FREEDOM

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THE CHICAGO ANNIVERSARY.

SINCE the Paris Commune no event in the world-wide evolution of the struggle between Socialism and the existing order of society has been so important, so significant, as the tragedy of Chicago. Standing as we do to-day at more than twelve months' distance from the series of events which culminated in the judicial murder of the Eleventh of November, we are able to estimate their meaning with a calmer certainty than amidst the storm of horror, indignation and pity which the wrongs of our comrades aroused last year, not only amongst Socialists but amongst all workmen aware of the facts. Good men are being murdered for their devotion to the cause of freedom ; let us save them, or if that may not be, at least let us protest against the crime. Such was the feeling which at the moment united Socialist and Radical, Revolutionist and Parliamentarian.

The crime was consumated, the excitement passed ; the facts have been fully canvassed and freely discussed. What, as seen in the light of this its first anniversary, is the real effect produced by this terrible incident in the struggle between Capitalism and Socialism, rulers and ruled.

First, as to the facts of the Chicago affair itself. Fuller enquiry, more complete and detailed information have served to confirm the statements laid before the public by the English Socialist press and repeated at the South Place meeting of protest.

The eight Anarchist Socialists picked out by the Chicago police as victims of the rage and terror inspired in the propertied classes by the growing energy of the labour movement, had absolutely nothing to do with the throwing of the bomb at the Haymarket meeting in May, 1886. The prosecution utterly failed to connect these eight men with the fatal bomb in any sense which did not equally apply to the 20,000 revolutionary Socialists of the Chicago Central Labour Union, or indeed to any active revolutionary propagandist in the world. They were simply selected as the most energetic and earnest advocates of opinions obnoxious to the ruling classes, opinions gaining ground so fast as to threaten the very existence of property and wage-slavery. These opinions were, (1) Socialism, *i.e.*, common property of the workers in the instruments of labour ; (2) Anarchism, *i.e.*, the destruction of all arbitrary authority and the substitution of co-operation by free consent and decision by unanimity ; (3) that these great social changes can only be brought about by the direct action of the workers ; (4) that if the monopolists of property and upholders of authority resist the demands of the people by armed force, the people are right in defending themselves by armed force, and for this contingency they must be prepared.

For these opinions, of which the first, third and fourth are shared by the Revolutionary Socialist party throughout the world, these eight men were condemned to death and imprisonment, on the plea that the holding and preaching of such views "set causes to work" which might result in the death of some of the defenders of the existing order of society, and possibly had so resulted in the actual destruction of eight police officers in the Haymarket, though of this no proof could be obtained.

Exactly of the same nature was the moral quibbling by which in the worst days of monarchical absolutism, during the shameful reign of the second Charles Stewart, the court lawyer secured the condemnation of Algernon Sidney, the Republican. The evival by the American democracy of such a dangerous instrument of despotism as "constructive conspiracy," with no basis in fact but the openly proclaimed opinions of the accused and the overt act of some person unknown, was felt by the whole Socialist party and, indeed, by every lover of freedom, as a common danger to the progress of humanity. It is idle to talk about freedom of opinion or of speech when for the mere utterance of opinions distasteful to the ruling minority or majority men can be condemned and executed, on the excuse that the utterance of those opinions may "set causes to work" which threaten the established social order and the lives of its defenders. The whole affair was regarded, and justly, as part of the general attack then being made by the ruling classes in Europe and America on the free utterance of the people's grievances. It was felt that our comrades were the martyrs not only of Anarchism but of freedom of speech and opinion and especially of the expression of the wrongs of labour.

It was recognised by all schools of Socialists that the only effectual means of securing an opportunity for peaceful Socialist propaganda and thus preparing men's minds to accept without bloodshed the inevitable social changes was to make a firm and united stand against the revival of this method of tyranny ; to protest against it with so much energy and perseverance as to secure a decided public opinion in our favour. Not of course amongst the rulers and masters whose interests and prejudices have blinded their eyes and arrayed their sympathies against Socialism and all true freedom. But amongst the workers and those earnest and sincere men and women born in every class, who seek truth and right rather than wealth, respectability, or ease. For even the admirers of written codes admit that law is a two edged instrument cutting both ways and in the hands of a ruling class affords no security to the liberties of the people, unless its administration for class purposes is effectively controlled by a courageous and enlightened public opinion.

Last year the foundations of such a strong and honest public view of the question at issue were laid. A vigorous cry of indignation was raised by the workers of every European country. Here in London 16,000 workmen added their voices to the protests of their American comrades And on the platform Anarchists, Revolutionary Socialists, Christian Socialists, Social Democrats, Land Nationalisers, Freethinkers, Radicals, stood side by side to denounce the condemnation of the Chicago Anarchist Socialists as a wrong to humanity.

To this united protest of the supporters of progress the organs of capitalism and reaction opposed the usual tactics of those who are hired to defend a bad cause. First they ignored the facts, and then when that was no longer possible, they misrepresented them, obscuring the truth with hinted suspicions and general accusations. The middle-class press is paid to invent excuses for the crimes of its supporters. When the triumphant middle-class of France attempted to terrorise the workers of Paris by the massacres which followed the Commune, the middle-class press throughout the world justified, and has never ceased to justify, the inhumanity by throwing suspicion on the motives and misrepresenting the deeds of the victims. The same in the case of the Chicago murders. To relieve the fears and to drug the conscience of the propertied classes not only must the workers be terrorised, but their cause must be discredited by the moral as well as the bodily destruction of its champions. The capitalist press was equal to the occasion. The middle-class American papers vied with one another in misrepresentation and abuse, and the like organs of opinion across the Atlantic followed suit in a tone softened by distance, but none the less hostile and unscrupulous.

Thus the forces of the new social order and the old stood face to face last year. This year the situation is still more clearly defined, we begin to distinguish it as one of those crises which signal a new departure.

The old facts remain unchanged, but in addition we now know (and the information has been within the reach of every London Socialist) not only that the Haymarket bomb was not thrown by or at the instigation of the murdered and imprisoned men, but that it was not thrown by any of the Chicago Anarchists, and that the throwing of it was contrary to the policy upon which the whole revolutionary party there were at that time agreed. We have said that they believed it right to withstand armed force by armed force ; and to be prepared for that emergency the workers of Chicago have been armed since 1877. But the Anarchist Socialists did not consider the eight hours agitation an event of sufficient importance to justify street fighting. They hoped but little from a mere compromise with capitalism, and though they energetically threw in their lot with the workers in the struggle, they felt convinced that it had not in it the elements of success. It might be useful propaganda ; but its immediate outcome could not be a real social revolution. In this belief they resolved not to use arms even in self defence and did not depart from that decision even after six strikers had been shot dead and many wounded by the police. They simply called a peaceful meeting at the Haymarket to protest against the brutal violence of the police. At this meeting a bomb was thrown by some person who to this day remains entirely unknown.

Whilst our knowledge of the facts of the Chicago affair has thus been enlarged and confirmed, the enthusiasm of the workers for the men who died in their cause, has grown and spread. The ennobling and elevating effect on the whole Socialist movement of these men's devotion and heroism, has deepened and widened. As Spies foretold, their "silence has been more powerful than speech." The principles for which they laid down their lives have been branded into men's hearts by their death. This year the eleventh of November has been observed by the most awakened portion of the working class throughout the world as a solemn anniversary, a day when men with one accord cast their eyes upon the past, that they may draw therefrom fresh courage, fresh inspiration for the future.

The scene at the graves of the five martyrs of Freedom in the cemetery a few miles from Chicago was impressive and touching in the extreme. Even the middle class newspapers were forced to minister to the general interest by detailed descriptions of the dense crowds, the

impassioned speeches, the intensity of the sympathy manifested, the mass of wreaths and emblems sent by working class organisations, the display, in spite of stringent police orders, of the red that signified adhesion to Anarchism.

In England this first anniversary has been rendered the more impressive by the visit of our honoured comrade Lucy Parsons, who has addressed great and enthusiastic meetings in London, Norwich, Ipswich and Edinburgh; everywhere stirring a deeper chord of social and revolutionary feeling by her noble personality and the simple directness of her heart felt eloquence. Everywhere the workers have met her with the enthusiastic sympathy due to her suffering, her courage and her devotion. Everywhere she has caused those who heard her to realise the true hearted earnestness of the men and women who have been most energetic in the Chicago labour movement, and deepened the sense of solidarity between them and the English workers.

Of course this unseemly excitement amongst the wage-slaves, this perverse respect and admiration showered upon men and deeds which the respectable of the earth have agreed to cover with ignominy, has called forth the renewed hostility of the middle-class press and the repetition even in professedly Radical papers, like the *Star*, of the ancient misrepresentation, suspicion, and abuse. That was a matter of course. Their readers pay for the careful spicing of their dishes of truth. But it is a burning disgrace to English Socialism that certain English Social Democrats have deliberately lent their aid to the work of calumny and played into the hands of the foe.

Not the Social Democrats as a party. The Socialist workmen of London have displayed the warmest sense of solidarity with their Chicago comrades. J. Burns and J. Blackwell, our well-known Social Democratic comrades, stood on the platform with Mrs. Parsons at the Store Street Hall; branches of the S. D. F. held capital local commemoration meetings, *Justice*, the official organ of that body, hailed the Chicago men as brother Socialists and martyrs of the Socialist cause. No, it is a small clique of middle class politicians who have done this thing.

Last year it was Henry George who, when he was seeking office in New York, turned traitor and used the influence of his labour paper, the *Standard*, to aid the manufacture of that middle-class opinion which enabled the capitalists of Chicago to murder the enemies of capitalism.

This year it is the middle-class Social Democrats, some of whom stood with us on the platform at the Chicago meeting last year, who have turned traitors and helped the middle-class press in the manufacture of that adverse public opinion which may in the end permit English capitalism to reproduce here the murderous policy of Chicago.

The attack of the middle-class press has from the first taken two main lines First; it accuses the Chicago Anarchists of setting up a false defence, and if it does not absolutely ignore facts to the extent of stating that they really did throw the Haymarket bomb, at least hints that the charge of conspiracy was proved, and that the condemned men instigated the deed. Secondly; if this accusation falls through, the papers covertly insinuate or, like the *Evening News* last year, loudly suggest that tolerance of opinion and freedom of speech are all very well, but there are limits, and those limits are reached at Revolutionary Socialist Anarchism. It is not to be suffered that a man be permitted to advocate the overthrow of all private property, of all authority, and that he urge upon the people to act directly with a view to obtaining this result and to defend themselves by force if they are forcibly restrained. This doctrine if a man preach he shall constructively be held guilty of complicity in the action of any person who under whatever circumstances and with whatever intentions, in whatever place and under whatever provocation, is guilty of any act of violence against any of the ruling classes or their hired defenders.

In each of these lines of attack the enemies of Socialism have received support from men and women calling themselves Socialists. We speak especially of the correspondence in the *Star*, and the ungenerous and misleading attack on Mrs. Parsons, on the Chicago martyrs, and on revolutionary Socialists in general, which disgraced the *Link* on the eve of its disappearance and left a lasting stain on a journal that during its year of existence had borne a brave part in the struggle against oppression.

And yet this sophistry tends to produce an effect on public opinion which is dangerous not to Anarchists alone, but the whole party of progress. In the eyes of the middle-class during times of any popular excitement every active revolutionary Socialist, however much he may have talked about parliamentary action and constitutional means in quiet times, is an Anarchist; and he can only save himself from the fate of an open enemy of the existing social order by casting principles and conviction to the wind and compromising in word and deed with the wrongs and injustice upon which that order is based. He must consent to play into the hands of the rulers when the time comes to act for the people, or he will be classed with the more plain spoken revolutionists whom he has been so careful to disown. In times of panic minor differences are obliterated in the headlong rush of conflicting class interests, and all those who work honestly and openly for the deliverance of the oppressed are in the eyes of the oppressors guilty in exact proportion to their earnestness and zeal.

Those Social Democrats who are abetting the capitalist press in its misrepresentation of Anarchism, its insinuations against the good faith of Anarchists even the dead and its attempt to deny revolutionists the right to speak openly of their ideas, are preparing a trap for themselves, and moreover taking the most effectual means to usher in the coming social revolution by deeds of cruelty which will provoke bloody and violent reprisals.

We fully understand the considerations which lead Democratic politicians to adopt this attitude of hostility towards revolutionists. They believe that a social revolution can be brought about by a certain amount of parliamentary and municipal wire-pulling. They actually think that if they can change the form of existing government institutions and introduce into them all active majority rule, that then they will be able to introduce the economic reforms which they understand by a social revolution, and moreover to paralyse the resistance of those capitalists and landlords who are too foolish to compromise.

Now this fine scheme depends at the present time very largely on the support of the lower middle-class and of the aristocracy of labour—these forming the majority of actual electors—and these are just the classes who having with difficulty gained what little they possess by means of a desperate struggle with their fellows, cling to their narrow vantage ground with blind tenacity, and turn sick at the vaguest idea of any change which may interfere with their hard won sense of security. They are ready to support extensive land taxation, even nationalisation of railways, etc., if these changes can be brought about without disturbing their small savings. But a real revolution in the existing order of society, Anarchy, Communism! The very shadow of such an idea scares them into reaction. Therefore it is that those Socialists who seek the suffrages of these shy birds, not only publicly dissever themselves from revolutionary Socialism, but even allow themselves to slip from that fair, if somewhat cowardly position of neutrality, into the treason of actually joining the reactionary party in crying down their comrades. As Mrs. Besant says in that article in the *Link* to which we have referred, "Socialism is now playing a part in all our political and municipal contests." And of course on the eve of such a contest as for example the London School Board, it is extremely inconvenient to Social Demacrats seeking office to have their constituents reminded of Anarchism, Communism, and revolution in connection with the new social idea.

It may be inconvenient, but is that a reason why we, who do not believe in this democratic programme and who do believe in revolution, should hold our tongues and conceal our convictions? or that we should be called "foolish and wicked" by our fellow Socialists for refusing to do so?

The Socialists who in their blind pursuit of the narrower expediency of immediate practical advantage, lose sight of the wider expediency of good faith, justice, and the claim of every honest man and woman to full and free expression of their opinion, are no longer comrades of ours. We can no longer trust them. They are following the downward path which in every country has opened before those who attempt to mingle the fresh life of Socialism with the current politics of a decaying social order. They are on their way to join that army of ambitious office-holders and place-seekers who began their careers as champions of the peeople. We part from them with regret, but with no surprise. Their action is but another instance of the ill effect upon the best of men and women of that compromise with the evil spirit of domination which ruins the life work of so many a noble nature, and continually delays the day of deliverance.

BEFORE THE STORM.

A speech delivered by P. Kropotkine at the meeting held at South Place, November 29, to bid farewell to Mrs. Parsons.

I THINK I cannot address better farewell words to our friend Mrs. Parsons than to ask her to transmit to our American friends the impression under which we, the advanced parties of the Socialist movement, are now living in Europe.

When Arthur Young, the great English agriculturist, was travelling in France, exactly one hundred years ago, on the eve of the great Revolution, he often heard misery-stricken peasant-women saying: "Something *will* happen some time very soon to improve our condition. What it may be we don't know, but *something* will happen." Exactly the same feeling exists now all over Europe. If our friend had had the time to go over to the Continent, or to travel in this country, she would have heard the same feeling continually expressed among the sufferers from the present system. Everybody expresses it in France and Spain, very many in Italy, many in Germany, Austria, and this country, and almost everybody—peasants and educated men as well—in my mother country Russia.

And the richer classes know that. They also frankly recognise in private that something is going to happen, that great changes are pending. In France they openly recognise it in the press. "Something will happen; it cannot last as it is" such is the opinion growing all over the civilised nations of Europe amidst the poorer and the richer classes alike.

Now, the student of human societies will understand what that growing feeling means. As long as there is in the masses mere discontent, that feeling can last for years and years, without being manifested otherwise than by individual acts of revolt. But when the feeling of discontent becomes associated with hopes of a near change, then the change must come; the revolt of the masses is near at hand.

What will be this "something" nobody can foretell. It may be the Communist Commune in some larger cities of France. It may be the Federative Republic and the Commune in Spain and Italy, and the Unitarian Democratic Republic in Germany. It most probably will be a peasants' outbreak in Russia and a consequent abolition of absolute rule there. It may be land nationalisation in this country, or some wider attempt at social reorganisation.

But, whatever it may be, tell to our American friends that two ideas are sure to come out of the change. One of them will be a very wide extension of Home Rule, and, in the more advanced countries, a disin-

tegration, a disjunction of the present governments, so as to take from their hands the numberless functions which they have concentrated now. More free understanding, more free association for achieving the ends now monopolised by the municipalities and the parliaments are sure to come out of the change. The centralised governments which gather in their hands all functions of human life—the defence of society, its education, its economical life, and so on—have been rendered an impossibility; disintegration of those functions must follow both in the state and the free commune.

And the other idea which is sure to come out of the change, will be the disappearance of many a monopoly, the socialisation of, at least, the first necessaries of life and production.

Two grand ideas which will revolutionise the whole life of our present society.

Now as to the question how this change will occur, *we* cannot answer it. It will not depend upon us; it will depend upon the privileged classes. If they understand the necessity of the change, and make timely aud substantial concessions, and do not conspire to overthrow the work of the revolution as they did a hundred years ago in France, then civil war may be avoided. If not, it will break out.

The masses will *not* insist on civil war, but they will not be satisfied with mere sham reforms. They will fight, if necessary, in order to obtain substantial changes.

Which of the two courses will events take? We cannot foretell. But we must say that the lessons now given to the masses by their educated rulers are working precisely in the directiou of preparing war. These rulers teach us cold contempt and disdain of humanity. To speak of humanity, to preach loftier ideas, is considered by them as wicked sentimentalism.

The other day the President of the Bristol Association was reviewing the recent achievements of engineering. Do you think he dwelt upon the St. Gothard tunnel, the canal of Panama, or the proposed tunnel across the Channel? No, he became really eloquent just when he began to speak of the art of killing men. He spoke without disgust, nay, with the enthusiasm of an artist, of a gun which could be put at Richmond and so pointed as to throw shells, weighing 380 pounds, and charged with dynamite, into a space 200 yards square around the Royal Exchange, where these shells would be "vomiting fire and scattering their walls in hundreds of pieces with terrific violence," thus killing the passers by.

What a grand idea! what a grand lesson to gloat over the possibility of throwing these hundreds of pounds of dynamite from a distance of twelve miles into the midst of the crowd of men, women and children! But such are the lessons given by the upper classes. "No sentimentalism in warfare," they say; "cold contempt for human life!"

"If you can, bombard peaceful cities," so they taught us during the last naval manœuvres. "Vomit death amidst the crowds and into the houses. No matter if you kill women and children. No sentimentalism in warfare!"

Bombard Alexandria, if by this means you can get possession of a new market! Such are the lessons given by the upper classes.

Again, suppose a country, like Irelaud, longs for Home Rule. Home Rule for Ireland menaces the interests of Birmingham manufacturers, of English landlords, and, especially, of the London money-lenders and the English insurance companies to whom the mortgaged lands of Ireland really belong. Therefore the ruling classes throw the advocates of Home Rule into prison, turn the peasants who have *made* the soil out of their houses into the mud and snow of the road, men, women and children; and, when it serves their purpose drive them to despair. provoke an insurrection and then crush it in blood! Such are again the lessons we are taught by the upper classes.

And if a workers' movement menaces the interests of the rich, as it did at Chicago, slaughter the workers, pick out a few energetic men and hang them without much caring what is the truth about the crimes imputed to them; hang them to terrorise the masses!

Such are the lessons given by the upper classes.

Well, let us hope that the workers will be better than their teachers. Let us hope that the numbers of rebels will be so great and important and their leading ideas exercise so powerful an effect, that they will be strong enough not to resort to the wicked means now resorted to by a ruling minority which knows that its days are already numbered. Strength, force, can be generous; wicked feebleness never.

Such are the conditions in Europe.

And now, dear friend, tell to our American comrades that their heroes did not die in vain.

There is not a single city worth naming in Spain where the bloody anniversary was not commemorated by enthusiastic crowds of workers. Not one in Italy. Not one in Germany where the names of Parsons, Spies, Engel, Schwab, Fischer, Lingg, Neebe and Fielden were not invoked by workers who met in small groups, as they were not allowed to hold big meetings.

The commemoration of the Chicago martyrs has almost acquired the same importance as the commemoration of the Paris Commune.

Many have already died for the grand cause of Freedom, but none of the martyrs of Freedom have been so enthusiastically adopted by the workers as *their* martyrs. And I will tell you why.

The workmen know that our Chicago brethren were thoroughly *honest*. Not one single black spot could be detected in their lives, even by their enemies. Not one single black spot! Mark that, young men and women who come to join the Socialist movement. The masses *are* honest and they ask the same from those who come to help them in their work. While a black past goes for nothing in the ranks of the politicians, the workers ask from their combatants to be pure of any reproach, to live in accordance with the grand principles they are preaching.

They were honest all their lives through, these martyrs of the labour cause, and once they had joined the Anarchist movement, they gave themselves to it, not by halves, but entirely, body and heart together.

And—they had no ambition. They were Anarchists and understood when they became Socialists, that it was not that they might climb themselves upon the shoulders of their fellow-workers. They did not ask from the masses a place in Parliament, in a Municipality, or on a School Board. They sought no power over the others, no place in the ranks of the ruling classes. They asked nothing but the right to fight in the ranks, at the post of danger. And there they died.

Only such men could die as they have died, without making the slightest concession to the enemy, loudly proclaiming their Anarchist principles before the judges who said that Anarchy is on trial, amidst the lawyers who whispered: "Renounce Anarchy, and you will be saved."

They proclaimed their principles during the terrible year spent on the threshold of death; they proclaimed them on the scaffold, and they hailed the day on which they died for those principles as the happiest of their lives.

Such men *can* inspire the generations to come with the noblest feelings. And so they do, and will do. The idea which lives in such men will never die—it will conquer.

ORGANISATION, FREE AND UNFREE.

A Paper read by T. Pearson at the November Freedom Discussion Meeting.

The best means of organising labour so as to provide our vast and increasing population with all its requirements is a question worthy of the consideration of any Socialist.

Thanks to the efforts of our ancestors and to the science of to-day, there is no doubt as to the possibility of providing for each and all that which they require to the fullest extent. We are all aware that the private ownership of the means of producing wealth is the great barrier that stands between us and the carrying out of our ideas. But suppose this barrier is removed, what is the basis upon which we are prepared to act in the future? Our position as Communist-Anarchists is this. A man produces for the satisfaction of his needs, and when any man both labours and shares the produce with his fellows on terms of free co-operation, his needs are more easily and variously supplied, his social instincts are gratified, and, no matter with what degree of energy he labours, he is always a happier man than he who insists on isolating himself and claiming an exact remuneration for his own particular labour.

We have in the former discussions endeavoured to point out that an exact remuneration can never be fixed for the ever-varying degrees of energy displayed by individuals and that it would be an impossible task for any government to fix a rate of wages which would secure to every man the full produce of his labour. For who can say what is the value of any one person's labour in a finished product. We have pointed out that the free distribution of wealth, supplying every man with all that is necessary for his needs, whatever his ability may be, is the most practically just way of distributing wealth under Socialism. The question therefore which we have now to discuss is the best way to organise labour under Free Communism.

The principle of freedom which underlies our former arguments, is equally applicable to the organisation of labour. Free men have organised and will organise again, slaves never did nor will. We believe in the free organisation of workers, producing and consuming as their different needs and capacities require and relying on voluntary association and personal initiative, instead of red tape and government, and that the society of the future will be the federation of these organisations, economically and politically free. But these communes must not commit the error of intrusting to a few men the management of their affairs. Each must organise itself on the principle of *no masters*. When men have direct personal interest in their work they will produce wealth worthy of the name and not rubbish as we see to-day.

What unpleasant and dangerous work has to be performed every one should take an equal part in performing. All have an equal delight in seeing our streets clean, and the health of all is equally benefitted by good sanitary arrangements and the regular cleaning of our sewers; and the same common interest exists in most other disagreeable or unhealthy work. Besides a good deal of this work could be performed by improved machinery or made more agreeable by pleasant surroundings were it not for the mad race for wealth we see around us to day.

I know this to be the case in the trade I am employed in; for in the building line there is a great deal of hard and dirty work, which is quite unnecessary, *e.g.*, carrying the hod, mixing mortar by hand, wheeling navvies' barrows, and other such work I could mention, which it has been proved could be done by machinery; only slaves in these cases are cheaper than machines, so machinery is *not* used.

Again in the painting line it is very unhealthy and disagreeable to have to work 10 or 12 hours in the midst of white lead and other poisons, not knowing from one day to another but that you may have the painter's colic; but if the hours were less and the men had time to to be clean and to take an interest in their work, painting would become a pleasure instead of drudgery.

In the paper hanging line it is a pleasure to hang good sanitary paper, and it is perfectly safe; but how many paper hangers have lost their

lives by the poisonous colour coming off the common paper, which makes paper-hanging unhealthy and disagreeable, and is used simply in consequence of the competition amongst paper manufacturers to undersell one another.

In the plumbing line there is not much that is in itself disagreeable or unhealthy work. The hardship is to be working for 8 or 9 hours a day amongst lead, and constantly handling it. That not only becomes monotonous, but very often results in lead poisoning, which would not be the case were every man not forced to stick all day at one occupation.

Besides these particular evils I have mentioned as brought about in these special branches of my trade by the present system of organising labour, there are others which apply to all branches of building, *e.g.*, the fixing of unsafe scaffolding, using rotten boards and ladders and being obliged to climb about without proper precautions; all of which go to make the men's lives uncomfortable, and all of which we could put an end to if we could have a free use of capital and organise our own work. If a mere race for profit were not the object of the present organisers of industry the unhealthy, dangerous and disagreeable work could be almost entirely banished from our trade, and with the aid of improved machinery what remains could be very easily planned and carried out by co-operation amongst ourselves.

It is a common argument against Free Communism that there would be a desire on the part of all to do the easiest or safest work and the other would be left untouched. Now in the painting line there are different kinds of work; some are dangerous, while others are quite safe. Yet even as things are the men, *if left to themselves*, soon find out who is willing or who prefers to do the top work, and if none of them like it, they arrange to take it in turns; whilst, *if the master interferes*, it very often falls to the lot of one to do all the top work, and perhaps he is giddy or nervous or in some way the most unfit man for the job. Very often accidents occur in this way; but I have never yet seen a case where a man who is nervous has been compelled by his fellow-workers to do anything dangerous. Indeed the men are mostly willing to help or take the place of a nervous man who has got a dangerous job.

It is to just this spirit of mutual help without the desire of reward, existing even amidst the scramble for riches of to-day, that we look for the free organisation of labour when the reign of private property is ended. It is this spirit that we wish to recognise and encourage and extend in every-day life. We fix our hope for the future on those fraternal feelings which, even as things are, are the greatest fact in society, those natural instincts of fellowship that are displayed from hour to hour in every human relation, or society could not exist at all. Why the principle of Communism is recognised in every social circle where the guests are treated with equal hospitality no matter in what degree they have contributed to the amusement of the party.

Now is it a waste of time to discuss now how labour will be organised under Socialism? Revolutions have taken place in the past, and the workers have found out that instead of altering their social conditions, they have merely altered the name of their masters, for they have remained slaves to this day; and that just because when they had a chance to act for themselves they had not made up their minds what they wanted to do. The most practical question for Socialists to-day is this. After the social revolution are we going to elect a state to organise labour, or are the workers going to freely organise themselves into groups or communes, producing and consuming by common agreement, all sharing equally the intellectual and artistic pleasures of life?

If we can make it clear how wealth might be distributed, so that all needs could be fully supplied, then we can feel assured that the incentive to produce will be given.

Are the workers of the present day equal to the necessity of organising so as to do the immense mass of necessary productive work? Or is it to be left to the skill, the honesty, the good will of a Whiteley, a Morley, or a Vanderbilt? If not to these then to whom? We ought to know, because the persons who are to direct this stupendous work should be now busily engaged mastering the many details they must have at their fingers' ends. But where are your saviours of society preparing for this task? We answer, the workers alone must be their own saviours; that vast body, no matter how classified, that does accomplish the task for which the masters get the credit and the profit. Is it possible to conceive of any other means whereby we can attain our end? If you are a worker take your every-day experience. Here is a factory, and the goods produced pass through many hands. The master who must pretend he does something, says he has organised this thing. But if you observe what takes place you will find the master has only succeeded in creating bad feeling between the workers by his system. Not only does he make them miserable by poor pay, but he puts one over another to keep them envious. Then because they quarrel amongst themselves, because they work with unwilling hands for this slave-driver, you tell us they will never organise without authority to direct them.

Do you not see it is this very man, this so-called organiser, who is at the bottom of all the trouble? Imagine him removed and what would happen? If the men felt the work necessary to be done, there would be nothing left for them but to agree amongst themselves how to do it. Very likely some would disagree and find other comrades with whom to unite their efforts. But those who remained would understand the work they had been accustomed to; having done it so long under a bad system, they would use their past experience until their new experiences of responsibility and freedom woke the spontaneous initiative that more or less exists in every man, to invent changes and improvements.

On equal terms, with free hearts and with a common sympathy bred of common interests, we might hope for such results as we do not now conceive of. But to give us a chance of obtaining these results labour must be free, free from the control of capital, free from the control of the state or of state officials. In this sense we use the words free organisation.

FREEDOM DISCUSSION MEETINGS.

On November 20th, the discussion on the organisation of labour under Free Communism was opened by T. Pearson in a paper the substance of which will be found in another column.

The only opposition was offered by Mr. Harrigon (Individualist Anarchist) who contended that the working classes were miserable worms from whom it was hopeless to expect any good; but that all they wanted was to destroy all governments and drive away all monopolists, leaving the instruments of labour to the labourer and the produce to the producer. As for organisation we were already organised quite enough.

To which Comrade Richardson replied that it might be true that we are now organised quite enough, but are we organised in the right way? The subject of discussion was the *free* organisation of labour and our present organisation was that of slaves by their masters. If the workers had the means of production in their own hands and the free direction of their own labour, is it to be supposed that they would go on producing the same sort of things in the same sort of slavish fashion they are driven to to-day? They would certainly give up making injurious and useless articles and turn their attention to making all necessary work more pleasant and safe. It would be their direct interest to secure their own pleasure and comfort in working, and this would in itself mean tremendous changes in the organisation of industry. The destruction of private property must moreover cause other vast changes. Crowded centres of population will be dispersed; uncultivated land taken into cultivation; useless occupations (*e.g.*, advertising) dropped, and so on. As to the working classes being "miserable worms," as far as there is truth in the accusation, it is so because their humanity has been crushed out by their circumstances. They have been driven and worried into being cowards.

Comrade Cores said that his own experience in the shoe trade led him to agree with Comrade Pearson as to the capacity for free self-organisation of the workers, even to-day, had they a fair chance. In each factory in which he had worked he had found men and not only two or three, but often as many as a dozen, more capable than the capitalist of organising the work. In fact many capitalists are absolutely ignorant of the business and trust entirely to the workers to manage its practical details. As to the mutual relations of industries throughout the country is there any need to have a government to arrange these? Could they not be arranged just as well by voluntary associations of experts at trade congresses and conferences? But such associations should have no power to *force* their views upon the rest of the community. It is just this question of *enforcing* central regulations that is the real question at issue between us and the Social Democrats as regards the future organisation of labour.

Comrades Marsh and Pearson both protested against a cynical attitude of contempt for humanity. Pearson said that amongst the "miserable worms" in the building trade he had continually seen men voluntarily doing the work for a mate who was hurt and subscribing from their wretched earnings to help his wife and family. As to organisation, some form of it, good or bad, free or unfree, is an absolute necessity of social life. Wherever two men co-operate together to supply each other's needs there is organisation. The question for us is, which form of organisation is the best?

ANARCHIST SCHOOLS IN CHICAGO.

A special dispatch from Chicago, Ill., says: The Anarchists in Chicago are becoming more bold, and scarcely a day passes now but that some meeting of theirs or some secret work is exposed. . . . The fact has also been brought out that the Anarchists have established a number of schools here, and are endeavouring to establish more, at which the teachings of Johann Most are to be the text books. In the rear of a liquor store at Lincoln Avenue and Halsted Street, a reporter found seated around the low, dingy room about 120 children, from five to fourteen years of age, listening intently to what their teacher was explaining of the teachings of Most. He told the little ones that Spies and Parsons had been murdered by the capitalists, and in eloquent terms pictured them as martyrs. At No, 58 Clyburn Avenue, about 170 children were found. Here the instructor, Eugene Leidner, formerly a teacher in Berlin University, was delivering an address from a Socialistic point of view. Another school at 636 Milwaukee Avenue had 120 children; at a fourth school at the rear of a saloon in the same Avenue about 150 were present; and at a fifth school, in the Arbeiter Hall, West Twelfth Street, about 160 children listened to a Socialistic address, after which the teacher described the scene at Waldheim Cemetery on Nov. 11.—*Philadelphia Evening Bulletin.*

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