like patience, remove mountains. There are mountains of ignorance, apathy, and prejudice to remove.

BESSIE WARD.

NOTICE OF MEETING

On Thursday, November 22nd, ROSE WITCOP will speak on "Is Birth Control Immoral?" at the El Wahid Café, 74a, Wells Street, Oxford Street, W.1, at 8 o'clock sharp.

APPEAL FOR "FREEDOM" FUND

Looking at the poor response to our usual appeal since our last issue, we conclude there must be some misunderstanding. Our move from London did not mean that we had given up hopes of re-starting FREEDOM. On the contrary, we moved so that our expenses might be cut down to the absolute minimum, and thus help to build up a fund sooner than if we had to pay a heavy rent in London.

We are sure that all our readers would be pleased to see FREEDOM appear again—the sooner the better—and we appeal to all to let us have the money necessary. Let those now give who never gave before, and those who gave, now give the more.

FREEDOM GUARANTEE FUND

The following donations have been received to date (November 2nd) since our last issue:—J. Grandjean 8s. 3d., J. Wearing 2s. 6d., Mrs. J. B. Robinson £1, H. F. B. 10s., D. Dent 2s., M. A. Cohn £2 1s., J. Petrovich 8s., Group Bremerhaven (per A. Ungerath) 12s. 3d.

FREEDOM PRESS

Cash Statement—January 1 to October 31, 1928.

Receipts.		£	s.	d.
"Freedom" Guarantee Fund	...	74	10	0
Sales of "Freedom"	...	14	0	9
Sales of Literature	...	95	5	9
Sales of "Freedom Bulletin"	...	5	15	5
Collections—Minerva Café Meetings	...	5	1	8
Machine and Press	...	4	0	0
Fount of Type, Cases, etc.	...	7	15	0
Old Type and Iron	...	1	3	0
Waste Paper	...	0	10	0
Returned Linotype Metal ("Bulletin")	...	1	5	6
Binding "Freedom"	...	2	0	0
Miscellaneous	...	1	4	0
Office Furniture	...	2	0	0
		£214	11	1
Expenditure.		£	s.	d.
Utopia Press—Printing "Freedom"	...	22	0	0
Books and Pamphlets	...	54	3	9½
Postage	...	14	0	1
London County Council—Rent	...	27	10	0
Office Expenses (Repairs, Coal, Gas, etc.)	...	4	4	0
"New Leader" Advertisements	...	3	3	0
Stationery	...	2	14	7½
"Freedom Bulletin"—				
Linotype, Printing, etc.	...	£16	0	7
Postage	...	5	3	9½
				21 4 4½
Meetings—Minerva Café	...	4	11	6
Removal to Whiteway Colony	...	12	12	0
Binding "Freedom"	...	2	3	0
On account of Loan	...	2	0	0
Miscellaneous	...	2	13	3
Manager—T. H. Keell	...	22	10	0
Deficit, December 31, 1927	...	5	0	0
		200	9	7½
Balance in hand	...	14	1	5½
		£214	11	1

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