

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

VOL. 3.—No. 37.

DECEMBER, 1889.

MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

The second Anniversary of the day on which our brave comrades Engel, Fischer, Parsons, and Spies, were murdered by the State of Illinois, has been commemorated by meetings all over the earth. Besides the British meetings, some of which we notice elsewhere, we have at the time of writing heard of meetings having taken place in America at Boston, St. Louis, and Chicago; in Spain, at Barcelona; and in France, at Paris, Lyons, Vaucluse, Le Chambon, and Roanne. Next month we hope to give a fuller list, but these first arrivals go to show how strong a hold the Chicago Martyrs have upon the workers of the world. In Barcelona an interesting literary competition was held in connection with the Commemoration, and a number of most valuable papers on the various phases of Anarchist thought have resulted including contributions from Spain, Italy, and South America. The Barcelona correspondent of *Freedom*, Comrade Anselmo Lorenzo, has secured prizes for three excellent papers, which have also won special praise from the jury. Comrade Sergi de Cosmo, of Molfetta, Italy, has also obtained two. There were altogether seventeen prizes offered by different groups, but in addition to the prize papers, many other essays will be published in the volume which is contemplated. The current number of *El Productor* is devoted entirely to this Literary Competition, and we have no doubt that the coming volume will be of great benefit to our cause.

* * *

On the 15th December, we shall publish the articles which have appeared on "The Wage System" in the November and current issues of *Freedom*, in the form of a penny pamphlet. Being from the pen of our comrade Kropotkin we are sure the pamphlet will be welcomed by Socialists generally, and by Anarchists especially. It is perhaps superfluous to say that the money derived from the sale of this pamphlet will go into the *Freedom* Publishing Fund, but we hope this statement will be an extra inducement to our well-wishers to push the pamphlet. It can be had at the rate of 8d. for 13 copies, and we shall pay postage when the cash is sent with order, otherwise the postage will have to be paid in addition.

THE PROPAGANDA.

HUDDERSFIELD.—On Nov. 3rd, Albert Tarn lectured on "The Labour Question," and "Can we do without Government?"

BRIGHTON.—At the Freethought Hall on November 10th, a very successful Chicago Anniversary meeting was held; Barker and Frank Cooper being the speakers.

ABERDEEN.—Kropotkin lectured at the Albert Hall on the 28th October. On the 29th he spoke in the Friendly Society's Hall. Good audiences.

MANCHESTER.—Kropotkin addressed several well-attended meetings here, and in the surrounding district during November.

YARMOUTH.—On November 10th Mrs. Schaack and other comrades addressed a good meeting in commemoration of our Chicago comrades.

HACKNEY.—On November 6th a Chicago Commemoration meeting was held at the Crown Coffee Tavern, 2, Columbia Road, Hackney Road; Cores, Davis, and other comrades speaking.

LEICESTER.—On the 8th, Chambers read an interesting paper on Parliamentarism v. Anarchism, which was followed by a good discussion.

NORWICH.—On Sunday November 3rd, some of the speeches of our Chicago comrades were read at the Gordon Hall. Swash spoke in support. On November 10th a well-attended meeting was held in the Market place, W. Moore and Swash speaking about the lives of the Chicago Martyrs. In the evening at Gordon Hall a Chicago commemoration meeting was held, at which Emery opened with a sympathetic speech. Poynts followed pointing out how honest and pure our murdered Comrades were. On the 17th another Commemoration meeting was held, in the Market place, at which a very large audience was present; Emery, Moore, and Swash were the speakers. In the evening at the Gordon Hall, Moore lectured on "Four Schools of Socialist Thought" leading up to a valuable discussion on the merits of Anarchy; Houghton, Poynts, Swash and others taking part. Afterwards "Annie Laurie" and other songs were sung. A letter of condolence with Mrs Parsons on the loss of her daughter Lulu, has been sent by the Norwich comrades.

TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD.—C. W. Mowbray (S. L.) will lecture on "Anarchism," at 6 Windmill Street, on Wednesday, December 4, at 8 p.m.

EDINBURGH (SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION).—Comrade Howie lectured on "Socialism and Evolution," in the Moulders' Hall, to a large and appreciative audience.

CHELSEA.—On December 1st, J. Blackwell addressed a good audience at the Co-operative Lecture Hall, 312 King's Road, Chelsea, under the auspices of the Chelsea Branch S.D.F., on "Trade Unionism, Social Democracy and Anarchism." Interesting discussion.

A FREE CONDITION OF SOCIETY.

[From a Speech delivered by James Blackwell at the Central Democratic Club, November 6, 1889.]

It is a very common error on the part of a large section of the public to confound Socialism with a particular method proposed for its realisation. With these people any trifling Act of Parliament which proposes to protect the worker against the rapacity of the Capitalist or the Landlord is termed Socialistic, and a condition of society in which the State—meaning Parliament and the Government—will control and direct industry in the interest of the workers, is looked upon by them as the goal of Socialist ambition.

Socialists themselves, however, know very well that Socialism is something quite apart from any particular plan of action; that it is an end to which the Vote, Parliamentary Action and the Conquest of the State are only the means of one section of the Socialist party—the Social Democrats. And the Social Democrats themselves will quite readily admit that it is not this machinery of which they are enamoured. They are Democrats, believers in Parliament and Government only because they imagine it will enable them to secure Socialism.

What then is Socialism? The Emancipation of Man from Economic Servitude is my definition, and I think it is one which will readily be accepted by Anarchists, members of the Socialist League, Social Democrats, or any others who call themselves Socialists.

Now in order to bring about this emancipation of man from economic servitude, working class Socialists agree in saying that the whole people must undertake the management of their own affairs, and in this sense all are Democrats. But as to how this is to be done—how the people are to manage their own affairs—there arises a difference of opinion, and Socialists divide themselves into two widely distinct schools of thought—the Anarchist and the Social Democrat.

Social Democrats assert that the only method by which the people can manage their own affairs is by electing rulers or administrators, whilst Anarchists claim that if the people hand over the management of their business to rulers or administrators they most decidedly do not manage it themselves and in fact remain under the same political system of society as exists to-day, a political system which is antagonistic to the true spirit of Socialism, and will be found to be impossible in practice when the emancipation of man from economic servitude is accomplished.

Anarchists believe that by allowing free scope to all individuals to manage their own affairs, to make free contracts between one another, dissolvable at will and to develop their own initiative, the highest possible condition of society will be realised. Every individual will act as he thinks best and will have to put up with the consequences of his actions.

I will assume that we are all agreed upon Socialism. We disbelieve in Rent, Profit and Interest. We believe in the worker getting what he produces and we disbelieve in Monopoly in Land, Machinery and Credit. Anarchists also disbelieve in taxes—a trifle of some 90 millions of pounds a year, which the workers have to pay.

But how will you get on without Government you say? Let us see.

In association on the Anarchist principle we propose that individuals should associate as their sympathies and interests direct.

For example. Some thousands of people form an industrial community. Of their own free will associations and individuals following certain callings have come to live in a certain town. It is found necessary that the roads and streets of that town, together with its sanitary arrangements, should be looked after. Very well. It is decided that certain individuals who offer to do this work shall do it, and it is done just in the same way as to-day gas is provided by gas companies and water by water companies, and where the interests of the sanitary or paving association is likely to conflict with the gas or water association, as for instance in the laying of pipes and mains, it is left to those associations to arrange matters. For indeed it is not the business of any other person in the town except those immediately concerned; so long that is as the different associations do their work satisfactorily, so long as the town is well paved, the sanitary arrangements are properly looked after and the gas and water supply is all right. As to how these associations are to be recompensed for their labour, it may be that they will receive payment something after the style in which gas and water companies are paid to-day, or if absolute communism prevails, that they will receive their necessities from other associations. Note that the distinction between the Paving and Sanitary Association and the present local body or vestry is that the former is similar to a present day

company formed to do certain work, but that all the members of the company or association are equal partners. "The tools belong to the toilers, the product to the producers," is the Anarchist motto. The vestry lives on taxation, the association lives on payment for work done, which is not exactly the same thing. If a man did not want the part of the street he lives in paved little is gained by forcing him, but it must be obvious that such cases would be as exceptional as to-day it is exceptional to see a well-to-do man habitually walking the streets without a hat on his head or boots on his feet. No one is compelled to do either of these things but probably not one who can afford the expense omits them.

The present form of the organisation of industry, the machinery of manufacture and distribution, is admirably adapted to meet the wants of men. Indeed I hold that as it is true that mechanical machinery which to-day is a curse will to-morrow be a blessing to the workers, it is equally true that the system of organisation which prevails under capitalism will when perfected under Socialism be the best possible for the general welfare. To make this quite clear let us once more remember that Socialism is the emancipation of man from economic servitude.

Go into a large factory and you will see a number of workmen who are at any rate slaves while they are within the factory walls. The master's orders are obeyed without a murmur. Equality is undreamed of. There is a slaveowner and his slaves; there is a king and his subjects. That is Capitalism. Remove the master. Make every workman an equal partner in the factory, thus establishing equality and abolishing exploitation and you have Socialism.

Now this transformation can be effected and I believe will be effected without changing the industrial organisation as far as its base is concerned, although of course it will be greatly modified. The general recognition that the exploitation of man by man is unjust will force on the struggle between the exploiters and the exploited until economic oppression is no more.

Let us suppose we have reached this point in the Social Revolution and that every one admits that exploitation is unjust and against the interests of the community. Two great movements will be taking place. The movement on to the land and the risings in the factories.

The land will certainly absorb a vast number if not the whole of the present army of unemployed, who will find that they can at any rate get a good living for themselves by tickling the soil with a hoe, and very many people who to-day are driven against their wills to the large towns and cities will then prefer the rural life, even if does not offer in some respects such great advantages as the life of the city.

In the factories the workers who have got rid of the masters and have become in a sense factory owners will first of all think about reducing their hours of toil and they will absorb all those who to-day follow useless occupations or are unemployed into their communal partnership—to the benefit of all concerned.

Then instead of the firms, factories and shops of to-day you will have free associations of workers on the land and in the factories and distributing agencies, and the form of organisation prevailing to-day will be modified considerably. The farming associations will be large or small according to the nature of the soil or the kind of farming employed. The same thing will be seen in the factory organisation. A capitalist to-day in his greed will mix up several businesses and by the combination will make money, but under Socialism this would not be found to answer and the workers of the different departments would probably form themselves into different associations. Or a capitalist association may have to-day a number of branch establishments which enables it to reap profit. But under Socialism each one of those branches could very well be as independent as the small shops are to-day. For instance, in the bread business there are several large monopolies in London, companies having 30, 40, or more branch shops, which are supplied from a central bakery. Now under Socialism it is likely that each one of these branches would be worked by a separate independent group, as would be also the central manufactory, and the groups would arrange their exchanges of bread independently. Thus the group would not be compelled to go to a particular central bread manufactory but could choose which one it preferred. The present co-operative distributing societies give one an idea of the modification of distributive organisation which is likely to take place when society becomes one huge co-operative organisation, based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. There is the Wholesale Society which buys large quantities of goods and has buyers in foreign ports, and there are the small retail bodies which buy from the Wholesale Society, but these small societies can buy elsewhere if they like. They buy from the Wholesale Society because they think it best to do so.

Then, again, the reason for the vast number of shops which fill up the streets to-day would disappear with Socialism. Perhaps 4 out of 5 or even 9 out of 10 of these small rival depots would be closed. The managers would have no longer any reason for rivalry and being anxious to dispense with all but necessary work, would find out what shops were really necessary and what were not, with the result that the unnecessary ones would be closed up, the shop assistants now employed either helping to reduce the work in the necessary shops, or going on to the land or into the factories as inclination might determine.

There are a good many firms to-day whose business of middlemen is necessary and in a modified form they would doubtless continue to exist, but there are others and by far the larger number who are quite unnecessary and simply prey upon industry; those would undoubtedly be suppressed. In a word the tendency would be to suppress the unnecessary and to maintain the necessary units of organisation which at present exist, and the feeling of solidarity amongst the whole people which Socialism cannot fail to create would make every worker anxious to do useful work and only useful work.

The Post Office and Railways would be managed on similar lines to other industries. The group in Holborn would attend to their business and the group in Whitechapel would attend to their business and the necessary arrangement between them would be made by some general rules agreed to at a congress of those concerned, by the election of a committee of management or by some sort of clearing-house arrangement such as obtains to-day.

Imagine our railways as they would be if the shareholders were suppressed and the boards of management consisted of workers. One of the results would be to still further decentralise. There are many lines to-day belonging to various companies which could better manage their interests independently than in conjunction with others. And the clearing-house which to-day regulates matters between the different railway companies would then perform the same services for the different lines and their controlling associations of railway men.

Another feature of the present organisation of industry to which I wish to draw attention is that of the Chambers of Commerce. These are practically congresses of merchants and manufacturers which meet locally and occasionally nationally to discuss the interests of their members. No one is obliged by force to carry out the decisions they come to, but the best thing to be done under certain circumstances having been ascertained, it is done naturally as a matter of course. Such congresses I think will be a quite common method of arranging matters and determining projects under Socialism, although of course they will then consist of the workers themselves instead of as now of their rulers.

"The mine for the miners" is the Anarchist ideal. Let us look for a moment at the coal industry as we can imagine it to be under Anarchism. The great thing is that the consumer should have the coal at the lowest possible cost or expenditure of labour. And this question would settle itself by the mines supplying the districts nearest to them, other things being equal, by the establishment of coal depots in direct connection with the mine and by the elimination of the intermediary dealers. To-day it is often said that the poorest people pay the highest prices. That is absolutely true. The householder who can have in a ton of coals at a time, saves in labour of moving and profit to small middlemen several shillings over his poorer neighbour who has a hundredweight or a half hundredweight at a time. Socialism would benefit us by carrying this principle of eliminating the middleman as far as possible.

Above all the Anarchist has faith in experiment. Let the individual initiative have full play and the general result to society will be a gain. Failures there will be of course, but they will be failures leading to success. In the domain of Science almost all great discoveries have been preceded by failures. So in industrial organisation failure will doubtless often result from experiments which will eventually lead to increased good for all.

Do not fall into the error of thinking these ideas of organisation are only held by those who call themselves Anarchists. These are only the advance guard behind whom are a vast army of people who yet but dimly understand Socialism, but see more clearly the evils of government control. Listen, for instance, to the words of a French writer recently quoted in one of our monthly magazines:

"When I try to picture to myself the coming organisation of society, as far as our shortness of sight will allow us to foretell the future, it appears to me in the guise of a multitude of associations of every size and description—associations in which the workers will possess the entire product of their work, because they will also be the owners of their instruments of production—which will suppress all middlemen, since they will exchange all products directly among themselves—which will not cramp individuality, because individual initiative will remain the hidden spring setting each of them in motion, but which, on the contrary, will, by their solidarity, protect the individual against the chances and changes of life."

THE PROPAGANDA.

CENTRAL DEMOCRATIC CLUB, GRAY'S INN ROAD, LONDON.—A discussion was opened on "What is Freedom?" by J. Blackwell, on Nov. 6, J. E. Barlas in the chair. Some interesting points were raised. Chambers avowed himself an Anarchist of the by-and-by type. Cores and others spoke in support.

HEBREW DRAMATIC CLUB, SPITALFIELDS.—A meeting in commemoration of the death of our Chicago comrades was held here on Friday, Nov. 8. There was no chairman but each speaker called upon the following one to speak at the termination of his own speech. The resolution absurdity was also dispensed with, each speaker expressing his feelings of sympathy with our murdered friends in his own way. It was an excellent and well attended meeting and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. Wess briefly related the story of the legal murder. Tom Pearson followed, urging that the best way to avenge our comrades' death was to strive to realise their ideals. Kahan, Trunk and Feigenbaum also spoke.

SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE, FINSBURY.—A meeting convened by the Socialist League in commemoration of the martyrdom of our Chicago comrades, was held on the 11th Nov. The audience was large and enthusiastic. The Freedom Group was represented amongst the speakers by P. Kropotkin and James Blackwell, the other speakers being H. H. Sparling, C. W. Mowbray, F. Feigenbaum, and Lothrop Withington. The second part of this meeting was devoted to the commemoration of the Police Riot of Trafalgar Square on November 13, 1887. Kitz, Morris and Nicoll spoke.

TOWER HILL.—The advanced section of the London Social Democrats held a Chicago Commemoration meeting on Sunday, November 10th. H. R. Taylor, Clifton and others spoke.

KILBURN.—On November 23rd a good meeting was addressed by Mainwaring and Samuels near the "Plough." A good number of *Freedom* sold.

DUBLIN.—At the Progressive Club a debate has been held on "Anarchism v. Social Democracy." Amongst the speakers were Thompson, King, Wilson, Hamilton, and Dr. Creagh. A Chicago Commemoration meeting was held here by the Dublin Socialist Club at 87, Marlborough Street. Frizelle, Fitzpatrick, Hamilton, King, and Toomey spoke.

THE WAGE SYSTEM.

By Peter Kropotkin.

IV.—EQUAL WAGES V. FREE COMMUNISM.

"To each according to his works," say the Collectivists, or rather, according to his share of service rendered to society. And this is the principle they recommend as the basis of society, after the Revolution shall have made all the instruments of labour and all that is necessary for production, common property!

Well, if the Social Revolution should be so unfortunate as to proclaim this principle, it would be putting an age long drag on human progress; it would be building on the sand; it would be leaving without a solution the immense social problem cast by past centuries upon our shoulders.

It is true that in such a society as ours, where we see that the more a man works the less he is paid, this principle may seem, at first sight, an aspiration towards justice. But at bottom it is but the consecration of all existing injustice. It is with this principle that the wage-system started, to end where it is to-day, in crying inequalities and all the abominations of the present state of things. And it has ended thus because from the day on which society began to value services in money or any other sort of wages, from the day on which it was said that each should have only what he could succeed in getting paid for his work, the whole history of Capitalism (the State aiding therein) was written beforehand; its germ was enclosed in this principle.

Must we then return to our point of departure and pass once more through the same process of capitalist evolution? Our theorists desire it; but happily it is impossible; the Revolution will be communistic; or it will be drowned in blood.

Service rendered to society, be it labour in factory or field, or moral service, *cannot* be valued in monetary units. There cannot be an exact measure of its value, either of what has been improperly called its "value in exchange" or of its value in use. If we see two individuals, both working for years, for five hours daily, for the community, at two different occupations equally pleasing to them, we can say that, taken all in all, their labours are roughly equivalent. But their work could not be broken up into fractions, so that the product of each day, each hour or each minute of the labour of one should be worth the produce of each minute and each hour of that of the other.

Roughly speaking, we can say that a man, who during his whole life deprives himself of leisure for ten hours daily, has given much more to society than he who has deprived himself of but five hours a-day, or has not deprived himself of any leisure at all. But we cannot take what he has done during any two hours or two days or two years, and say that this produce is worth exactly twice as much as the produce of any one hour's day's or year's work from another individual and reward him proportionately. To do this, would be to ignore all that is complex in the industry, the agriculture, the entire life of society as it is; it would be to ignore the extent to which all individual work is the outcome of the former and present labours of society as a whole. It would be to fancy oneself in the Stone Age when we are living in the Age of Steel.

Take, indeed, no matter what—a coal mine, for instance—and see if there is the least possibility of measuring and valuing the services rendered by each of the individuals working at the extraction of coal.

See that man stationed at the huge machine which raises and lets down the cage in a modern mine. He holds in his hand the lever which stays and reverses the working of the machinery; he stops the cage and sends it off in the opposite direction in the twinkling of an eye; he launches it from top to bottom with giddy speed. He follows an indicator upon the wall, which shows him, on a small scale, the place in the pit where the cage is at each moment of its progress. All attention, he follows this indicator with his eyes and when it has attained a certain level, he suddenly stops the rush of the cage, not a yard above or below the desired elevation. Then scarcely have the pile of tubs been discharged and the empties shoved off, when he reverses the handle and launches the cage once more into the void.

For eight or ten hours at a time he displays these prodigies of attention. Let his brain relax for a single instant and the cage would fly up against and shatter the wheels, break the rope, crush the men, bring all the work of the mine to a stand-still. Let him lose three seconds upon each reverse of the lever and, in a mine with all the modern improvements, the output will be reduced by from twenty to fifty tons a-day.

Well, is it he who renders the greatest service in the mine? Or is it, perhaps, that boy who rings from below the signal for the mounting of the cage? Or is it the miner who risks his life every moment in the depths of the mine and will end one day by being killed by fire-damp? Or again, the engineer who would lose the coal seam and set men hewing bare rock if he merely made a mistake in the addition of his calculations. Or, finally, is it, as the economists pretend (for they also advocate remuneration according to "deeds," reckoning "deeds" in their own fashion) the owner, who has put all his patrimony into the concern, and who perhaps has said, in opposition to all previous anticipations: "Dig there, you will find excellent coal?"

All the workers engaged in the mine contribute in proportion to their strength, their energies, their knowledge, their intelligence and their skill, to the extraction of coal. And the utmost we can say is, that all have the right to *live*, to satisfy their *needs*, even their whims, after the more imperious needs of all are satisfied.

But how can we value their deeds?

And then, Is the coal that they have extracted entirely the result of *their* work? Is it not also the outcome of the works of the men who constructed the railway leading to the mine and the roads branching off on all sides from its stations? And what of the works of those who have tilled and sown the fields which supply the miners with food, extracted the iron, cut the wood in the forest, made the machines which will consume the coal, and so on?

No hard and fast line can be drawn between the works of one and the works of another. To measure them by results leads to absurdity. To divide them into fractions and measure them by hours of labour leads to absurdity also. One course remains: Not to measure them at all, but to recognise the right of all who take part in productive labour to the comforts of life.

Take any other branch of human activity, take our existence as a whole, and say which of us can claim the highest reward for his works?

The doctor who has divined the disease or the nurse who has assured its cure by her sanitary cares? The inventor of the first steam engine or the boy who one day, tired of pulling the cord which formerly served to open the valve admitting the steam beneath the piston, tied this cord to the lever of the machine, and went to play with his companions, without imagining that he had invented the mechanism essential to all modern machinery—the automatic valve? The inventor of the locomotive or that Newcastle workman who suggested that wooden sleepers should take the place of the stones formerly put under the rails which threw trains off the line by their want of elasticity? The driver of the locomotive or the signalman who stops the train or opens the way for it?

Or, take the trans-Atlantic cable. Who has done most for society, the engineer who persisted in affirming that the cable would transmit telegrams, whilst the learned electricians declared that it was impossible? Or Maury, the scientist who advised the disuse of thick cables and the substitution of one no bigger than a walking stick? Or was it, after all, those volunteers, coming no one knows whence, who spent day and night on the deck of the *Great Eastern*, minutely examining every yard of cable and taking out the nails that the shareholders of the maritime companies had stupidly caused to be driven through the isolating coat of the cable to render it useless?

And, in a still wider domain, the true domain of human life, with its joys, its sorrows, and its varied incidents, cannot each of us mention some one who during his life has rendered him some service so great, so important, that if it were proposed to value it in money, he would be filled with indignation? This service may have been a word, nothing but a word in season, or it may have been months or years of devotion. Are you going to estimate these, the most important of all services, in labour notes?

"The works of each!" But human societies could not live for two successive generations, they would disappear in fifty years, if each one did not give infinitely more than will be returned to him in money, in "notes" or in civic rewards. It would be the extinction of the race if the mother did not expend her life to preserve her children, if every man did not give without counting the cost, if men did not give most especially where they look for no reward.

If middle-class society is going to ruin; if we are to-day in a blind alley from which there is no escape without applying axe and torch to the institutions of the past, that is just because we have calculated too much—an excellent method indeed for the blackguards. It is just because we have allowed ourselves to be drawn into not *giving* except to *receive*, because we have desired to make society into a commercial company based upon debit and credit.

Moreover, the Collectivists know it. They vaguely comprehend that a society cannot exist if it logically carries out the principle, "to each according to his works." They suspect that the *needs* (we are not speaking of the whims) of the individual do not always correspond to his works. Accordingly De Paepe tells us:

"This eminently individualistic principle will moreover be *tempered* by social intervention for the education of children and young people (including their maintenance and nurture) and by social organisations for the assistance of the sick and infirm, asylums for aged workers, etc."

They suspect that a man of forty, the father of three children, has greater needs than a youth of twenty. They suspect that a woman who is suckling her child and spends sleepless nights by its cot, cannot get through so many *works* as the man who has enjoyed tranquil slumber.

They seem to understand that a man or woman worn out by having, perhaps, worked too hard for society in general, may find themselves incapable of performing so many *works* as those who take their hours of labour quietly and pocket their "notes" in the privileged offices of State statisticians.

And they hasten to *temper* their principle. Oh, certainly, they

say, society will feed and bring up its children! Oh, certainly it will assist the old and infirm! Oh, certainly *needs* not *deeds* will be the measure of the cost which society will impose on itself to temper the principle of deeds.

What, Charity? Charity organised by the State.

Improve the foundling hospital, organise insurance against age and sickness, and the principle will be tempered!

Thus then, after having forsworn Communism, after having sneered at their ease at the formula, "to each according to his needs," is it not obvious that they also perceive that the great economists have forgotten something—the needs of the producers? And then they hasten to recognise them. Only it is to be the State by which they are to be estimated; it is to be the State which will undertake to estimate whether needs are not disproportionate to works and to satisfy them if this be the case.

It is to be the State that will give alms to him who is willing to recognise his inferiority. From thence to the Poor Law and the Workhouse is but a stone's throw.

There is but a stone's throw, for even this step-mother of a society which disgusts us, has also found it necessary to temper its individualistic principle. It too has had to make concessions in a communistic sense, and under the same form of charity.

It also distributes halfpenny dinners to prevent the pillage of its shops. It also builds hospitals, often bad enough, but sometimes splendid, to prevent the ravages of contagious disease. It also, after having paid for nothing but the hours of labour, receives the children of those whom it has itself reduced to the extremity of distress. It also takes account of needs—as a charity.

Poverty, the existence of the poor, was the first cause of riches. This it was which created the earliest capitalist. For, before the accumulation of the surplus value, of which people are so fond of talking, could begin it was a necessity that there should be poverty-stricken wretches who would consent to sell their labour force rather than die of hunger. It is poverty that has made the rich. And if poverty advanced by such rapid strides during the Middle Ages, it was chiefly because the invasions and wars that followed one upon another, the creation of States and the development of their authority, the wealth gained by exploitation in the East, and many other causes of a like nature, broke the bonds which once united agrarian and urban communities and led them, in place of the solidarity which they once practised, to proclaim this principle: The devil take needs; works alone shall be paid for and let each get along as best he can!

And is it this principle which is to be the outcome of the Revolution? Is it this principle that we dare to dignify by the name of a Social Revolution, that name so dear to the hungry, the suffering and the oppressed?

But it will not be so. For, on the day when ancient institutions splinter into fragments before the axe of the proletariat, there will be found amongst that proletariat a number of men and women who will shout: Bread for all! Lodging for all! Right for all to the comforts of life!

And these voices will be heard. The people will say to themselves: Let us begin by satisfying our need for life, for joy, for liberty. And when all have tasted of this happiness, we will set to work, the work of demolishing the last vestiges of middle-class rule, its morality drawn from the account book, its philosophy of debit and credit, its institutions of mine and thine. And by demolishing we shall build up, as Proudhon said; but we shall build on new foundations, those of Communism and of Anarchy, and not those of Individualism, Authority, and State's Charity.

PROPAGANDIST LITERATURE.

The "Knights of Liberty" group send us a pamphlet of 32 pages, printed in Yiddish, which has just been issued from the *Worker's Friend* printing office, 40 Berners Street, Commercial Road, London, E. Comrade B. Feigenbaum is the author, and the title rendered into English is "Why a Jew should be a Socialist." It can be had for 2d. in England and 5 c. in America.

We are glad to notice an excellent little German paper *Der Anarchist*, which has lately appeared at St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A. (C. Timmermann, P. O. Box 758). It is published fortnightly, is printed in roman characters and can be had, post free for a half-year for 2s. in stamps.

L'Associazione, the Italian Anarchist-Communist paper recently published at Nice is now issued from London. An interesting feature in this journal is the translation as a serial of "Society on the Morrow of the Revolution," to which we referred last month.

"The State: its origin, its nature and its Abolition," is the title of a pamphlet just issued by Albert Tarn, 39 Newhall Street, Birmingham, which can be had post free for 2½d. in stamps. The author very truly says that "the State is the outward expression of certain coercive principles which prevail in society to-day." He describes Property as "a Monopoly of Possession created by Law and upheld by the State," and says that "as long as it lasts the workers will remain wage slaves." Again he says, "as long as Property lasts . . . it is impossible to eliminate crime." The author deals with the Marriage question and also the cause and cure of Crime in true Anarchist fashion, pointing out that "the State is the chief cause of crime."

Our Parisian weekly contemporary *L'Attaque*, of 120 Rue Lafayette, continues to make good progress. During the recent elections it issued a most excellent number, full of articles advocating abstention from the polls and showing the folly of voting. We notice that our comrade Dr. Merlino is now among the writers for this paper, as also is Charles Malato, the Paris correspondent of *Freedom*. In the current issue Malato has an excellent article bearing the title of "Mysticism." There is also a dialogue from our comrade's pen, running in *L'Attaque* as a serial. Merlino writes on "The Golden Age." Readers of French will find it a profitable investment to send half-a-crown to Comrade Ernest Gegout at the above address, thus ensuring the receipt of *L'Attaque* for six months. The two other Parisian Anarchist papers are *La Reolte* and *Le Père Reimard*.

INDIVIDUAL OR COMMON PROPERTY.

A DISCUSSION.

At the suggestion of our individualist fellow-worker for Anarchism, Albert Tarn, we open our columns to a full and free discussion of the question of property. Our own views as Communists are well known to our readers, but as we hold it to be every honest man's business to let the other side speak and to prove the truth of his own position by hearing what the opposition have to say, we welcome the idea and shall be glad to print contributions which are to the point from either Communists or Individualists.

FROM THE INDIVIDUALIST SIDE.

An investigation into the meaning of Property practically amounts to an inquiry into the origin and meaning of the possessive pronouns. In order to clearly understand what property is we must ascertain precisely what we mean by stating that this or that object is mine, thine, or his.

A watch and chain are *mine*, I take it, if I possess them, and either by my own might or artifice or by the might of social organisation, can retain possession of them against all comers. It does not matter how I have come by them, so long as no one dare dispute possession they are mine. I am quite aware that long established social custom may surround some kinds of property with a halo of sanctity and make unthinking people almost believe that a Supernatural Being has distributed possessions and by his divine commands has created the possessive pronouns. Still, when one comes to closely examine the institution of property, one finds it in reality to be just as sacred as title-deeds, bailiffs bludgeons and bayonets can make it and no more, and that even Divine Right is at bottom no more than Human Might.

There is, indeed, no difference in nature between my possession of a watch and chain and the Earl of Dudley's possession of a vast tract of land, of mines, of ironworks, and other such valuable items, except from this point of view, namely that my watch and chain are so small in compass that I may be able to retain possession of them by my own might and artifice *without the aid of the State*, whereas the possessions of Earl Dudley referred to are so cumbrous and extensive that only the existence of the State forces (or fundamentally of certain superstitions) could enable him to retain possession and say they are *his*.

Earl Dudley's possessions, therefore, partake of the nature of monopoly, that is to say he possesses more than his natural abilities and powers would assign him, human law stepping in and giving him an enormous quantity over and above his natural allowance. And it seems to me that if we are discontented with the present distribution of wealth, the first question it behoves us to ask is this: Is the present mode of distribution a natural one, that is to say, according to the natural gifts and talents of each, or do human arrangements step in and take from some and give to others, and hence destroy freedom and equity? It seems to me that the latter is the case, that human laws by interfering with a natural distribution of wealth, create the inequality and miseries which exist to-day, continually taking from the strong working men who produce the wealth and giving to a number of empty-headed creatures who can do nothing better than look handsome, and often don't succeed in doing that.

Plainly, if we wish to solve the vital question of the Distribution of Wealth, it seems to me apparent that we must appeal to *Nature*, for when every man receives his natural due obtained by free contract between man and man without State interference on either side, none can quarrel, none can complain, none can rebel.

If it is true, therefore, that the State steps in and causes the wealth to be taken from the producer and given to the non-producer, then it is true that the *State protects theft*, and indeed it is true of any system of property which is contrary to the principle of every man receiving according to his merits, that such system of Property is a system of Robbery, and hence we see the meaning and truth of Proudhon's assertion *La Propriété c'est le vol*.

Let any one ask himself whether the State protects the Irish peasants, or indeed the English peasants and mechanics in the fruit of their own toil. If so, how comes it that the great mass of the producers of this country, amounting to 70 per cent of the population, are eternally in a state of abject poverty, eternally struggling to keep the wolf from the door? And I would further ask every working man to think whether the State Protection of Property is for his own benefit, or merely for the advantage of a small clique of idlers who live on the fat of the land. Does the average working man possess more than what by his own might or by free association with his fellows he could defend and protect?

Sir Thomas Moore's remark is as true of the State to-day as it was of the State in his own time, *i.e.*, that it is "Nothing but a certain conspiracy of rich men seeking their own commodities under the style and title of the Commonwealth."

ALBERT TARN.

Editorial communications to be addressed to "The Editor of FREEDOM," 28 Gray's Inn Road, W.C. Orders for copies of the paper, payments, etc., should be sent to "The Manager of FREEDOM," 28 Gray's Inn Road.

Freedom Publication Fund.—H. G. (Cape Colony) 10s.

Printed and published for the proprietors by C. M. Wilson, at the Labour Press Limited (Co-operative Society), 28 Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C.