

Freedom

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CO-OPERATION & ANARCHISM.

The International Congress of Co-operators which was held in London last month deserves the attention of Socialists and Anarchists for many reasons. Not that we saw, either in the speeches delivered or the resolutions recommended by the Congress to the attention of co-operators, any new departure from the lines followed by co-operators for the last fifty years. Not a trace of any new idea could be noticed throughout the Congress. Nay, when it was proposed to include in a resolution concerning the International Alliance the following words, "To promote co-operation in all its forms, taking for basis the principles of property (?), liberty, and participation in profits," they were objected to on the ground that "if profit-sharing were made a cardinal principle, certain wholesale societies would have to be excluded from that Alliance." And there was nobody in the whole Congress to remind them that co-operation without profit-sharing ceases to be co-operation at all; and, still less, to appeal to the great ideas of social reform advocated by Robert Owen, the founder of all co-operation. But precisely this total absence of any but middle-class ideas in the Congress makes us think it is high time for us to do our best to impress our ideas upon the mass of workers who are led, or rather misled, by the promoters of the movement, aided in this case by a rather striking proportion of lords, dukes, or simply middle-class sympathisers.

The Congress shows how far we are from the time when co-operation could be looked at with enthusiasm by so many social reformers; while the paucity of results obtained towards emancipating the working classes from their middle-class exploiters also shows that the co-operators will have to strike on some new lines if they intend to be of any importance in the great changes which mankind is sure to go through in the near future.

Fifty years ago it was firmly believed that through co-operation the workers would succeed in freeing themselves from the middleman first, and, with the aid of the economies thus realised, from the employer next. The co-operative movement, it was believed, would soon compel the capitalists to capitulate, while co-operation would educate the necessary staff of workers in Communism. Of course, looking backward to those times, we cannot but feel deeply grateful to the early Communists for their having put the ECONOMIC emancipation of the worker above all other things. At a time when each advanced reformer knew nothing besides the political declarations of the French Revolution an immense service was rendered to mankind by putting forward the necessity of an economic change in the Communist sense. But those years were also the years of the most reckless and abominable exploitation of the workers, driven from the villages into the factory dens—years when the middle-classes, having climbed to power, locked the workers in the workhouses, with their children, when they refused to work twelve and sixteen hours in the factories, and hanged them when they entered into coalitions for obtaining a living wage.

Revolt against the bloodsuckers and the State which supported them would have been at those times the only means to combat that terrible force. But the Communists separated from the workers, who continually revolted against the employers, as well as from the politicians who revolted against the State, and they preferred to follow their own lines of *personal* emancipation amidst the misery and sufferings of the great mass. Three separate parties thus grew up: the Revolutionary Radicals organised in their secret political societies; the revolting workers organised in secret trade organisations; and the Communists and Co-operators who were ready to put up with any form of government provided it would allow them to put their pennies together or to start Communist colonies.

The three parties necessarily followed each one its own line of development and, as is usually the case, evolved more and more their fundamental principles. The politicians gradually became mere Radicals, caring for no substantial changes in the economic conditions and only advocating some mitigation of the conditions of wage-labor. The trade unions tended more and more to become an aristocracy of better paid workers; and the co-operators gradually became more and more—in the distributive associations, men simply striving to make the best out of their scanty wages under a growing insecurity of employment, and in the productive association they tended entirely to become a sort of lower middle-class employers of labor, sometimes a little better, but very often worse than the middle-classes themselves. A movement which was based on the personal and partial emancipation of a few individuals, a movement which appealed to the egotistic features of man and narrowed the circle of his views upon society, could not produce other results.

Happily, there was a class of reformers who developed their ideas outside of these three parties—the Socialists. They proved the necessity of a *complete* change in the whole of the present conditions. They maintained that no isolated freeing from the yoke of Capital is possible; that the whole of the present commercial system is rotten. They endeavoured to widen the views of the worker instead of directing them into a narrow sphere of personal interests; and gradually and naturally out of this movement evolved the Anarchist current of thought which waged war against the very idea of the State and Authority in addition to its war against Capital; and, after having proved that men need not be coerced to unite, could accept Communism,—but Communism freed from all authoritarian ideas which resided in it—Free Communism, Anarchist Communism.

Of course, the Socialists, and especially the Anarchists, were treated by trades unionists and co-operators alike as "unpractical dreamers," as utopians; but facts show how right they were in making their own evolution for themselves and in developing their ideas free of any compromise. Their ideas have not been lost in the petty struggles for personal interests; they have not been obscured by the prosecution of a narrow, partial aim. And what we now see is that these ideas conquer the world; that they permeate it. More than that: those who sneered at them and treated them as unpractical, after half a century of so-called "practical" experiments, are bound to recognise that isolated emancipation is more unpractical than any of the reputed utopias of the Anarchists. Politicians are bound to inscribe in their programs the Socialist schemes, for which the workers grow more and more passionate, in proportion as they know them better. The trades unionists begin to understand that so long as the necessities for production and the necessary food remain in the hands of exploiters the worker *must* be exploited; that to emancipate separate trades, or parts of trades, when thousands of men and women are shelterless and breadless, is the most foolish of all utopias. And, in the face of the continually growing complexity and cost of machinery, as well as of the masses of people continually thrown out of employment, there is less and less chance for co-operators to start productive workshops with their own miserable economies; Capital, continually finding new fields to exploit, is less and less amenable to the idea of flowing into the co-operative banks for a low interest, while under the present conditions it becomes every day less possible to pay even an interest of five per cent without refusing to Labor all but what it would receive in the capitalist's workshops.

And then, let the co-operative leaders do whatever they can, they cannot prevent the workers they employ from looking upon them as mere "bosses," from striking for better wages and from being permeated with Socialist ideas. During the last coal strike in the midland counties, the Wholesale Co-operative had to take part for the workers against the employers, and they voted no less than £5,000 to the strike fund, opening at the same time a large credit to the local societies (was it not £35,000?) in order not to let their customers die from starvation. So intimately is everything connected in the present industrial life; so impossible it becomes to talk of any one man's or society's production under the present intricate conditions.

The necessity of a social revolution is brought home to the co-operators as well as to every other category of workers, and they are bound, in the near future, to merge their interests in the interests of the whole mass of workers. The time has come when a broad Anarchist propaganda has to be done among the co-operators as well—Anarchist, not merely Socialist, because the very organisation of the co-operative societies, their absolute independence, their congresses which only express desiderata to be discussed by each society for itself, and the general spirit of independence and initiative which pervades the co-operative societies (this part of R. Owen's spirit is still alive among them), all this has prepared the way for Anarchist Communist propaganda among the co-operators; and we sincerely regret that there was no Anarchist at the Congress to seize upon the several splendid opportunities offered for developing Anarchist ideas. Let us not forget that the co-operators represent a mass of 1,600,000 heads of families who must be won to Anarchism, and who have to shake off the middle-class leadership they are still submitted to.

GREEN POWDER.

The strike at Carmaux, and the one at Bousquet d'Orle are hardly mentioned at present. What strange people we are! For a strike to be a strike, it must be theatrical, melodramatic, with startling incidents, meetings, conflicts with the police, military encampments, affrays and,

at times, even stretchers must appear on the scene. A strike that does not offer these entertainments and emotions is not a strike. The one at Carmaux ceased to excite interest the day the workers began to starve in silence. It would not be amiss to remember this at least twice a day, when we sit down to our meals.

Yonder is a people suffering more acutely from the horrors of a siege than if imprisoned between walls battered by the enemy's fire. It is possible to repulse a storming party in time of war, but here is an enemy that need not even show himself. An enemy consisting of a gentleman, or a group of gentlemen, who remain peacefully at home, awaiting the end of the campaign without anxiety. Would you speak to us of smokeless powder? What a ridiculous and childish invention! The administrator and master of a factory has made a far better discovery. He manages without powder: he only cares for his cigar smoke, rising in spiral form above his head and carried away only by the wind. It is with that smoke he gains his most murderous battles. Confess that the primitive M. Lebel is perfectly ridiculous.

M. Ressayguier, administrator of the Carmaux glass works, knows that he can expect everything from smoke, so he smokes.

Around him hunger and misery carry havoc among the besieged army, an army that has already surrendered once, but whose capitulation has been disdainfully set aside because the voluptuous victor found his enemy insufficiently humiliated. He only accepts capitulations from men on their knees. He will gain his point, I am sure. The terrible compulsion of a house without bread crushes the proudest and strongest.

This is what M. Leon Say and the economists, with ferocious irony, call "freedom of labor," adding that the powers of the State cannot and must not intervene.

Do not interfere, or you will falsify the free play of those forces. Are you not delighted with the pretty little mechanism that works like a child's toy? The worker on one side, the master on the other. Both equally free. The worker asking for work; the master refusing work or only granting it on certain unacceptable terms. Then appears a third character—hunger—who settles matters, and the curtain falls. It is as amusing and witty as a proverb by Alfred de Musset. It is a little play for three people. Nothing more,—save in an extreme case, when hunger is not in the vein and acts his part too feebly—a fourth personage is introduced, the *gendarme*. He belongs to a buff-skin syndicate and helps to bring about the catastrophe, which is always the same.

This is one side of the question.

Here is another.

Last week, at Aniche, the professional jubilee of M. Vuillemin was celebrated. Grand to-do! To complete the festival, M. Vuillemin wished to crown it with an act of generosity. At dessert to extend his hand and, with an august gesture, speak word of amnesty, and equal Titus in his clemency, to open wide the gates of the prison of labor:—"In my munificence I wish that those who have starved may from to-day find a crust of bread. I give them the right to live by work. It is my festival. It is my good pleasure."

And the speaker was, no doubt, sincere. He only thought of being magnanimous. But suddenly, in the midst of the feast, a fierce creature arose who enacted the scene of Saint Vallier in "The King amuses himself." A horrible succession of revolver shots, with a bomb as crowning piece.

With a snobism that made me laugh till I cried, some have said: "Yet that good M. Vuillemin had said all of a sudden, without rhyme or reason, that people could return to work, that the Company's condescension would go so far as not to refuse work to a single creature."

Nation of serfs!

And then the police went prowling round Decoux's home to discover who had furnished him with a revolver and who had loaded it for him.

If the police will allow me, I can give them a clue. Let them go to Carmaux. They will easily find M. Ressayguier looking from behind the windows of his mansion and the destruction famine is working around him. It is there, and not at Aniche, that our distinguished police can find a clue.

I said at the beginning that M. Ressayguier made no use of powder. He does not make use of it, but he manufactures it, and green powder too. In the well-to-do and bourgeois comforts of his home, surrounded by his people—also well-to-do and bourgeois,—this man stores and pulverises chlorate of potassium.

His powder factory is not clandestine. He works under the eye of the prefect. Not being a representative of the people he runs no risk of being arrested, although his explosive works are situated on the Tarn. Handcuffs are only made for Compayré. But Ressayguier works, without anxiety, at those mixtures of detonating hatreds, concentrated anger and fury, that will explode some day. In sorrow be it said. Oh! not at Carmaux. Not tomorrow, not after tomorrow, but in two or three years. At Lens, at Anzin, at Montreuil-Mines or elsewhere. The explosion may harm some good man who has nothing in common with M. Ressayguier.

And the police, putting on blinders fit for horses turning the grindstone of a mill, will start for the scene of the outrage to inspect and to ask the fragments of the bomb where the green powder came from.

Good Heavens! Look at Carmaux! They are storing it there; they are fabricating it under your very eyes, under your protection.

I speak to all those who govern, to all those who make laws, to all those who think, to all those who have a moral responsibility in this country, and I say:—

"Do you not fear that some day you may be asked: Was it done with your complicity?"—EDOUARD DURRANG (*Lanterne*, 15 August 1895).

THE INTERNATIONAL & ANARCHY.

Internationalism, foretold by the great founders of Socialism, and well expressed by an independent thinker* so early as 1836, has in our days become a main factor in the political, social, and intellectual life of the civilised world. The number of associations and societies holding their international congresses is already so large that it is very difficult to follow closely their debates and reports. The majority of these congresses are organised by specialists, and are generally interesting only as a symptom that the needs of human life in our time cannot be satisfied by the old-fashioned methods of legislation, either Republican or Monarchical. We attach importance to these congresses as first steps towards a social order which shall have no need of the State or of law givers to regulate the public well-being, national or international. But their members, most of them imbued with the ancient prejudices of the State and authority, do not realise the social mission they accomplish and what service they render to Anarchist ideas.

However, side by side with the congresses of specialists, there are others more important. I mean the congresses of Socialists. They are not limited to special questions. They discuss and propagate a novel mode of social organisation; a new conception of private and public morality; therefore mankind in general follow their debates with attention.

The first Socialist congress took place in 1866. It was that of the International Working Men's Association, which met to announce that, for the Socialists of the world, "The economic emancipation of the workers is the main end, to which all political movements must be subordinated." [See paragraph 3, General Statutes adopted by the Congress, in French edition, 1866.]

As the most efficient means of reaching this end, the International Socialists advocated strikes and the abolition of standing armies. And history tells us what moral influence was exerted by the strikes of London, Geneva and Paris, organised, led and maintained by the International. More especially in the world of the toilers the Association caused a stir of enthusiasm and revolutionary aspiration.

But this very revolutionary tendency provoked a split in the International itself. The majority of its federations declared for individual, communal and federative autonomy and for revolutionary action. The Centralist minority declared themselves the partisans of State Socialism and legal and parliamentary action. After 1872, the latter, the Centralists, held (in 1873) one Congress: a very unimportant one. They were so weak that at the end of three years they declared "their International" dead.

Very different is the history of the revolutionary Federalists (Anarchists). They held congresses at Geneva, at Chaux-de-Fonds, at Berne, at Ghent, at St. Imier, in London (1881), and a second at Geneva (1882). They organised the Socialistic, revolutionary outbreaks at Benevento, at Carthage, the demonstration at Berne, and other active agitations. It may be stated without any exaggeration that from 1872 to 1883, the International, with its openly Socialist creed, spread its ideas and carried on its agitation thanks to the efforts of the Federalists (Anarchists) alone. It was, at length, only the reaction—also an international movement—which obliged us temporarily to give up holding congresses. Our comrades were persecuted in their workshops and everywhere else; our active men filled the prisons of Italy, Spain and France. The persecution culminated in the Lyons Trial of 1883.

From this cursory glance it appears that the Anarchists, more than any other section of the modern Socialist party, have served the ideas and urged forward the movement of international Socialism. How comes it, then, that it is the Anarchists who are now driven with blows out of Socialist congresses? Why is it that the invitations for the coming congress of 1896, in London, are to be so worded that all working men's organisations and all democratic Socialists shall be admitted, but not the Anarchists?

The answer is simple: the gentlemen who are now organising the so-called Socialist congresses are the declared enemies of the International.

Whilst that great association, and we the Anarchists of to-day, have been teaching that "The economic emancipation of the workers is the main end to which all political movements must be subordinated," the aforesaid gentlemen are declaring that "The struggle against class domination must be a political one, having the conquest of political power for its end."

The International acted through strikes; these gentlemen repudiated the idea of a soldiers' and producers' strike in case of war, proposed by the Dutch Socialists at the Zurich congress.

The International demanded the abolition of standing armies and wars between peoples, proclaiming the brotherhood of the nations; these gentlemen boasted at Zurich of their jingoism, their hatred of rival nations, especially Russia.

But the main cause of their animosity against us is because we are Revolutionists. Yes, comrades, because we are Revolutionary Socialists!

According to the formula adopted at the Congress of Zurich, all Socialists who admit "political action" are to be invited to the next congress. The organising committee adds that "political action" means parliamentary elections. What political absurdity! What "scientific" stupidity! What, political action means only elections and the legislature? Then the struggle for Italian independence, the revolutionary

* "The peoples tend to lose their physiognomy in a common type."—A. Quetelet, *Sur l'Homme*, etc., 1836.

movement in France, in Russia, and everywhere else have not been political? Were not Mazzini, Garibaldi, Barbès, Blanqui, Sophie Perovskaia, Jelliboff, etc., political revolutionists?

If you accept the actions of these men as political, you must logically accept as political action the conspiracies of Bakounine, of Malatesta, and of Cafiero, the Anarchist demonstrations all over Europe and the acts of Vaillant and Caserio. Either you must accept Crispi's position and say that all Anarchists are malefactors, and as such should be expelled from an international Socialist Congress, or you must recognise that Anarchists, with their revolutionary struggle against the State and privilege, admit "political action."

If the State is a political organisation, the men and parties who strive for its abolition are distinctly engaged in political action. This is obvious and admitted by everyone, except those who have crooked ends to serve.

AN OLD INTERNATIONALIST.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE WITH HIM?

OR

THE GENESIS OF A LAW-MAKER.

His father had amassed a large fortune, so that he did not grow up without the advantages which wealth has the possibility of conferring. Still, the problem was: What should they do with him? He had been sent to Eton, where desperate efforts had been made to pump into him the elements of a classical education. He was deluged with Greek and Latin in the hope that some drops might filter through and fertilize his barren and unresponsive mind; but the results were very disappointing. His dear Ma grew sad and wondered what would be the future of her darling boy. True, she had been cheered by the news that he almost won a race in the College Fours; and she felt proud to hear that he had developed quite a reputation for thrashing impertinent boys—of tender years. Still, she feared he had been overworked and needed rest.

However, he was to go to the university; and, accordingly, to the university he went. Oxford seemed to suit his tastes very well; and he spent lots of money and had lots of fun. He began to get quite a superficial taint of education here; and, in some circles, he might almost have passed as a man who "knew a thing or two." Still, at bottom, nothing definite could be made of him. He seemed to have no ideas of his own about anything in particular, although he still maintained his reputation for "taking it out of other fellows,"—other fellows meaning young boys in the town.

At last he came home, having accomplished nothing to retrieve his reputation as a thinking animal. And now indeed the parental mind was sorely perplexed to find a career for him. Ma had a weakness for the Church; and forthwith steps were taken to provide him with the necessary pabulum to enable him to take his degree. His mind, however, showed an utter incapacity to assimilate this latter: a fact which his uncle Joss considered redounded to his credit. At the same time he showed such a decided inclination to get into trouble with the ladies—possibly from being over-anxious to hand down his physical and mental characteristics to future generations—that his Pa deemed it advisable for him, under the circumstances, to try the Army.

His dear Ma fretted much at having to give up her long-cherished idea of the Church; but when Pa expatiated on the advantages of the Army, and pictured forth to her their darling boy (who was now twenty-one, with all the airs of a stereotyped "masher") in full dress in the Guards, she was speedily resigned.

But even this dream was doomed to disappointment. Unfortunately here again the thickness of his skull stood in his way; for he was soon found to be deficient in all the qualities which would be required of him in this department of life. Even his capacity for flogging little boys didn't help him.

The parental mind was rapidly becoming exhausted in its efforts to provide him with a future. It was, therefore, deemed advisable to call in the aid of aunts and uncles: hoping by such a combination of wisdom to arrive at some result. So one day found all the family relics assembled in serious conclave over the future of this promising young man with the thick skull. Many and various were the suggestions offered; but the skull always came in as an insurmountable obstacle. One toothless aunt suggested he should become a missionary; and it was generally felt that he might be equal to this demand upon him if his propensity for bullying and bossing could be kept in check. But possibly his study of very recent history induced the promising young man himself to offer the most spontaneous objection to this proposal.

At last uncle Joss propounded a bright idea. There would shortly be a vacancy in the constituency of Cripple-town: why not put him up as a candidate?

Everyone applauded the idea as brilliant. But the question arose: In which interest should he stand? The toothless aunt suggested in the general interest; but it was pointed out to her that politics had nothing to do with the general interest. He would therefore have to choose a "party." He chose one, and was elected. In answer to the calls for a speech he was seen to put his head out of the window of his central committee rooms in Cripple-town, to wave his arms as if including the voters in a general embrace, and to point proudly to the Union Jack overhead, which at this particular moment was waving in close proximity to the thick skull.

The parental mind is happy now; for he has taken his "seat," and is very likely at the present moment making laws, dear reader, for the benefit of you and me.

He has not yet delivered his maiden speech; but he has shown great aptitude in the matter of voting—especially in affairs where the people want suppressing. Being no longer in a position to take it out of little boys he takes it out of the nation by helping to make her laws: in which effort he finds his thick skull a help rather than an impediment. Everyone in Cripple-town swears he is a born legislator; and, no doubt, "everyone" is right.

FREDERICK ENGELS.

On the night of August 5th, at the age of seventy-five, one of the founders of German Social Democracy and the intimate friend of Karl Marx—Frederick Engels—died.

He was a man of learning, especially in metaphysics, an indefatigable worker, a subtle dialectician, a first-rate polemist and had rendered immense services by his numerous writings to the Labor movement in Germany. Since his first important work, "The condition of the working classes in England," published in 1845, and till the last days of his political career, he remained faithful to the ideas expounded by him and by Marx, in 1847-48, in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party." According to the opinion of Engels' panegyrists, this Manifesto is the fundamental basis of the Social Democratic movement, and all that Engels and Marx published later is but a statement, more or less elaborated, of the ideas put forth in this Manifesto. All of which is perfectly true. Engels' pamphlets—for, since his work in 1845, he only published polemical pamphlets, and his last little work on the origin of the family is but a compilation from the researches of Morgan, Maine and others—all these pamphlets and newspaper articles are really the incessant repetition of the same ideas.

In what do they consist?

As Engels himself tells us in "Ludwig Feuerbach," he was, during his youth, completely immersed in Hegel's reactionary metaphysics. According to one of the greatest authorities on modern philosophy—Professor Wundt—Hegel's system suites the reactionary forces of the Restoration that was waging war to the death against those who had inherited the ideas of the great Revolution, and especially against those who declared themselves for the "Rights of Man." We see that Hegel proclaimed as an absolute truth the complete submission of the individual to the State, and he affirms that the right of the individual has no reason to exist before the all-powerful State. It is true that, under the influence of Ludwig Feuerbach, Engels and Marx, like many others, ended by revolting against Hegel's metaphysics. But, according to Engels himself, they have not entirely renounced the system; they have only *set it on its legs*; that is to say, they have declared themselves Revolutionists and Materialists while admitting the doctrine of an all-powerful State.

There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in their *Manifesto* claiming, in the name of Socialism, State-monopoly in the organisation of the whole economic life of the nation with "obligatory work for all," "the raising of a working army, especially for agriculture" and the "amelioration of agriculture according to a unique and obligatory plan" (see *Manifesto*, first edition).

Such a conception of Socialism was completely at variance with the autonomous Communist ideas of Robert Owen—this great founder of of the labor movement and modern Socialism. Even Louis Blanc in his *Organisation du travail* admitted that State credit having enabled the workers to organise their factories, the associations were to enjoy complete autonomy in their internal affairs. But the English as well as the French were not affected by the evil influence of reactionary metaphysics. So, to distinguish themselves from these "ignorant persons" in these same metaphysics, Engels and Marx were the first, if I am not mistaken, to lay claim to the term "scientific Socialists" (in reality metaphysical and reactionary), while they applied the epithet "Utopian" to Robert Owen—to that positive spirit, that incomparable organiser and initiator of factory legislation, to that Materialist and Atheist and creator of the co-operative movement, to the man who breathed new life into the trade unions.

Modern history proves that Hegel's doctrine, "All for the State and by the State," was completely false; and toward the end of his life (1891), Engels was compelled to declare that in a Communist society the State will have no reason for its existence (see the preface to the third edition of Marx *Civil War*). But it was too late. His influence during half a century has produced quite a band of ignorant talkers, who also call themselves "scientific." Without the least idea of the reactionary State metaphysics created by Hegel, Engels' followers teach the workers (see *L'Ere nouvelle*, Nos. 10 and 11 of 1894) as to the action and practical results of an absolute authority in the history of humanity—and this in France! And in our times, after the encyclopedists, after Lamarch, Laplace, Darwin, Lyell, Quetelet, Owen!—This propaganda of ignorance and reactionary metaphysics carried on by those versed in "scientific Socialism," that is to say Engels' pupils, will remain a dark blot on the master's fame. We can pardon the political and literary misdeeds of a defender of the people's interests; so we shall pass over in silence all Engels' attacks on Anarchist men and ideas. But the alteration of the broad and humanitarian idea of emancipation (the autonomous Communism of Robert Owen), the introduction of metaphysics into Socialism, can hardly be forgiven Engels in the history of the Socialist movement, in spite of the services he has rendered, in spite of his brilliant qualities.

W. TCHERKESOV.

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NOTES.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Marion Starck, forty-seven, the wife of an engineer living in Hackney, had been struggling hard for the last twelve months to support herself and her husband (who had been out of work for a long while) at boot machining. One day she was found sitting in her chair at her machine in front of her work, quite dead. This is the tale told as simply as simply as words can tell it. What this poor soul suffered each day of the long twelve months must be left to the imagination.

As Dickens said of the death of poor "Joe" we may say in this case: "Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us every day."

To this we will add (and it is a fact from which there is no escaping) that every man and every woman who even *palliates* a system where such a thing is possible share the responsibility for this woman's death.

WHAT IS MONOPOLY?

The *Daily Chronicle* is justly indignant with the East London Water Company whose conduct, on investigation, proves to have been more callously selfish and inhuman than appeared at first sight. But even the *Chronicle* ought to know by this time how Monopoly treats its victims; and if it wishes to discuss the evils of Monopoly it might show a little more logic in so doing. Of course this company's conduct is a "monumental illustration of the evils of a private monopoly in the necessities of life;" and everyone knows that "the East End is, for the present, at their mercy."

But the fact is ignored by the *Chronicle* that the East End is at the mercy of a whole network of monopolies. And not only the East End but the nation; not only the nation but the whole civilised world. It is just as true that the poor of the East End have to eat bad or insufficient food through the monopoly by the exploiters of the means of production, as it is that they drink bad or insufficient quantities of water through the monopoly of the Water Company. And the same with all monopolies; they are all run on parallel lines, and they all engender parallel evils.

Down with the East London Water Company, by all means: down with them as deep as you can hurl them. But down, also, with the landlord who lives by the rent of slums, or who drives the peasant from the land to the cities. Down with the money-lord who starves the unemployed, and who makes this life a hell on earth even for those who can get employment. This seems to us the only logical way of treating monopolies; but then this means nothing less than a social revolution. So now you know why the *Daily Chronicle* couldn't afford to be logical.

THE PROPAGANDA IN BOSTON, U. S. A.

Our comrade Kelly, who has returned to Boston, writes to say that they are about starting a new paper in that city, to be called *The Rebel*, with Mowbray as editor. It will expound the principles of Communist Anarchism and has already received valuable offers of support. Comrades Kelly and Mowbray have our best wishes for success.

Kelly also gives an encouraging account of Mowbray's activity in the States. Certainly, there is room enough in that vast country for any number of good comrades to find plenty to do; but, if we are not misinformed, the propaganda of Anarchism in the United States is an uphill task just at present. However, this is only a temporary difficulty. It is impossible to stand still, and it is impossible to go back; and when the spirit of rebellion revives once more in that much-exploited country it will be found that Anarchism is still far from being extinguished.

JANE CAKEBREAD AND THE LAW.

The two hundred and eighty odd attempts that the Law has made to deal with Jane Cakebread have been simply two hundred and eighty odd blunders; and the magisterial mind is as far now from any solution as it was at the first attempt. It is very clear that if eventually any-

thing is done to help Jane Cakebread out of her wretched plight it will be done by some voluntary effort outside of the Law.

This poor woman, it is admitted, is not an inebriate nor a lunatic; she is simply a person "of weak intellect, and is utterly incapable of controlling her actions or of doing anything towards her own maintenance;" though we are not told under what conditions her capacities have been tested, and we take the liberty of doubting if she is a person "utterly" incapable of doing anything towards her own maintenance—unless it is meant under present conditions and that is no criterion at all. There are, no doubt, many ways in which Jane Cakebread could be useful if she had someone to work *with* and something to work *for*.

But the fact is that her case and hundreds of similar ones can never be "dealt" under present conditions; for, if we reflect, we shall see that it is present conditions which multiply these cases. So the tender-hearted Lady Henry Somerset, with her panacea of twelve months detention for poor Jane (cruel only to be kind, we suppose), had better keep her genial suggestion for the next drunken lord that beats his wife.

MEDDLESOME MISSIONARIES.

No one can read of the recent massacres in China without pity for the unfortunate victims. But, really, it should be understood that missionaries who persist in carrying the "banner of Christ" amongst semi-barbarous peoples take their lives in their own hands. Besides, we are very strongly of opinion that missionaries have an unhappy knack of making themselves very objectionable amongst savage peoples. A great many of them identify themselves too closely with the gangs of "civilised" exploiters, whom the unfortunate savage soon comes to regard as his bitterest enemy. So that in times of unusual excitement the missionary is also naturally an object of wrath.

Independently of all this, however, there is the fact that a majority of these Christian proselytisers give themselves an air of self-conscious superiority, which is galling enough to us at home and which must be doubly so to the followers of Confucius. Imagine Mrs. Ormiston Chant and Lady Henry Somerset lecturing the "Heathen Chinese" in the name of Cristianity on the advantages of Cockney "proprieties!" And, after that, declaiming, with their noses in the air, against the religious rites and ceremonies of the said Heathens. Something similar to this, no doubt, has often happened; although we readily admit that amongst missionaries there have been some splendid examples of genius and self-sacrifice. But all missionaries are not Livingstones and Colenso's; and since it seems such high and humane natures are alone capable of success in this sphere, we should advise the crowd of silly people who think they have the divine right of improving the savage to stay at home and improve themselves. Otherwise massacres are likely to continue.

EXPERIMENTAL COMMUNES.

It will be remembered that our comrade Kropotkin some time since gave his views on the chances of a successful experiment in communal life under present conditions. He then pointed out that such ventures would stand a far better chance if started within easy reach of a large city than in the wilds of Africa or South America for example. These views were undoubtedly verified in the case of the Freeland Community which Dr. Hertzka initiated, and now the Cosmé Colony is presenting us with an object lesson which points the same moral. Men, women and children, to the number of 81, are struggling and suffering in an endeavour to overcome the difficulties which are naturally to be expected in an enterprise of this kind carried on under such conditions.

One cannot help sympathising with people who make these struggles to escape from the miserable and degrading conditions which wage-slavery entails; and yet when one reads of women being "deprived of well-nigh every comfort," and men "living manly lives under great privation," having to do a hard day's work on a breakfast of sweet potatoes, one wonders what can be the recompense for all this suffering. Is it a greater gain in personal liberty? We fear not; for sinister rumours of dictatorial persons having gained power and ascendancy in the commune are constantly reaching us. Besides which, we read that the membership of the Cosmé Colony is only open to persons who "accept the life-marriage, the colour-line and teetotalism." One need not go as far as Paraguay for that amount of freedom; and we fear that the membership of the colony will not increase while such conditions last. At any rate such an existence will have no charms for the Anarchist Communist, whose ideal of social life is quite different to this.

A SCARE IN THE SILLY SEASON.

The sea-serpent story being a trifle worn, and nothing better offering itself as a substitute for a sensation, some facetious person or persons bethought themselves of the Anarchists. Knowing how readily most London editors would bite at the bait, the rumour of an Anarchist conspiracy to blow up the Houses of Parliament was launched with most successful results; nearly all the London papers giving out the news in bold type—the *Echo* conspicuously in the van. No doubt, numbers of old ladies were greatly shocked at the bare possibility of England's elected and hereditary governors—the flower of the land—being "dispersed" in this unceremonious manner on Guy Fawkesian principles. Perhaps, too, in the midst of a discussion on *Cordite*! Horrible!

However, the awakening soon came; and, the innocent cause of the scare having explained, it was seen that the "flower of the land" had escaped a purely imaginary danger.

We feel bound to add, however, that we still have strong hopes

dispersing them at some future time; but by quite other methods than those of the redoubtable Fawkes. General Enlightenment, Reason, Logic, in a word, the general propaganda of a new Social Ideal—Anarchism: that is how we propose to accomplish our end. Once dispersed by these forces, we feel quite sure they will stand no chance of reassembling.

REVIEW.

"Was Jesus Christ a Socialist, Communist or wise Teacher?" is a well written pamphlet by comrade G. E. C. Naewiger. In it he exposes some of the absurdities of the teachings attributed to Jesus Christ, and shows they are incompatible with a sane view of life. Of course there will always remain many debatable points concerning the character of Jesus, clouded as it is by the mists of superstition; but anything he said or did that was wise and good (and such things have been said and done by him) we can accept and admire. Still, when we hear people referring to him as a Socialist, almost as if he was acquainted with the social evolution of the last five hundred years, it is time to protest, and for that reason comrade Naewiger's pamphlet may, we hope, do good.

It is published by R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C. Price 2d.

ANARCHY.

[A lecture delivered by Elysée Reclus at South Place Institute on Monday, July 29th, 1895.]

There is a proverbial phrase which is very commonly uttered, even by the most conservative people: "The best government is that which governs the least!" This is also our opinion, and we follow it logically by adding that government, when reduced to a mere cypher, leaves society free to attain its final perfection. But everywhere, the so-called "civilised" nations groan under the pressure of a more or less strong government, and certainly I can show you in no part of the world any large community which lives entirely free, without the intervention of people who consider themselves as rulers, givers of work and superintendents of the whole political and social machinery.

All Anarchical existing groups (and there are many of them) are only small tribes, enjoying their entire freedom from general or local governments in forests and open plains. There are, also, some groups of agriculturists who have still the good luck in mountain fastnesses to escape conquest, and the laws of monarchies or republics. We must add a few consciously Anarchical and Communist societies that have arisen during this century in Western Europe and America. I must especially mention the old Icarians, who began some fifty years ago as authoritarians and law-abiders, who had a chief or rather a pope, but who, by a long series of vicissitudes, lost, so to say, their first skin and, changing their constitution from time to time, finished by abolishing it altogether, and now live happily and simply without any other rule of life than self and mutual respect and love.

But if I can show you only comparatively small Anarchical communities, history exemplifies to us in a splendid way how among nations progress is always in exact proportion to the increase of freedom, to the decrease of strength in government and power in laws.

Look first at Greece, the land to which we trace our spiritual birth. Certainly it had governments, even many of them, aristocracies and democracies and oligarchies and so on, but with the single exception of barbarous Sparta, entirely composed of warriors, who were forbidden to think, to speak, even to read, all the Greek republics were in a state of constant evolution and revolution; governments built on the sand were continually shaken; they had no time to take hold of the public mind, to become a kind of religion, correlative with the belief in a heavenly god, and the strife of thought went on between parties and parties, between men and men. The spirit of freedom was not crushed among them as it had been in Babylon, in Persia, in Egypt, and that is why knowledge increased immensely in all directions. Art attained a perfect beauty which was considered for two thousand years as a definite standard; all sciences began or developed themselves, and the outlines of every course of study which we are now trying to complete were distinctly marked; history made its appearance in literary masterpieces; the theories of evolution, which most people falsely think a new conquest, grow splendidly in Epicurus out of the treasury of facts; and, lastly, morals progressed at the same pace as science, as is shown by the admirable, and I say eternal, books of the Stoics, so well sustained by their noble life. That period of time is always the pride and glory of mankind.

And now let us turn to another period, when the long night of the middle-ages gave way to the first light of the dawn. For more than one thousand years triumphant barbarian chiefs and Christian monks had utterly prevented any freedom of speech and thought; but under those ashes gleamed still some fire, and flames rose again. The history of communes, that history which has not yet been written, but which, I hope, will be taken up by some of our thinkers, began in all parts of Europe and even of Mussulman Africa. There was everywhere, as in ancient Greece, a clashing of states against states, of barons against cities, of peasantry against knights: innumerable conflicts and revolutions shook the old state of things, and people were born to new thoughts. Again that happy struggle, which weakened the idea of strong government, allowed human intellect to free itself and a new period of science, literature, art, discovery, morals, developed itself throughout Europe. Some of the most splendid pages that have been

written belong to that time, which culminates with the Renaissance, that is with the new birth of mankind, when old Greece was discovered again.

The names of the Spanish comuneros, of the French communes, of the English yeomen, of the free cities in Germany, of the Republic of Novgorod and of the marvellous communities of Italy must be, with us Anarchists, household words: never was civilised humanity nearer to real Anarchy than it was in certain phases of the communal history of Florence and Nürnberg.

Great monarchies prevailed over these many free republics and the gloom of subjection seemed to darken our Western Europe; but it was difficult to eradicate entirely free speech and free thought. In spite of the great kings, in spite of Philip of Spain and Louis XIV. of France, the little commonwealth of the Netherlands had writers and printers to keep tyranny in check. Afterwards the struggle went on also in France, in England, in America, minds emancipated themselves and gave rise to those revolutions, which were the beginning of our modern world. Without those revolutions society would have been at a standstill in industry, science, art, social philosophy; and we Anarchists, instead of speaking to you on the destruction of capitalist society, would have certainly no opportunity of grouping ourselves all over the world in new communities.

And now do you not think it is too late for government to put a gag in our mouth, to let silence reign again over a subject people? We have behind us the impulse of all former acquisitions in science and in morals and these drive us forward with an irresistible force.

Certainly we seem to be weak in numbers, in material strength, and we are very poor in money; meanwhile governments have on their side armies, ammunition, millions and millions of pounds, the reasonings of the political economists and the blessing of the priests. But there is one thing which is wanting to them and which we have. This will be the reason for our final and decided victory. They know already that they are wrong: they don't believe in their own morals. We, on the contrary, know that we are right and that our idea is just; for we are working and fighting for the equality of men, for the happiness of all human beings.

OVER THE WATER.

The German Government failed to pass the famous Anti-Revolutionary Bill, but it does not fail to achieve by other means the same end, *i.e.*, to develop a whole system of the most brutal suppression,—not by exceptional laws, but quietly, stealthily, by jurisdiction. Here are some instances.

The law-courts have for some time condemned everybody who recommends the boycott of a firm or publican, etc., as guilty of "grobe Unfug" (gross misbehaviour). It is true the fines and imprisonment which may be imposed under this head are not high; but, nevertheless, this "gross misbehaviour" of the judges shows the intention of the government to make it, if not impossible, at least difficult for the workmen to use this economic weapon, which has often done good service. It will not be long before to strike will also be "grobe Unfug," if not something more serious.

A year ago, when the government decided to suppress the German Anarchist journal, DER SOZIALIST, as the shortest way to accomplish this aim it imprisoned the printer as well as the editors. But, even in this, it was still ashamed to show the real reason of the prosecution. The various printers of DER SOZIALIST, therefore, were not officially condemned in their quality as printers, but as *spiritus rector* (soul, head, real editor) of the journal; but to-day the government believes this pretext quite unnecessary, and so different Social Democratic printers are already condemned to various terms of imprisonment simply in their capacity as printers. The most extraordinary of these cases is that of the printer Bading. This man printed for the 18th of March last a number of a journal consisting of articles which had already once been published in other Social Democratic newspapers, for which the respective editors were indicted by the Public Prosecutor and, in every case, dismissed by the judges. Besides this, Bading could prove, and the judge admitted it, that he had no knowledge of the contents of this publication. Well, nevertheless, a court was found which discovered the dangerous character of the articles in this publication, and condemned the editor and the printer (in his capacity of printer) to six months imprisonment. And the Court of Appeal confirmed the sentence.

Now every printer in Germany can be made responsible for the contents of any publication printed at his office. Long live the liberty of the press!

But the most characteristic instance of German reaction took place at Essen (Rheinproven) in the following way: A well-known leader of the German miners, named Schroeder, spoke some time ago at a meeting called by a Catholic workmen's organisation. He was at last expelled from the meeting for some reason, and a policeman named Munter pushed him out of the meeting hall and knocked him down twice, as Schroeder and many other people assert. An account of this brutality was published in a Social Democratic newspaper, with the result that the editor was prosecuted for slander. At the trial Schroeder and five other Social Democrats testified on oath to the brutality of the policeman, whilst the latter and a few other witnesses swore to the contrary. The editor together with those six men were indicted for perjury, and although about fifty Social Democrats, all men who have never been punished, confirmed the statement again on oath that Munter had maltreated Schroeder, although the few witnesses in favor of Munter were not quite sure of their evidence, although Munter was proved to be of a sanguinary and violent temperament the JURY condemned the accused to from 2 to 3½ years hard labor, for wilful perjury; and the Public Prosecutor stated that, as numerous perjuries had again been committed, he would indict those fifty witnesses. They were tried and condemned by a jury inspired with fear and hatred of a movement in their district which, although Social Democratic, is pretty revolutionary—at least in temperament. And all these prosecutions and condemnations practically on the oath of a single policeman!

One would expect that those lessons by the ungrateful authorities to the Social Democrats would make them cease their efforts to be friends with the shopkeepers and farmers. But it seems not.

The protests of the Social Democratic press against the latter judgment are very moderate, more moderate than those of the bourgeois Radical newspapers and reviews. And the fact that the Social Democrats are now carrying on an energetic propaganda against the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the victories of 1870, is not a proof of revolutionary feeling; although the patriotic bourgeois press is very excited about it and exhorts the government to interfere, on the whole this agitation is very cheap and not dangerous. But though no change can be discerned in the ranks of the leaders or the great mass of the Social Democratic party, yet in some circles a better spirit is evolving—I cannot say in consequence of the prosecutions.

The opposition to their recently published "Agrar program" is assuming considerable proportions. No wonder! When the Social Democratic congress at Frankfurt (1893) was debating whether a special, more practical program would not be of great use for agitation among the agriculturists, one of the delegates said, "The medicine of Socialism must be administered in small doses"; and, in this program, the doses are *very small*.

This program, elaborated under the influence of Bebel and Vollmar, confirms and intensifies the old love for State Socialism. Some years ago the Social Democrats emphatically protested that nationalisation of the railways had nothing to do with true Socialism; but to-day they ask for "conservation and augmentation of public (communal and State) property in land," "administration of State and communal land as far as possible by the State and the community," "State credit to co-operations of laborers," "nationalisation of the burden on land, and a diminution of the rate per cent," etc., etc. The latter point shows that the program is intended for a mere "Bauernfang" (trap for the rural voters). But this intention becomes still clearer in a paragraph which demands the abolition of the Grundsteuer, a tax on land which varies with its quality. Naturally the little farmer will be glad to pay one tax less, and he will vote for the generous Social Democrats. On the other hand, the abolition of this tax means a nice present to the big land-owners, who hold the best and most heavily taxed land.

There is no little opposition to this program. Several of the Social Democratic newspapers, especially the Berlin Sozialdemokrat, criticise it severely and nearly every day one can read of a Social Democratic meeting in some part of Germany which declares its disapproval. The coming congress in Breslau will decide whether this program shall be accepted or rejected. It seems likely that it will be a stormy one.

If this opposition is only partial, a more general one seems to rise in the intellectual circles of Social Democracy. Since the beginning of this year some Social Democratic students have published a journal DER SOZIALISTISCHE AKADEMIKER, designed to make propaganda among the students. It is well written, has a tolerance for other opinions quite unknown in the Social Democratic movement for many years, and contains in its last numbers some excellent articles criticising keenly the tactics of the Social Democrats. Even the theoretical conceptions of the writers on its staff do not quite harmonise with the old traditional dogmas. On the whole, this journal is a very sympathetic one and promises to be the beginning of a more revolutionary current in Social Democracy. But the treatment which those "young, inexperienced men" will surely receive at the hands of the Social Democratic leaders will be to them a good lesson.

As to the Anarchist movement, the Berlin Anarchists have brought out a new edition of DER SOZIALIST. Bearing in mind the persecutions of the past, this is a proof of great and persistent courage. B. K.

ANARCHY & PROPERTY.

I cannot see how Property is compatible with Anarchy. Abolish government and wealth naturally falls into the hands of those who are using it or who need it most.

So long as no one possesses more than he can personally use no one objects; and if one gets by exchange no more than is approximately equivalent to his labor no one will interfere, in fact, one may count on the active help of his neighbors should invasion be threatened.

But if one accumulates more than he can possibly use or refuses to recognise the claims of the weak and the helpless the difficulty of protecting his ill-gotten gains will correspondingly increase and monopoly will find a natural limit. "Nature takes care that the trees shall not grow into heaven," as Goethe says.

But this admits no absolute right of ownership, whether of society or of the individual, whether of the producer in his product or of society in the social product. Simply possession, usufruct, limited by the equal claims of all to work and live.

While "Property" is legal and artificial, use-possession is spontaneous and natural. Will this possession take a competitive form or will the individual units find it better to co-operate, that is to agree amongst themselves as to the sharing of work and its product? This is the real question at issue.

Doctrinaire Individualism and doctrinaire Communism are alike incompatible with Anarchy.

Communists think that the struggle of each with all develops all the bestial qualities in human nature, encourages greed, suspicion and envy, and, essentially unstable, lends itself to the formation of a new privileged class and the resuscitation of government. To me these arguments, as far as they go, seem conclusive; but it may be that there are individuals to whom the struggle is exhilarating and the only spur of individual energy. Experience in a free society will alone decide.

Some of the objections urged against Communism by Individualists (I am not referring to comrades Robins or Bell) seem to me somewhat puerile. They seem to think that Communism would put some abstract entity, the community, over the individual, who would be compelled to work for it.

As I understand it, all that Communists desire is that each producer or group of producers shall *freely* direct their own labor; but that instead of each trying to sell their products to each other at the highest price they should agree to put them in common, whence all should have as they need.

A group might undertake to collect statistics of demand and supply, but whether the producers directed their activities by this information

would be a purely voluntary matter. It would, of course, be their interest to produce the goods that were in demand, and not waste their energy on goods which were not needed.

Personally I favor a partial Communism. Conceiving pure Communism too ideal for present day human nature, would it not be best for individuals to agree to appropriate wealth in proportion to their respective hours of labor, less what might be required for certain common purposes agreed to by all? Not upon the ground of giving the producer the full equivalent of his labor—which, under modern condition of production, cannot be measured—but upon the ground that it tends to more fairly apportion effort to reward, burden to satisfaction, an entirely different thing; for labor time equally burdensome might be very unequally productive through many causes which need not be specified.

The objections thereto (I have specially in mind Kropotkin and Grave) seem to me inconclusive. They object to it as a principle, in which I concur. I simply look upon it as an expedient to be tried on its own merits. They assume it means authority; but the mere fact of appointing or allowing a person or group to value the social product at its labor cost and distribute according to labor time cannot be termed authority, inasmuch as the producers may always secede at will and can always check the distributors' accounts, statistics being free and open to all.

Its advantages are: Firstly, in more scientifically adjusting supply and demand, and saving waste.

Secondly, it is more in accordance with our ordinary conception of equity. The lazy man is free to be lazy if he takes its natural consequences, and does not seek more than proportionate reward; the luxurious-minded are free to satisfy their desires provided they like to pay the price in labor. Thus the sense of justice is satisfied and real equality prevails; for if one has more wealth, another has more leisure.

Other objections are mere matters of detail easily adjusted by practical people.

Of course, if work is agreeable and wealth abundant no such scheme is necessary. But, while the necessities of life may be sufficiently plentiful, I doubt if the refinements and luxuries of life would be equally so, at any rate for a long time to come, and it is best to be on the safe side. However, I simply outline this system as a possible alternative to pure Communism. The final test must be experience, and consequent survival of the fittest.

A word as regards Mutual Banking. I hardly see how it can be seriously treated. It seems to rest upon the ancient fallacy that the more money there is in circulation the better off we shall all be. This may be a crude way of putting it, but what else is the meaning of all this talk about the currency being limited and monopolised owing to its resting on a gold or silver basis?

But it is easy to see that a mere proportionate increase in the currency, gold or paper, would simply alter prices, but not affect distribution in the slightest. The assignats of the French Revolution increased the currency enormously, but the advantage to the French people was *nil*. And the increase of currency by the Mutual system would be equally useless.

Besides, it seems funny to talk of trade being limited by a restricted gold currency when the banks are full of gold, offered at a merely nominal rate of interest. Hardly looks like restriction of the currency.

Mutual Banking is said to do away with interest and bring credit within the reach of all. But as those with plenty of property will be able to get plenty of money, and those with no property no money (unless money is issued without security, in which case the banks will go "smash"), we fail to see how the producing class will benefit.

A bank, to be sound, must have sufficient in hand to redeem the currency as it is brought in. This disposes of unlimited credit; it must only be such amount as the borrower or client of the bank can be expected to pay in a limited time, and only on such security as can be easily transformed into easily exchangeable wealth, and this to be ample in every way. Unless these conditions obtained the bank money would be very "shaky" and difficult of acceptance.

A Mutual Bank would, in fact, be a pawnshop on a large scale, the only difference being that the things pawned would largely remain in the hands of the pawners, and the pawn-tickets would be redeemable in any agreed-to species of property, and hence circulate as currency.

As the tickets would be continually handed in to be redeemed, the bank would have to keep a sufficient stock to redeem them, or be able to call upon its clients at very short notice.

It is evident that the bank would not benefit the people who had nothing to pawn; for, like modern banks, it dare not issue on personal security unless of the very highest character. It is evident, too, that it would have to keep a very strict watch on the security it accepted, besides being very careful what it did accept.

All this would make bank expenses very great; and what with salaries, storage, risks and manager's commission (which would have to be very large, as he would have a very responsible position, with great opportunities of swindling) the cost of Mutual management would probably be as high as present interest to business people, and capital as difficult to get.

Of course, the big proprietors would not suffer; but that is not much consolation to the worker. Rothschild can borrow any amount to-day at 2 per cent and less, where a workingman would have to pay 20 per cent, sometimes 100 per cent and even 500 per cent or more, and this on ample security.

The only condition of things in which Mutual Banking might conceivably be of any use whatever would be in a community of small proprietors owning their own means of production. Under such con-

ditions it might retard the growth of large monopolies, though this is doubtful; but as a means of abolishing those which already exist or benefiting the immense mass of propertyless workers it is an utter futility.

To abolish existing monopoly a thorough revolution in social conditions is imperatively necessary, and the workpeople must expropriate all existing idle property-holders—regardless of legal property rights. Then, when the possession of wealth is in the hands of those who produce and use it, with a fair field and no favor, all systems of wealth-holding can be put into operation and we may be sure the best will survive.

Only do not let us use the barbarous term "Property," with its legal and artificial implications, to designate the natural possession of useful things by those who need and use them.

And do not let us limit the principle of liberty by any metaphysical right of the producer to his product, but recognise that such a right is only an endeavor to approximate to a fair proportion between labor and satisfaction, and is not to be laid down as an absolute principle, since in some cases, as in those of children or sick people, it is inapplicable and inconsistent with complete liberty.

CORRESPONDENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "FREEDOM."

SIR,—May I send you a little item of news about a friend of yours. M. Elisée Reclus has been lecturing on a geographical subject to a summer gathering of teachers and students. I was not able to come in time for the beginning of the course; and, when I arrived, I was greeted with this announcement: "We have all found out that we did not know what Anarchism meant: we used to think it meant throwing bombs; but now we think it means, being nicer and kinder than other people." One intensely Conservative person, after describing to me some of M. Reclus' personal habits, and retelling some items of his conversation, added: "Really one does not know what to make of it. It seems to me that our conceptions of Anarchism will have to shed a good deal of dead skin before we can understand truly what it is."

Now the persons who spoke thus would never have gone to hear a lecture on Anarchism. If you wish to destroy prejudices in your opponents, do not fling at them either bombs or hard arguments about Anarchism; but send some Anarchist, whose conduct they will be forced to respect, to teach them some art or science which they themselves desire to learn, and let him make his own impression.

August, 1895.

MARY EVEREST BOOLE.

We print the above letter with pleasure, and are glad to read the encouraging news therein contained. However, we should like to remind our correspondent that the opponents of Anarchism have mostly themselves to blame for their misconceptions of our principles. We are well aware that many persons who would go to hear comrade Reclus give a scientific address "would never have gone to hear a lecture on Anarchism." But are we to blame for this? Many of these persons have time and money and every advantage for enabling them to gain not only a knowledge of Anarchism, but also of the infamously unjust condition in which society is at the present day. Do they try to gain this knowledge? Very few. Yet if they came amongst the workers and learnt their life-conditions, they too might be driven to use harsh words against the selfish indifference of the exploiting classes. As to the question of bombs, we may refer our correspondent to the article "Green Powder," which we print in this issue.—EDS.

TO THE EDITOR OF Freedom.

UNION OF COMMUNISTS AND MUTUALISTS.

In the August issue of *Freedom* I notice a letter from G. O. Warren, with comments thereon by J. Turner, in which an attempted compromise is made between Communists and Mutualists, the basis thereof being Turner's remark that "Communism deprives no one of the power to appropriate the produce of his own labor to his own use."

I have regarded the Communists as being more advanced than the Mutualists, and cannot see how such a compromise is possible. There are two master-fallacies in the theory that each is entitled to the products of his own labor:—

1. It implies that the strong and industrious enjoy a greater right to labor than the young, or the old, or the disabled, so that in principle the present property system remains intact. Whence do the strong obtain a greater right to labor than their weaker brethren? This superior right gives the stronger access to more land than the weaker, so that the land cannot be equally accessible to all.

2. It implies the existence of a surplus population; for the products of labor can only have value when pressed against an overpopulation; and, in the event of underpopulation, there can be no inducement for the strong to produce more than is necessary for their immediate consumption. Hence the population question is the first problem for solution, and upon it all the laws of value depend. Whether we are overpopulated or not depends upon the quantity and nature of our desires; and thus, by a marked diminution of our desires, increase productivity values would disappear, and so, also, the idea of property.

A fundamental question is how to get rid of that monstrous economic abstraction called labor. Prince Kropotkin accomplishes this master- feat by making exertion a "physiological necessity." This being the case, there can be no incentive to claim the products of our labor, so the whole problem is solved and we are landed into a state of absolute Communism, wherein the products of our exertion will have no more value than the air we breathe.

While I am more in accord with the principles of the Communists, yet the methods of the Mutualists are more in harmony with my way of thinking—not that absurdity of "free currency, however, for money must disappear with the rest of economic abstractions. The idea of property is the first thing to be got rid of, which cannot be done by merely violently overthrowing the State.

W. A. MACDONALD.

I do not know whether our friend Macdonald is in a fog or whether he is trying to get everyone else in a fog; but if he had read the beginning of the discussion in June number of *Freedom* he would have seen that there is no attempt to compromise on the basis quoted, or any other.

Our friends ideas on the population question are funny. A man may desire to retain something he has made because it satisfies some hobby of his; but its value to him will not depend on the number of the population to the square mile. And the number of the population will not depend on the "quantity and nature of our desires"; for people who are not humbugged by cant and hypocrisy study physiology and the new Malthusianism; and a proper attention to the laws of health, a greater affection for fresh air, would also affect the population by a decrease of the present enormous infant mortality.

Eating is also a "physiological necessity" which, together with the recurrence of winter seasons, has caused, not only men, but other animals, without regard to their strength, to produce "more than is necessary for their immediate consumption."

I am unable to conceive of anything "absolute," even Communism; and I think that is the meaning of the phrase that Macdonald commenced to fall foul of. For, unless individuals were free to become hermits—if they chose—and to retire from the community, there would not be Anarchist Communism.

As the State forcibly upholds the idea of property, the Communists, in order to be practical, will have to be strong enough to destroy the power of the State; and it is only after the overthrow of the State, whether by moral or physical force or both, that the property idea can be dealt with. T. CANTWELL.

FREE MONEY, OR SLAVERY?

Since J. Turner, in his rejoinder to my article on "Anarchism and Mutual Banking," has dealt so lightly with my evidences from Communistic sources against Communism; since (figuratively speaking) he hastily accepts the offer of my hand upon his definition of Communism, in which "personal property is not thereby converted into common property;" and since, as he does not reject, I may infer that he accepts my definition of personal property, namely: "property in the product resulting from personal exertions or its equivalent in exchange, I think that the wisest course to settle our differences would be to narrow the issue and come to closer quarters.

It must be clear to most people that the formula of Communism "To each according to his needs," precludes any such precise proposition as personal property, as defined above, which is necessarily based not upon needs but upon deeds. Therefore I must invite J. Turner to think again before he accepts my hand upon that definition. Moreover, I warn him that such acceptance includes competition, value, free markets, and other holy horrors to Communists. But, for the present, let these pass.

As J. Turner truly says: "All that is claimed for Mutual Banking through a currency free of interest" was claimed for Free Trade with 'a commerce free of taxes.' But it didn't come off." True! and because so-called Free Trade never gave 'a commerce free of taxes.' The greatest and most disastrous tax of all, which the money-monopolists are enabled to impose upon labor through the restricted currency basis was left untouched. Thus interest, the greatest of the robbers of labor, and through it house-rent and profit, survive; while the easily gulled laborers listen to lectures upon "the nationalization of the means and instruments of production," given by State Socialistic journalists, barristers, and stock-gamblers whose spare cash is "well invested."

Free land will enable the laborer to freely produce, providing that he has the necessary implements—the capital. Free money will place capital within the reach of every laborer by reducing its price to the labor cost and causing such competition among capitalists to obtain labor that there will always be a demand for as much labor as is available, and that of course at the highest rate of wages compatible with the full product.

The reiteration of the old wail of "What's the good of Free Money to laborers who have no security to offer?" becomes too sickening for anything. Time and time again have the advocates of Free Money made good its claims, and yet there is always some dullard who comes forward and, with owl-like gravity, cries: "What's the good of Free Money to those who have no property?" It is distinctly dishonest for Communists to sneer at Mutual Banking as a "paltry palliative," and then, when challenged to discussion, to back out with such remarks as: "We do not trouble ourselves about it;" "we have nothing to bank," and "can see nothing in it for us."

Will Mutual Banking abolish interest, and through it also house-rent and profit? I say it will; and am ready to prove it if J. Turner will quit equivocation and begin to reason.

WILLIAM J. ROBINS.

I did not deal lightly or at all with the quotations from Anarchist Communists Parsons, Owen, Kropotkin; I left them to speak for themselves with the context if readers of *Freedom* cared to refer. There was nothing to disagree with.

I wish friend Robins would "cut the cackle and come to the 'osser" or, as he says, "to closer quarters." Up till now he has beaten a lot of wind.

Like many more of the little band of Mutualists, he implies that what would be the guiding ethical principle in Communism is going to be enforced against the wishes of some; and, in so doing, shows where his confusion of thought comes in by confounding ethical with economic first principles. I have no desire to grip his hand if he now wishes to withdraw.

I cannot help thinking he feels himself hard hit or he would not wish to introduce fresh matter at this stage of the discussion in the shape of "Competition," "Value," "Free Markets," and though I have no "holy horrors" I can hardly let them pass without saying I prefer Co-operation to Competition, and view it as most modern statesmen do military warfare—a thing to be resorted to only as a last resource;—that Co-operation dissipates an individual competitive value and makes a free and fair exchange and distribution possible.

The implication that interest upholds rent and profit is not economically correct. Both rent and interest are paid out of profit. It is quite possible, under a capitalist condition of industry, for both rent and interest to disappear and yet the exploitation of the workpeople to be as great as ever.

This economic error accounts, I expect, for his rickety reasoning in the following paragraph where the worker is supposed to have free land and free capital placed within his reach and yet capitalists still exist and compete for laborers, paying the full product in wages; and friend Robins does not see that the capitalist as capitalist has then disappeared, since a capitalist is one whose capital is used on condition that he receives a part of the produce for its use, or that co-operation as economic equals follows as a natural corollary the first supposition.

The incipient insults in the last paragraph I will pass over by quoting in full what I previously did say; then the readers of *Freedom* can judge who it is that is "distinctly dishonest." As for "sneering" at Mutual Banking as a "paltry palliative"; I have not sneered nor have I merely asserted without proof, and on reference find friend Robins, in his first letter, last paragraph, wrote thus: "To those who abhor palliatives we say that Mutual Banking is a palliative without compromise; not a political but an economic palliative." Was he then sneering at himself? When I was trying to reason with him and put the Communist position as plainly as possible, I said: "Friend Robins seems to think we are in some way opposed to the establishment of Mutual Banking. Nothing of the kind! We do not trouble ourselves about it because we have nothing to bank, nothing to exchange except our labor power, and we have yet to learn that even the Mutual Bank will discount short bills on labor not yet embodied in the raw material as a commodity of some sort." "Yes, some of us Anarchist Communist wage-workers have looked into it with unprejudiced minds and can see nothing in it for us." That has never been answered yet, and the term "equivocation" rebounds.

We Communists are after the substance, in the shape of the means of production. Once that is under the control of the workers, its shadow, in the shape of currency, will be easy to manipulate.

"Can we co-operate?" Can we even reason together?—JOHN TURNER.

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REPORTS.

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