

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

THE ROBBERY-ENSURANCE SOCIETY.

Once again, a correspondence is being carried on in the daily papers regarding the price of food-stuffs, from which it can be clearly seen what miserable conditions we offer in this country to the tiller of the soil and to the grower of the food we consume. The farmer, we read in the papers, is happy if he gets 7d. for a gallon of milk; but we pay, water and chalk inclusive, 16d. the gallon. The gardener gets 2d., seldom 3d., for a dozen lettuces; we pay 2d. each head. Apples and plums are rotting in the orchards of Devonshire and Surrey—and pigs feed upon them; but if sent to the towns we pay 1½d. to 3d. the pound. And so on.

Such complaints are renewed periodically. A few years ago the same griefs were bitterly expressed, and we remember having read in the *Daily News* a long study on the same subject. The conclusions drawn from this study were—that the customer, on all that he consumes, pays from four to twelve, and mostly from twelve to twenty-four times as much as the grower and producer get for it.

Everyone can himself verify the truth of this. Read the "Market" column of any daily paper, and you will see the difference, even between Covent Garden, Billingsgate, Mincing Lane and the Meat Market, and the greengrocer's, the fishmonger's, the grocer's, and the butcher's. Choice fruit which is bought at 2s. the box of forty pieces at Covent Garden, is retailed the same day at 5d. and 6d. apiece in the shops, and 9d. in the West End shops; for plain vegetables the disparity is even much greater. Meat grows in price in the same proportion. Nay, even goods which are not soon spoiled and always find buyers, such as tea, have the same fate. The tea bought at 4d. and 5d. the pound in Mincing Lane is sold at 1/6 and 2s. by the grocer. And so on.

These naive souls, the correspondents, are at a loss to discover "Who gets all that money?" And, seeing that the co-operative stores charge very little less in this wholesale plundering of the consumer, they ask in despair, "What is to be done?"

Well, our answer is plain. Who gets the money?—The landlord, first, for the lion's part; his friend, the clergyman, next; the functionary of your dear State; the middleman; every middle-class man, woman and child; and you, Mr. Correspondent, are not the last to share the spoil, especially if you are the holder of shares in railways, or banks, building societies, co-operative workshops, cotton-mills, and the like. The fact is that one-half or more of the inhabitants are organised as a powerful plundering insurance society in order to spoil of the fruit of their labor the other half, or less, who work and produce.

As to what has to be done: nothing, nothing whatever will change this exploiting of the producer except a complete, pitiless crushing down of that robbery-insurance society between lord, priest, State-functionary, capitalist, banker, mine and mill owner, whose name is—the STATE.

One day, an old, very old farmer of the Romney marshes was asked by a Londoner: "Good crop this year?"—"Very poor." "Some thirty bushels (of wheat) to the acre?"—"Thirty!—we should starve on such a crop!" The inquirer was somewhat taken aback: thirty bushels would be above the average for England. "Thirty-five, then?" he continued.—"Thirty-five to forty," replied the old man. "But that would be a good crop in many parts of the country."—"Not here! Seven shillings for each acre to keep up the wall (the marsh is protected by a wall from the sea)—well, that is all right; £2 of tithes; and the rent." "If you have that to pay," exclaimed the inquirer, "then, I am afraid, fifty bushels would be of no avail?"—"One could manage with that," the old man said, and paused for a minute.—"No! they would take it all, all the same," he said scornfully, rising from his seat and walking away.

There is the gist of all political economy. Do whatever you like, they will take it all the same. They, not he; because all of them belong to that robbery-insurance association.

Suppose the farmer gets 10d. instead of 7d. for his gallon of milk, leaving only 6d. to the middleman; suppose the gardener gets the full 2d. which you pay for your lettuce, leaving nothing to the middleman,—do you think he will be better-off? Very soon the landlord, the clergyman and the State will have discovered that he grows too fat, and they will rent and tax him so as to have all the fat for themselves and leave him none. They use the very word in their consultations. He *must* be lean, otherwise he might get too proud, and contest the very right of the State, the lord and the Church to slowly but surely devour him.

But how can he get anything approaching in any way the full market-value of his produce, when, for the last three hundred years of State existence, a whole cunningly schemed organisation has been imposed upon the enduring masses by the fighting minorities, precisely

for preventing the producers from getting anything like the market-value of their produce?

If men lived in large or small communities—everyone working with his hands on the land or in the mine, or in the workshop, all working for a certain part of the day, and all going to rest and to enjoy life at about the same time—there could exist a pretty fair exchange of mutual services among them, without any attempt at closely measuring the produce of everyone's work. So it goes on still on a small scale in the villages, where men aid each other, and exchange services when they are wanted by one of their number.

This was what men always endeavoured to realise—but what the fighting and cunning minorities always tried to prevent—attaining full success during the last three hundred years when the masses in Europe gradually were brought (as they were brought formerly in Rome) under the dominion of the robbery-insurance societies—the States.

By fire and sword and the rack they have achieved their successes. They have driven the peasants from the land; they have destroyed the village communities and the guilds; they hanged or transported to Sydney those laborers who continued to constitute labor organisations; they brought the masses to obedience and submissiveness by law, religion and "education," all rendered subservient to the said robbery-insurance society.

And here we are now—a nation chopped into separate individuals, having no bonds whatever to keep us united; compelled to keep one half of the nation upon our shoulders, and to keep them in luxury, simply in order to be allowed to work and obtain from others what we cannot produce ourselves.

If you wish to grow a few potatoes on that plot of land—pay toll to the three, the State, the lord, the clergy! If you will exchange your potatoes for a spade—pay toll to the buyer and to the seller, to the landlord on whose land the sale takes place, to the State who permits you to sell, to the middleman who stands between you and the buyer, to the lawyer who pretends to protect the sale. All that army of leeches must have its part in the pennies you will get for your potatoes, and in the pennies you will pay for the spade.

And if you make spades and would get six pennyworth of potatoes—pay also the toll to the lord who has permitted you to forge iron on his land and to breathe the foul air of his slums, pay the Church which will call down the blessings from above and conjure the devil, pay the State, pay the middleman, pay the judge, pay the hangman! Pay and work hard, that your purse may be never empty when the hangman and the judge, the State's minister and the lord's bailiff, call upon you.

If you would seek redress for an offence, dare not seek it yourself: they would send you to climb the wheel! Call again upon the middleman surrounded by policemen, jailors and hangmen, and pay the toll. Pay the lord who permits the judge to fine you on his land, pay the State which appoints the judge and protects the lord, pay the judge and the hangman who teach you cruelty, pay their informers who bribe one man into crime to catch another man, who creep in the dark like thieves and associate with thieves in order to break into our houses, spy the wife for the husband's sake, and the husband for the wife's sake; pay all the corruption which the lawyer, the Court, the executioner spread in society.

And if you wish to be protected from these tortioners and desire a change in the law—apply again to the middleman, the city alderman, the M.P., the government, and all the rest, down to their valets and scribes. Pay the armies they maintain to keep up the flag you are proud of. Pay for all the things your children will learn about Kings, and States, and Law, at school; pay for all that you and they learn from a science which has been worked out to keep up the robbery-insurance association.

And don't forget that all of those whom you pay with your labor are too busy to walk on foot like you, too crushed by their "labors" to eat the plain food of the laborer, too refined to enjoy the plain pleasures of life, which may be good enough for you—not for them. Pay, and be ready to pay more!

Pay so long as your patience lasts, and you do not arise to fling the robbery insurance overboard. But don't forget then that it is of no use to attack any one of them. They are all of them banded against you, and all of them, hand in hand, will crush you down again if you run against one of them, instead of pulling to pieces the insurance itself.

Do you know now where your extra tenpence on milk goes?

I have received for the *Berkman Commutation Fund* the following sums:—Leveson, Glasgow 12/6; Price, Chester 2/6; list 18 R. G. 15/-; list 19, Starcke 2/- As funds are much needed, I urge upon friends to do their best, and those who have subscription lists to send them to me as soon as possible.—R. GUNDERSEN, 98 Wardour Street, London, W.

Freedom

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NOTES.

A FIELD-DAY FOR FADDISTS.

The Congress of Women Workers recently held at Nottingham seems to have been a melancholy affair—at least to us who regard woman as a few degrees more enslaved than man, and who can see clearly how the struggle for her economic emancipation is being muddled and misdirected by some high and mighty feminine frauds of the middle-class.

That this is the case, unfortunately, manifests itself only too clearly in the reports, wherein we read that a Miss Lonsdale, hailing from Kensington, stated that she had heard a good deal of starvation, but had never come across a case. She went on to imply that, like the sea-serpent, it was often heard of, but never seen. Nearly all the speakers in this discussion could see no cure but private charity for the poverty which needed outdoor relief.

If the only hope for woman's emancipation rested on the efforts of people like those forming the Nottingham Conference, it would be a poor look-out indeed. But such is not the case. It is not the economic and political freedom of a sex for which the advanced guard of the world is struggling to-day, but for the freedom of all. The blind leaders of fads cannot see this; but they are as drops in the ocean. Those springs of human action which will help the revolution lie deep down, and are to be seen in such splendid acts of solidarity as manifested themselves in the match girls' strike at Bryant and May's.

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE.

We congratulate the S. D. F. on having in their ranks such a courageous and high-minded comrade as Miss Lanchester. We also must express our deepest indignation and abhorrence of the shameless and inhuman outrage which "blear-eyed and inveterate tyranny," egged on by the unspeakable hypocrisy of middle class "morality," has inflicted upon her. The publicity given to this outrage, however, helps the cause of Freedom; and this thought no doubt will sustain Miss Lanchester in her present trying position. By refusing to compromise with the shams of bourgeois "morality," by nobly asserting her individual liberty under circumstances which most women would suffer life-long misery rather than face, Miss Lanchester has in a single day brought to the front, before the eyes of the world, the question of woman's sexual freedom. And how finely her example stands out, even to those who pretend to sneer at her! A hundred years of "political action" will never help the cause of human freedom as this one act has done. Indeed, we must remind the comrades of the S.D.F. and, in fact, all whom it may concern, how poor, how mean, how shabby are your tactics, your compromises with capitalists and governments, beside the example which Miss Lanchester has set. And, finally, although she would wish, no doubt, to be known as a Social Democrat, it is no more than the truth to add that her action is simply and purely Anarchistic.

AND ON THIS!

Side by side with the case of Miss Lanchester should be placed the case of Miss Clarke.

By a momentous coincidence, at the very time that Miss Lanchester's courageous conduct brings upon her the inhuman persecutions of those who no doubt consider themselves "pillars of society," poor Miss Clarke is petitioning for a release from an intolerable position in which she finds herself captive by virtue of the very legal and religious ceremony which Miss Lanchester was wise enough to despise. When only a child of seventeen this unhappy young woman was haled off to church by her cranky mother under false pretences and there and then married to a man whom, to use her own words, "she hardly knew." Strange, was it not? But of course the official and orthodox blockheads who performed the ceremony knew nothing of all this, and cared less. They would just as sanctimoniously have tied together the healthy and the diseased, crabbled age and youth, genius and insanity, or any other abnormal and outrageous combination, provided the necessary fees had been forthcoming. And it would have been perfectly legal; the State has said so, and the State can do no wrong.

Here, then, are the two positions, the legal and the illegal. Round the former are gathered all the forces which would keep the world in

darkness and superstition; whilst the illegal action of Miss Lanchester—the rebel, the Anarchist, as we may truly call her in this matter—is clearly seen to stand high above the sordid motives of the conventional world, and to be inspired by the pure ideal of liberty. Such is the object-lesson before the world, and tens of thousands will surely grasp the moral.

A SHAMEFUL SUGGESTION.

We had written, and written sincerely, that we congratulated the S. D. F. on having among them a woman of such character and determination as Miss Lanchester. Hardly had we done so when the following appeared in *Justice*:—"Though we are as much opposed to the present marriage laws as a final solution of the relation between the sexes as the most vehement 'new woman' can be, we have the right to ask that the question shall not be publicly raised in an acute form by an official member of the Social Democratic Federation without any conference whatever with other comrades."

It is necessary at once to contradict two gross misstatements in the above. It was not Miss Lanchester, but the tyranny of her parents which "publicly raised in an acute form" the question of her sex-relationship. Nor did she attempt to assert the right to act for herself "without any conference whatever with other comrades." But although both these statements are false as applied to Miss Lanchester, the disgusting spirit of tyranny which they manifest should rouse to indignation the manhood, and womanhood too, of the S.D.F. This implied desire to control the liberty of men and women in their love affairs furnishes us with an idea as to what might be expected if they had full control in a Democratic State.

What, however, is perhaps more disgusting than the desire to coerce is, that all the while the writer is throwing sopas to Mrs. Grundy by denouncing Miss Lanchester (for the sake of votes perhaps) he is at the same time pretending to be in accord with advanced ideas; for he says: "Miss Lanchester may be perfectly right in her contention in the abstract. So far as that goes we do not differ from her."

A beautiful phrase that "in the abstract"—for cowards. But occasionally the abstract has a knack of getting translated into the concrete, and then the cowards shriek and denounce those who have some regard for consistency and self-respect. Such people belong to that class described by Walt Whitman as "the immutable granitic pudding-heads of the world."

THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT.

We sincerely trust there is going to be a revival of Anarchist propaganda in the United States. We believe there is every sign of it. Our courageous comrades of the *Firebrand* are working heart and soul in the West, and we are sure their excellent little paper with its clear and uncompromising articles on the Anarchist Communist position must be having a good effect on the movement. We always welcome it here.

Then there is *The Rebel* which has started under such promising conditions, and which we are all hoping will revive and enlarge the propaganda in the East. With the *Firebrand* in the West and *The Rebel* in the East we sincerely trust the Anarchist movement in the States has a brighter future. At any rate it has an unlimited field and events will not be lacking to help it on.

THE CARMAUX STRIKE.

Very many instructive lessons might be deduced from the Carmaux Strike; but for the moment we can only refer to a few. Firstly, it must be noted that there has, perhaps, never been a strike in which Socialist politicians have played so important a part and made so much political capital; and, at the same time, there has, perhaps, never been a strike in France so passively endured by the strikers for such a weary length of time, and still they have before them goodness knows how much more of the suffering that a strike entails. So much for the help that "political action" can give the workers in their hour of need.

Yet Halliday Sparling is foolish enough to write that Carmaux is "avenged" by the fall of the Ribot Ministry, and at the same time finishes his article by remarking that "Rességuier remains firm in his resolve to crush out the Union from Carmaux," and that even when the new government is in working order "it cannot compel Rességuier to recognise the Union or hinder him from sacking the workmen under any pretext he pleases. *The battle must be won by the men of Carmaux and can be won by themselves.*" This is the conclusion Mr. Sparling arrives at (and we endorse that conclusion) after telling us "Carmaux is avenged." Carmaux and all similar outrages on the starving workers will only be avenged when the reign of Capitalism is at an end. But we must notice one more fact in connection with this strike. Everyone must have noticed the barefaced manner in which the French government has supported Rességuier against the strikers. Now imagine if the Free Bread panacea had been in vogue, what chance would the poor strikers of Carmaux have had of receiving their dole from the government?—None, we are sure. This fact proves the truth of Kropotkin's contention in *Les Temps Nouveaux*—that the Free Bread idea would prove a terrible engine of oppression in the hands of a government.

Meanwhile the strikers of Carmaux are starving and help is urgently needed. Any comrade who can afford to send us a donation large or small, in aid of the strikers will be expressing real solidarity with the French workers.

The speeches of our comrades George Etiévant, Jean Grave and Caserio, delivered on their trials in 1893-94, in the press 36 pp-8vo, price 1d.

THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY and the Land Question.

[FROM A CONTINENTAL CORRESPONDENT.]

The Annual Conference of the German Social Democratic Party, held at Breslau in October last, chiefly dealt with the question of the best means of agitation among the agricultural population of Germany. As this party is the largest State Socialist party in existence—disposing of 1,800,000 votes, 45 members of parliament, 77 papers, an annual income of about £13,000, etc., besides enjoying the privilege of professing, as we are so often told, the only “scientific Socialism,”—it may seem worth while to keep ourselves informed of the result of their dealing with this most difficult problem of how to win over the agricultural population, the backbone of reaction, to Socialism. Before doing so, we shall indulge in a rapid survey of last year's history of that party, which is necessary for an understanding of the different currents of ideas that found expression in the Breslau debates; and even some facts not immediately connected with this subject may be in tructive and interesting as showing the method of action pursued by such a prominent party.

The exterior history consists in the usual propaganda by means of hundreds of local societies, mostly electoral associations, 77 political papers, members in elective bodies, May-day demonstrations, etc. Besides political organisation, 48 trade unions were organised in 1894 in 4,217 local groups of 238,613 members, with an income of £134,278, publishing 50 trade papers, all Socialist; though there is not much love lost between the leaders of the political and the trade union sections, witness the debates of the Cologne Conference of 1893, and Anarchists have a foothold in a number of unions in the development of which in general the question of centralisation *versus* local autonomy and federation constantly comes to the front.

The parliamentary report given at Breslau shows the action of the 45 deputies arising from their own initiative to be almost limited to political and formal questions, right of meeting and the like, to which must be added their participation in general debates and committee work where they do a good deal of the usual parliamentary pettifoggery and tinkering, without visible results; still more of this they do in the provincial Diets, where, as in Bavaria, they even voted the estimates of the government in 1894.

In spite of the predominance of these parliamentary tomfooleries and the scorn and insults that are unanimously heaped on the acts as well as the ideas of Anarchists and revolutionists, this party is harassed in the meanest way by the German police and authorities; of course, they cannot discover the slightest revolutionary act, and have to distort their vicious brains to invent constantly new pretexts for criminal proceedings—pretexts so ridiculous and ignominious that they can only be compared with the equally fertile phantasies of the Austrian police; in every other country they are impossible, even in our period of general reaction. So, on August 17, at Essen, six miners were sentenced to 18½ years of penal servitude for alleged perjury in giving evidence about an assault committed on one of them by a policeman, simply because their evidence differed in minute details (the question of whether a man was touched or pushed by another) with that of the interested person, the policeman himself. The remaining condemnations amount to 64 years 10 months 1 day and £1760 fines (in 11 months), mostly consisting of an immense number of small sentences of weeks or months. Compared with other countries these figures are small; think of the thousands of years imprisonment awarded the rebels of Sicily and Massa Carrara, or even of the prosecution of the Bohemian Radicals by the Austrian Government, where the criminal court at Prague from September 1893 to October 1895 sentenced 154 prisoners to 258 years of penal servitude.

Notwithstanding those many hundreds of condemnations—of which on an average a dozen may, if put together, attain the usual height of sentences on Anarchists, and none of which, save for damages in libel actions by capitalists, could have been pronounced in England,—the government, after Caserio had killed Carnot and the capitalist press of all countries demanded howling that all Anarchists should be hunted down, brought in the so-called Anti-Revolutionary Bill (on December 17, 1894), which was finally rejected on May 11, 1895. Its purpose was not only the suppression of Anarchist literature, but the strangling of every expression of free thought in science, art and every sphere of life. It was equally distasteful to the Radical and Democratic parties, and we might be inclined to look at the debates on this bill, published in extenso, for an expression of a solidary reclamation of freedom of speech and press by the Social Democratic party for all, including Anarchists, and a cessation of vulgar insults in a moment of common persecution. We find, however, only the usual calumnies of the *Freiheit* and theoretical “scientific” remarks like those by Mr. Frohme (one of the oldest deputies), that Anarchism is “the legitimate child of authoritarian power,” that the whole history of the Church is nothing but “a history of hierarchic Anarchism; that the ancestors of the aristocracy may “in full justice be called Anarchist murderers and incendiaries,” that every enthusiast for war and mass murder is an Anarchist; all these are “true and genuine Anarchists,” etc. If they speak in this way in parliament, in one of the most responsible debates, we can gauge the extent of their perfidy and absurdity in the agitation of every day.

One good thing they did this year: they scorned at and combated the jingoism resuscitated by the 25th anniversary of the French war. This seems a matter of course; but when we remember to what extent a part of the French Socialists indulge in Russian patriotism, it is a fact worth while recording—even after the well-known speeches of Bebel in 1891. This attitude excited the utmost anger of the emperor, who since uses all efforts to provoke them by insulting remarks of a low type, and whoever dares to publish any reply to these cowardly insults by an irresponsible person is prosecuted for “lèse majesté” as Liebknecht is for the simple remark that the throwing of mud from high or low quarters did not disturb his party in its progress.

Quite recently a new feature appeared in the doings of the party, namely, the fructification of “petits papiers,” indiscreet private letters of political opponents, which the official organ (VORWAERTS) is fond of publishing. This and the publication of all sorts of backstairs hearsayings or deliberate insinuations by political intriguers is probably considered as the fine flower of “scientific Socialist” diplomacy and statesmanship; to us it is a disgusting spectacle, and one of the many signs of growing degradation; denunciation is at the root of it, for the free expression of opinions about the emperor in terms which, in modern Germany, are considered as lèse majesté is really that which makes these “revelations” sensational for the gossip-mongering public and press. Thus, apart from the ignominious exploitation of private letters, Social Democracy assumes the rôle of the public prosecutor, a rôle odious and infamous in our eyes in whatever cause it may plead. The applause

of a great part of the press certainly is with the Social Democrats in this campaign; but if they look closer they will find that the more they appear to be feared the less they are respected; the capitalist press feels that they sink to its level.

We pass on to the interior history of the party—not the history of persons and their aims and interests, but that of the development of ideas, which, however, owing to the hierarchic organisation and the influence of leaders, is closely connected with the former. The chief problem here is indeed, since 1894, the agrarian question, and the question how far a parliamentary policy of reforms is compatible with the alleged aim of bringing about the Socialist State.

In 1882 about 19 out of the 45 millions of inhabitants of Germany belonged to the rural population; these 19 millions consist of 6 million agricultural laborers (with their families nearly 11 millions) and 2½ million peasants (with their families 8½ millions). The 2½ millions of peasants comprised a quarter of a million of well-to-do peasants, chiefly in the north-west of the country; of about 900,000 small peasants working for themselves; and of 1,000,000 of poor peasants who can only make their living by home industries or temporary wage labor. The latter two classes predominate in the centre and the south, whilst agricultural laborers under the sway of the landed aristocracy prevail in the eastern provinces.

The position of the rural population is very bad; the laborers are under the despotic rule of the landlords, hardly better off than their forefathers were as serfs; their education is miserable, consisting of religion, patriotism and servility inculcated by thrashings; brutal and ignorant as they are, they form as soldiers the pride of the army and an eternal defence (as it is fancied) of the throne and the money-bag. The peasant proprietors are mostly in the hands of usurers, and crushed by the competition of large landowners with capital. Still they have a common interest with the landlords to raise the price of agricultural produce, and are the enemies of free trade, cheap bread, etc. In this way and by their education the allies of reaction, considerable numbers of them have fallen a prey to the Anti-Semitic agitation, incited thereto by the exploitation practised by mortgagors and moneylenders.

What wonder that some of them also lend an ear to the Social Democratic agitation as it addresses itself to them? It is not the entire program that is put before them: where this is done, the peasants—who hate the workingman from town, whom they see earning ready money whilst they have to work perhaps quite as much and, in addition, to bear the burden of carrying on a decaying trade through all the vicissitudes of life, for themselves, with none but enemies and competitors around them,—the peasants, we say, when told the true program of collective property, State regulation of production, etc., let alone some sensible remarks on religion, will not have anything whatever to do with the Social Democrats. This experience was gained long ago, and the peasant agitation consists, from long since, in promising them a number of measures which the State shall carry out for them—if they return Social Democrats to parliament. This agitation, which Bebel himself called (in 1894) *Bauernfang* (fraud by means of the confidence trick), was all successful in Bavaria, where Von Vollmar, the leader of the Bavarian Socialists, four or five years ago proclaimed the practical abdication of Revolutionary Socialism and the resolute adoption of reform tactics. He made great friends with the peasants in some districts of Bavaria, and went so far as to vote the estimates of the government in the Bavarian Diet,—a policy which a Social Democratic conference held at Munich, in 1894, fully endorsed.

The Frankfurt Conference of the Social Democratic Party (October 1894), after violent debates between the rival leaders, Bebel and Vollmar, refused to censure the Bavarian members for their action and Mr. Bebel, upon this, took occasion to speak truth for once at a Berlin meeting and in a number of subsequent articles (November 1894) in describing the real state of affairs within his party. His remarks coincide with independent and Anarchist criticism to a great extent; he describes the growing lack of revolutionary spirit and enthusiasm, the detrimental tendency to mere reforms, and opined that in this way the party was rapidly going to the dogs. His remarks met with violent protests in nearly the whole press, and an organ in Hanover even hinted that, if he did not keep quiet, he would be expelled from the party like any ordinary mortal.

Somehow Bebel took the hint, or other unknown reasons may have convinced him; at any rate he did nothing further to combat a state of things which he declared to be so intolerable and detrimental. And this year, on the question of rural agitation, we find him side by side with the reformers, the apostles of *Bauernfang* whom another influential member of the party (Schippe) now publicly describes as “charlatans.”

The Frankfurt Conference elected a committee to elaborate a rural platform; this committee, meeting in Berlin in February 1895, did a very sensible thing, namely, it divided itself into northern, midland and southern committees, all of whom, in May, elaborated separate programs with special regard to the requirements of the rural population of their districts. But in June, at Berlin, at a general meeting of the committee the three projects by Bebel, Vollmar and a third member from central Germany were amalgamated into one project, and this was even incorporated in the general program of the party (published in this form on July 16).

This program (adopted at the Erfurt Conference of 1891) was distorted in this way to a shapeless misfit, embodying all sorts of palliative cures for peasant proprietors with demands for their own wage-slaves, the laborers. It created a storm of discontent and was torn to pieces by nearly the whole Social Democratic press and many meetings all over the country. It was soon discovered to what an extent some of the new demands were identical with old planks of the Conservative and Anti-Semitic platforms; Schippe even discovered the origin of a part of the southern project (of Vollmar's) in an old bill of the former Austrian minister of agriculture, a Clerical of the purest water. The organ of the Christian Social Reformers, *Die Hilfe* of Frankfurt, grew enthusiastic over the confidence which the Social Democrats put in the State; “until now,” they say (No. 32, August 11), “the State, in Socialistic phraseology, was called the servant of the ruling classes. But now he is required to oppose the ruling classes. We have always asked for this, and the Social Democrats laughed at our childish confidence. Now they do the same thing.”

Notwithstanding a series of articles by Bebel in favor of the new program a fiasco was seldom more complete, and the committee, on October 5, when it modified its proposals—embodying only a part of the new demands in the party program and formulating the rest in a resolution,—achieved nothing whatever towards its rehabilitation.

Under these circumstances the Breslau Conference met to discuss the general affairs of the party, and notably the agricultural problem.

(To be Concluded.)

NOTICES.

No supplement is issued with this number; it will be supplemented again as soon as circumstances permit. Reports held over till December issue. A general meeting place has been secured in Huntley Street, Tottenham Court Road, and news of any cheap seating accommodation will be gratefully received by T. Reece.

THE DRAGON OF INTEREST.

THE *DAGON* OF INTEREST.

The same with his argument about the Mutual Bank. My point was that it did not necessarily abolish interest. It may, as he seems to think, add to the security of the bank, but it knocks all the stuffing out of the principle of the thing—which is to abolish interest—and leaves it little reason for existence, except what I had previously pointed out, namely, a saving through co-operation in banking to the trading and small capitalist class at the expense of the bankers, but leaves the position of the proletariat untouched. That the People's Bank

[This discussion is now closed.—Eds.]

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