

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

WE NEVER FORGET.

Once again the anniversary of the Chicago tragedy arrives! To those of us (enthusiastic Revolutionary Socialists at the time) who followed step by step the whole foul deliberate murder of our comrades, it seems impossible that thirteen years have elapsed since they were done to death. The fearful wrench it caused in the heart of every honest liberty-loving individual at the moment was such, that November 11th can never approach without a slight catching of the breath, a flush of indignation, a feeling that if ever we wish to be reminded of the tigerish instincts of the capitalist class—especially if their power to plunder is even momentarily menaced—we have only to recall the dark days which culminated on that date in Chicago.

Few really believed till the very last moment that the governor of the State of Illinois would carry out the sentence of passion and prejudice. When, however, he allowed it to proceed in the case of Spies, Parsons, Fischer and Engel, their dying words sounded the death-knell of any lingering faith in democratic institutions, and created more convinced Anarchists by one object lesson than could have been converted by years of reasoning or preaching of principles.

Only thirteen years; yet, how much has happened! Some of the ideas they held most firmly are now abandoned by most of us. We could not go back to the past if we would; we would not if we could. They had only just broken from the rut of political Socialism when their faith in new principles was put to the test. That not one of them flinched (though, in the case of Parsons at least, his life would have been spared almost for the asking *had he been willing to separate himself from the rest by one word of hedging*) is what has raised them even in the eyes of their enemies, and given them the highest place of honor in the modern revolutionary labor movement.

The question has sometimes been asked: whether their martyrdom was not too heavy a price to pay for fidelity to principles? As this is not an age of sacrifice, and since asceticism is a thing of the past, little wonder few appreciate the frame of mind which led them to give up their lives rather than betray a principle they held so highly. The fact is they could not do otherwise; the new ideas had burnt themselves into their very existence. They had taken up an uncompromising attitude in the labor movement, and yet were able to hold the confidence and win the respect of those who remained indifferent to the new movement. There can be no doubt that it was this central fact which gave them the enormous influence they wielded and which, at the same time, accounts for the intensity of the hate shown toward them by the whole exploiting class of America. Probably no other event in the whole struggle of the working class has contained such a clear and direct challenge to privilege as this. In the midst of a labor war in which the usual police brutality was shown, someone from among the people replies with even stronger force! What audacity! An Anarchist hunt is instituted, our comrades selected as the most dangerous and put on trial. Parsons, who had gone away, surrenders the morning the trial opens—still believing in the honesty of American institutions. He paid for his simplicity with his life, and so placed on record a warning to those who follow: that, the social war once begun, all sense of justice is obliterated, and that it would be as sensible to trust your life in the power of a man-eating tiger as in the courts of the rich when they are frightened for their future power. Still, as before mentioned, few could bring themselves to believe that "the home of the free" would carry out the sentence, since all felt it was a packed and prejudiced jury that had rendered the verdict.

And while we are remembering all this against the government let us not forget, too, that there were those in the popular—nay, even in the labor movement—who, had they have had the courage to speak out against this legal outrage, might have prevented it, but did not. The late Henry George and Powderley, of the now defunct (or nearly so) Knights of Labor, could have created a storm of indignation; but they were too cowardly. They were both "in politics," and there was much to

be lost and nothing to be gained by rescuing such irreconcilables as the "men of Chicago." When both the former are forgotten the latter will be better known than ever. They allowed them to be immortalised by letting them go to their death without a protest, and there is no doubt that George recognised this before he died. Of the whole shameful story nothing is meaner than the attitude of those two men. On the other hand, let us remember those who took up the cudgels on their behalf. Whatever Pentecost has degenerated to, he spoke out then. Of the enormous amount of work done by many whose names are not known outside a small circle in their effort to save them, it is impossible to more than make mention.

The effect of our comrades' speeches upon the average wage-earner was, and still is, to make their blood tingle and feel that at least here were men who were not afraid and could not be bought or cajoled. How many Anarchists have been made by them it would be impossible to tell. They rank among the most eloquent speeches delivered by men who have been tried for their lives. They will live as a statement of the case for the workpeople of the world toward the end of the nineteenth century.

Of the subsequent action of Governor Altgeld in liberating Fielden, Schwab and Neebe, and the vindication of the memory of our comrades and the legal acknowledgment of their martyrdom, what can one say except that here we had the spectacle of an honest politician, a man altogether superior to the crowd by which he was surrounded, and who has never been forgiven for his honesty in this matter by the wealthy.

For the rest, it is impossible to forget their death. Their lives were not given in vain. Though our movement flag at times, each fresh impulse forward from the ranks of labor will see the principles they loved better understood; and when at last they try to apply them to their social and industrial life, the death of the Chicago Anarchists will be recognised as one of the sacrifices that hastened the happy day.

JOHN TURNER.

SPAIN.

The new clerical cabinet of Spain, which comprises five generals, of whom two are Jesuits (Arcarraga, organiser of the Cuban defeat and the tortures of Montjuich, and Linares, the rogue of Santiago) has had no luck to start with. A Carlist insurrection has heralded its accession and, sadder still, the Liberal crowd this time has not shown itself against the Absolutists. It knows that no government, however bad, could be worse than the present. As yet the insurrection is not very serious, but it can become so. Officially it is strangled already. Were that true, however, would a state of siege be declared throughout the peninsula? What is the reason of this revolt of the Catholic Absolutists, seeing they are already masters of Spain? This, they feel the government trembles before them, and masters in reality they would also be masters by right. This is in the natural order of things.

The workers take no interest whatever in these quarrels. Little does it matter to them that the wolves are at each other's throats. On the contrary, their strikes increase, especially in Catalonia, forcing new conflicts upon the infamous government of Madrid. Also, they have just resuscitated the old Federation of the Workers of the Spanish Regions, which had been killed by inquisitorial persecution. For its *debut* it has held a Congress of the Societies of Resistance, at Madrid, where 52,000 workmen belonging to some 300 unions were represented. Here are a few extracts from the Manifesto addressed by them to their brothers in Spain:

"We desire the suppression of private property and the socialisation of the instruments of labor.

"We proclaim the urgent and lasting necessity of the Social Revolution.

"We would render wars between the nations impossible, by refusing to bear arms in the service of governments.

"We do not aspire to the conquest of Power, because Authority, by whatever name it is known, is always tyrannous."

Bravo, comrades! Forward!

We know that the Spanish Anarchists living in London will soon form a section in union with the Spanish Federation, and hope that the Spanish workers residing in France and elsewhere will imitate this example.

T. del MARMOL.

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NOTES.

Will Dr. Creaghe kindly communicate his address at Buenos Aires to Victor Cailles, care of this office.

ODIOUS COMPARISONS.

A Hooligan named Duggan, on being sentenced to the most severe term of imprisonment with hard labor, told the court that at any rate prison was better than home. A similar remark was made by another individual who found himself in the clutches of the law; which taken together form a most damning indictment of our social conditions.

The Philistines will, of course, cry out that our prisons are too humane, and that severer treatment is needed; they have neither the heart nor the brain to understand that it is the homes that need improving. So Hooligans will continue to be bred and reared under those conditions which are a direct result of our social life, while the hypocrites continue to cry: "a disgrace to civilisation." But they are no disgrace to the civilisation that exists today; they are natural, inevitable and perfectly in order, and why respectability should pretend to be shocked we cannot understand. For, after all, the Hooligan has played a most important rôle during the war-fever, and the politician and the capitalist press have been very glad of his assistance.

So why should we not have our Hooligans? Let them flourish; let them have their place. They are a necessary part of a landlord and capitalist ridden society, and it could not exist without them. It is Socialism or Free Communism that says: No more capitalists, no more landlords (and, as a logical consequence, no more Hooligans).

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

At the recent polling for the electoral college at Turka, in Galicia, the returning officer placed gendarmes at the polling stations with orders to arrest electors voting for candidates on the Democratic list. In answer to this abominable conduct the people, we are told, "stormed the polling station, put the gendarmes to flight, drove the returning officer out of the place, demolished the voting urns and fired the building." We wish we could see all forms of coercion answered in a like spirit. We are quite sure the Turka authorities will hesitate to try the game again. But is it not rather an amusing and, we may add, an instructive spectacle to see the advocates of a "peaceful solution" of our social problems fighting for the right to vote? Why not fight for something more substantial, and let voting go to the devil?

TELL-TALE STRAWS.

Probably our Social Democratic friends in answer to the above will reply that "under the British constitution such things couldn't happen." Probably not in a similar way, as the ruling classes here act more insidiously; but it would be as well to keep our eyes open to possibilities. And as an instance, note the following:

"The Sheffield City Council yesterday (October 25th) decided to spend £300 per annum in training the police of the city in the use of the rifle."

What do trade unionists, non-unionists and the workers generally see in this? Not a desire to prevent rapacious landlords from rack-renting or greedy employers from paying starvation wages; or a Chamberlain government from fleecing the people. No; but the intention of shooting down strikers, without the shadow of a doubt. In imagination we can hear the chorus of Social Democrats, labor men and others crying:

"To checkmate this let the workers send us into Parliament, where we can make our voices heard." But listen to this:

BRISBANE, Saturday.

Owing to persistent obstruction by the Labor Party of measures authorising the construction of certain private railways, the Government on Wednesday last introduced in the Legislative Assembly a motion to amend the standing orders by authorising the application of the closure on an affirmative vote being given by twenty-four members out of a house of seventy-two. After a continuous sitting, lasting seventy-two hours, the motion has been carried, with an amendment increasing to thirty the number necessary for the application of the closure. The carrying out of the Government's policy is thus assured, and the four railway Bills which have already passed their second reading are expected to become law at an early date.—REUTER.

Here we have direct proof of the utter futility of political action as a means of the workers obtaining concessions from their rulers. Whatever move may be made on the political chess board the ruling classes can always cry "check!" And it is only as a result of agitation outside parliament that sops are thrown to keep the people quiet. So let us all keep active outside.

We regret that lack of funds compels us to appear without our supplement. We hope enough help will come in to ensure our issuing the full size for our next number.

We are holding over "The Pyramid of Tyranny," "A Brief History of Freedom," and other matter.

THE SUPPRESSED INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY Workers' Congress of 1900.

Readers of *Freedom* will be interested in hearing some authentic details respecting the International Revolutionary Workers' Congress, which was to have been held in Paris last September, but was interdicted on the eve of its first sitting.

The theory of Anarchism expands with the years, and many questions of vital importance needing patient discussion had arisen since the last important international Anarchist meeting in July, 1896. At that date, as will be remembered, a so-called International Labor Congress was held in London, at which discussion by the anti-parliamentary party and Anarchists was violently suppressed by the Marxian Parliamentary Social Democrats present. Nightly meetings by the rejected party promptly took place in St. Martin's Town Hall, where in a true fraternal spirit the international anti-parliamentarians discussed the items upon the agenda they had prepared for the larger conference in Queen's Hall. But the meetings owing to circumstances were hurriedly prepared, few of the questions could be thoroughly debated, and the need for determining certain points in Anarchist theory and practice became, as time passed, ever more urgent. Upon the initiative, therefore, of certain *Groupes de Paris*, notably the Groupe des Etudiants Révolutionnaires Internationalistes or Students Group, and Le Parti Ouvrier Révolutionnaire or Allemanists, preparations in view of holding a purely anti-parliamentary and Anarchist Congress in 1900 were begun as far back as two years ago, Paris being selected as the meeting ground in consequence of its central position, and the fact that the Exhibition would lead the railway companies to lower their fares, thus enabling a larger circle of comrades to come together. The pros and cons of such a Congress were vigorously discussed in Anarchist journals, there being divergence of opinion not only as to the benefits likely to ensue from such a congress but as to the wisdom of holding one at all. As the date approached, however, promises of financial support, of group delegates and reports rolled in from every side, and interest became general. The Congress was convened from Sept. 19th, to Sept. 23rd; the Salle du Commerce in the Faubourg du Temple was secured for the occasion, and by Monday, Sept. 17th, delegates and sympathisers from all quarters of Europe and America had either arrived or were hourly expected in Paris. Many were the bearers of printed or written reports on the movement in their respective districts or the questions to be debated, over which time and thought had been expended, and as up to that time no whisper of police or governmental interference had been broached, the Conference was looked forward to if not with absolute security at least with keen interest and hope.

On Sept. 17, Léon Remy, the Secretary of the Organising Committee, called at Police Headquarters to state that the Congress would open two days later.¹ He was requested to call again next afternoon; later the hour was abruptly changed to 9 in the morning. Calling at that hour, as directed, upon the 18th, he was informed that by virtue of the laws of 1894, known as the *Lois Scélérates*, the Anarchists would not be allowed to hold a Congress; also, that any meeting held in public or private in connection with the so-called Anti-Parliamentary Congress was forbidden, and such meetings, if attempted, would be suppressed by force if necessary. Indignantly demanding to know by what right the police arrogated to themselves the power to forbid a peaceable public conference, he was informed the police assumed no such right, but the Government did, and that the Congress had been prohibited by the decision of a Council of Ministers. Daring to question the fact, Fouquet, the police superintendent charged with the supervision of the Paris Anarchists, read aloud to him the Ministerial ukase; a copy of

¹ This intimation being necessary under the French laws.

this document for the purpose of showing his committee was refused him.

Within a few hours the suppression of the Congress was known to all; a protest, calling attention to this high-handed act of a ministry which included the would-be Socialist Millerand, was sent to the offices of the Paris papers, and certain of the French comrades decided to hold an indignation meeting at the Maison du Peuple that evening; but it was only to find the doors held by the police, the street full of agents, and protest answered by arrest. The following day *L'Aurore*, a Radical-Socialist paper, published a protest and inserted a call from some of the French comrades for a private meeting to be held that afternoon in the rue de Montmorency; few ventured there; such as did were again confronted by the police. The *Petite République* and some other Paris papers scoffed at the idea of the Congress having been prohibited either by the police or the Government, and stated that not only was permission by the Executive unnecessary for holding a public meeting, but that the Congress had not been prohibited, the Anarchists having simply been frightened out of their intention. These statements are quickly disproved by the facts above mentioned, viz.: the reading of the Government's decision by Fouquet, his refusal to grant a copy of it, and the presence of the police and Municipal Guard wherever a meeting was advertised to be held. A few days later at the Social Democratic Congress, Jaurès also did his best to fling derision at the Anarchists, by saying the Congress was lost through their want of courage; had they forced the doors and held the Congress in spite of the police, they could have done so, the right of public meeting existing in France. Perhaps, for reactionaries like himself. Had the Anarchists seized the Salle du Commerce it would have been the signal for the expulsion of every foreign delegate from French soil. As it was, Nino Samaja, who had travelled from Geneva for the Congress and shown some activity by telephoning to the Home Office and Prefecture with regard to the authenticity of the Ministerial prohibition, was arrested on the 21st and ordered to leave within 48 hours. The only reason vouchsafed by either the Ministry or the police for the prohibition of the Congress, was: that an inauspicious date had been selected for holding it; Paris was *en fête*, it being the eve of the Presidential banquet to the Mayors! "That, then," protested Matha, editor of *Le Libérateur*, "is your chief reason for the prohibition?" "It is the best," was the Prefect's sententious answer.

Their right of public meeting being thus brutally suppressed, it was hardly likely that the Anarchist delegates and comrades in general would calmly submit to the police mandate forbidding private meetings. Even the allurements of the Exhibition failed to fill their leisure hours. Meetings beginning on the 19th, the day the Congress should have opened, and continuing till the 23rd, the day it should have closed, were held—now here, now there; and while it was impossible that these should comprise all the comrades present in Paris or that every subject originally meant for debate at the Congress should be discussed, good understanding was reached on certain important points, such as Correspondence Bureaux, etc. Among other matters, it was resolved: (1) To print, if possible, all the Reports handed in by groups and delegates (some 80 in number) first in French, Jean Grave undertaking that task in *Les Temps Nouveaux* (the series began with No. 23, and continues), and that when the series was complete each country should, were means forthcoming, publish the volume in its own language. (2) That the English groups were invited by the International Conference to convene an International Revolutionary Workers' Congress, to be held in England (London) on a date to be hereafter decided. We now learn that, since these informal meetings, the comrades in France have decided to form a federation of groups so as to ensure closer *rapprochement* and quicker action in time of need.

The delegates from the Freedom Group were A. Marsh and J. Turner, but four other independent sympathisers from England assisted at the deliberations. Many, also, were the well-known delegates or representatives from foreign groups, though it is deemed imprudent to disclose names. But this may be said, there were delegates from 36 groups of Paris besides those from the provinces; there were delegates from Bourges, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Nîmes, Epinal, Nancy, Rennes, Valréas, Toulon, Chinon, Marseilles, Saint Etienne, Roubaix, Montpellier, La Tour-du-Pin, Turcoing, Montereau, etc. Foreign delegates came from the United States, the Argentine Republic and nearly every Continental state, while written adhesions arrived from Bulgaria, Roumania, Greece, Portugal, Brazil, the Sandwich Islands and Uruguay.

In spite, therefore, of its suppression, the Congress of 1900 was in certain special ways a distinct success. It had drawn delegates and comrades from every part of the world; these met, views were exchanged the solidarity between distant groups was strengthened, while the knowledge of being so to speak banned, knit all together in closer bonds of sympathy and brotherhood than might have been the case had they met only in public. The final gathering took place, as had been originally intended with regard to the Congress proper, on Sunday, Sept. 23, in one of the beautiful environs of Paris, where in a forest glade, with no eavesdroppers but green leaves, a Czech comrade unfolded the tale of the Bohemian movement, and we parted with feelings of mutual sympathy and goodwill.

Below we append the order of the day as arranged for the Congress, a perusal of which will show the amount of serious business that lay before its members.

Sept. 19th. Wednesday:

On Communism and Anarchy: Reports from the Students' Group of Paris; from P. Kropotkin; from the Anarchist group of Para, Brazil; from the Italian group of Lausanne.

On Communism and Individualism: Reports from Janvion and a libertarian group of Buenos Aires.

On Anti-Semitism and Zionism: Reports from the Students' Group and the Brazilian Group of Para.

On Tolstoism and Anarchy: Report from the Students' Group.

Various Questions: Anarchy and the Church, by Elisée Reclus and G. Guyon; *The Social Vengeance called Justice*, by the group distributing that pamphlet.

Sept. 20th. Thursday:

Organisation of continual connections between the Communist Revolutionary Groups of one country with others. Reports from Students of the Université de la Nature; from groups of Philadelphia; Providence, R.I.; Social Students of Epinal; the E.S.R.I.; from Para; Jean Grave; the Italian Socialist Anarchist Group of Zurich; Italian group of Lausanne.

Different methods of Propaganda: Propaganda in Trades Unions by libertarians of Rennes, by P. Delesalle. *Publications and Propaganda by Posters*: Report from Marseilles, proposition of Italians. *By Distribution of Pamphlets*: Report from Philadelphia; from the group of social students of Epinal; from the Group of l'Harmonie.

Free Theatres. Report from l'Avenir theatral.

Open-air Meetings. Report from group of Philadelphia.

Protest Elections (of political prisoners). Opinion of Italian comrades hostile to this tactic.

Publication of an international Newspaper. Letter from D. Nieuwenhuis. Reports from the libertarians of Bourges; the Students of l'Université de la Nature; the Epinal group of social students; the Para group.

A Depot for Documents in London. Organisation of the Solidarity (Bureau of Assistance, refuge for comrades, international resistance). Report from the students of the Université de la Nature.

Agrarian Question. Report from the group of Pyrgos (Greece).

The Unemployed: What rôle should they take in the Socialist movement, and their best means of agitation?

Libertarian Maison du Peuple. Proposition from the Groupe des Egaux du XVII.

Libertarian Teaching. Reports from the Egaux du XVII.; Brassworkers' Trade Union; the libertarian group of Nancy.

Responsibility and Solidarity. Report from Freedom.

Various Questions. Report from the group Germinal, of Turin.

Tactics of the P.O.S.R. (Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party) with regard to libertarians. Reports from the Central Group of XVII.; libertarians of Rennes and Bourges.

Sept. 21st. Friday:

Co-operation and Neo-Co-operation. Circular from Brimeur; Note of the Knights of Labor. Reports from Bancel; Students' Group; Brassworkers' Union; Ricardo Mella; Valréas Group.

The Woman Question. Feminism and co-education of the sexes: Reports from Students' Group; Brassworkers' Union.

The Sex Question. Letter from Philadelphia; note from J. F. Morton; Kate Austin; Viroqua Daniels; R. Addis; E. Goldman; League of Human Regeneration; Para Group.

Sept. 22nd. Saturday:

General Strike. Reports from Revolutionary Group of Lausanne; Philadelphia; libertarians of Rennes; Central Group of XVII.(P.O.S.R.); Réveil socialiste des Epinettes (P.O.S.R.); Barcelona; Brassworkers' Union.

Attitude of Anarchists with regard to War, Risings and Insurrection. Reports from D. Nieuwenhuis; Brassworkers' Union; Para Group.

Propaganda against Militarism. Proposal for anti-military demonstrations by Geneva group; proposals from the Egaux du XVII.

AMERICAN NOTES.

The great strike of the anthracite miners of Pennsylvania is all but settled at the moment of writing. The miners struck for a 20 per cent. increase in wages, abolition of the sliding scale, and recognition of their union. They received 10 per cent. increase, abolition of the sliding scale—until February, and we shall see about the recognition of the union. Politics and the 6th of November played their part in the settlement, and when the election is over and McKinley is chosen once more to execute the wishes of Mark Hanna for another four years we shall see about that sliding scale and recognition of the union. The Republicans accused the Democrats of provoking the strike to discredit their cry of the "full dinner pail" which they are using in the present campaign to ensnare the working men into giving McKinley another four years. The Democrats were probably very glad to see the strike, but there is about as much reliance to be placed on the statement that they provoked the strike as on Mark Hanna's tale that Webster Davis got £25,000 from Kruger to help Bryan win. The newspapers tell us that Mark Hanna used his influence to procure a settlement. Very likely, as Mark is very astute and he saw the strike was likely to affect the labor vote in the Presidential election, so he used his power to force a settlement till—after the election. *Free Society* quotes the N. Y. *People*, the organ of the Socialist Labor Party, wherein the said *People* accuses the strike leaders of selling the strike. Labor leaders are far from perfect, but they are not half so bad as they are painted, and certainly it would take a great deal more than the word of the *People* to make me believe the leaders sold this strike because they accepted a 10 per cent. increase instead of the 20 per cent. they struck for. The historian who essays to write of Social Democracy in America will be better fitted for the task if he has lost his sense of smell, for if he attempts to wade through all the foul and slanderous things written by De Leon in the *People* during the last ten years he will faint before he gets through a dozen. Max Nordau ought to write another book on "Degeneration," and use De Leon as his subject.

The recent controversy over the "Twopenny Tube" in London and the rise in rents at Shepherd's Bush reminds me of a lesson in economics poor Edelman gave some Single Taxers a few years ago. The Single Taxers in New York were discussing at a public meeting of theirs such far-reaching reforms as the municipalising of gas, trams, etc., when the chairman called on Edelman for his views on the matter. Edelman began by pointing out the development of the Single Taxers, who a few years previously had been proclaiming the single tax as a remedy

for all the exploitation of to-day; but so certain were they now that it was not the cure-all they expected could be seen by the way they were stealing planks from the State Socialist platform and tacking them on to the Single Tax platform. Suppose, said he, for the sake of argument, that we had municipal street-cars and gas, and going further than you do, suppose they were quite free. What would the result be? The Monday morning after this revolution took place you would all receive notices from your landlords increasing your rents some 25 per cent. If you protested, he would point out that your expenses were not so heavy as before; you could now ride on the cars and burn your gas all night without it costing you a penny. No use having improvements unless we make something out of them. At this a Single Taxer who had been listening intently jumped to his feet, for the truth had dawned on him. "Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I quite agree with the last speaker. I have always said the trouble with us Single Taxers is that we don't go far enough! What we want, Sir, is municipal houses." He then proceeded to demonstrate how such a sweeping reform as municipal houses would prevent exploitation by the landlord. Edelman got up with a smile, for he dearly loved a joke. He congratulated the Single Taxer on seeing his argument so clearly, but, said he, you must go beyond even municipal houses, for don't you see what the result would be? On Saturday when you received your salary you would find it reduced by 50 per cent., and on inquiring the reason, your employer would point out: "Why, don't you see, your expenses are so much less! You have free rent, unlimited gas, and ride up and down all day without spending a penny." And you would sorrowfully acquiesce. Yes, my friend, you must go farther than municipal houses. Poor John H., had he lived a month longer he might have heard that his little parable was enacted in London some four years after he delivered it.

To those comrades in England and Scotland who have not seen *Free Society* recently I would most earnestly advise them to do so. It's a real live little paper now, and under the able editorship of Jas. F. Morton there is more meat and less academical discussion than previously.

There is more than one comrade here, including myself, who sadly miss those delightful "American Notes" Voltairine de Cleyre used to write for *Freedom*. Cannot some one persuade her to take up her pen again?

THE INTERNATIONAL, ITS PRECURSORS, AND ANARCHISM.

XII. *Proudhon.*

The doctrine of State and parliamentary action introduced into Socialism by Louis Blanc and the revolutionary Socialists, by Ledru-Rollin and the Social Democrats, but especially developed into an unlimited State despotism by Marx and Engels, did not fail soon to provoke an energetic protest from the ranks of thinkers and independent Socialists. Among the voices raised against the inauspicious doctrine of military equality, of State monopoly and obligatory labor for "an industrial army, and especially for agriculture,"—that of Proudhon was one of the most powerful. That is why he was attacked, ill-treated and calumniated by all the apostles of State and submission—from Marx to the most perfect nullities.

"Sophist, ignorant, reactionist, bourgeois, little shopkeeper"—such are the names which they bestowed on him in profusion; and this only because Proudhon defended the rights of man, of groups and communes, mutuality in the relations between free, autonomous producers; federalism in social life. They hated him especially, and so they do until the present time, because he opposed Anarchy to despotism of doctrines, to their monopoly, to their discipline imposed on humanity under the form of State Communism.

Certainly Proudhon was not one of those thinkers or of those reformers who open up new horizons and paths to humanity. He had neither the exceptional talent for analysis and generalisation of an Adam Smith, nor the gift of penetration, the breadth of view of a Fourier or a Robert Owen. But if one compares him with a Marx, a Louis Blanc or a Lassalle, then I do believe that he is superior in originality and in genius. When one remembers the history of his life one is astonished at the energy, the perseverance and the ardour which he displayed when quite a child, to earn his own living and to instruct himself at the same time. It was easy for Louis Blanc, son of a general inspector of finances or for a Marx, son of an advocate, or a Lassalle, son of a banker, to study and to plunge into the depths of philosophy, history and sociology; but Proudhon was the son of a poor day-laborer, a poor wretch who, at the age of 8, herds cattle and teaches himself by copying from the books of the other children or by borrowing them for one night. Afterwards he goes to school without hat—having none—and leaves his wooden shoes at the entrance, to avoid making a noise. As an apprentice, he travels through France; then, at once, at the age of 30 (1840), he publishes his famous first memoir: *What is Property?*

Unknown, without means for living, he declares war against existing society—not only in its economic, but also its political basis. He attacks not only the aristocratic or constitutional politics, but even the most Radical, the most Republican of politics. Because, if I am not mistaken, Proudhon was the first who raised his voice with incomparable vehem-

ence against the right of majorities to impose their decisions upon minorities.

According to him, slavery of thought is recognised by law as an obligatory matter under the government of the majority.

The literary and scientific, the political men and the government recognised in Proudhon a capacity of the first class: the government wanted to prosecute him, the scientific world and the bourgeois press calumniated him; but all friends of progress, Socialists of all schools greeted him as the most courageous and the most brilliant defender of the people. Many Socialists and revolutionary Democrats, it is true, were a little chilled by some passages of his work; but his dialectics so brilliant and bold, his style so energetic and full of freshness earned him, nevertheless, their esteem and even their admiration.

Imagine the period when Socialists and revolutionists hoped to accomplish their reforms by intervention of the State and by laws; add, that the works sympathetic towards the people—of E. Buret, Villerme and others, even of Socialists proclaiming Communism like Louis Blanc—were written in moderate and nearly academic terms. Suddenly appears a rough and courageous peasant, who says that all who live spending more than 5 francs a day, are thieves! also, that neither government nor a majority have the right to impose their will upon minorities. It is evident that everyone would be a little hurt.

That did not prevent Proudhon from being recognised by all Europe what he did not cease to be during all his life: the most courageous champion of the welfare "of his brethren, the workers," of the emancipation of human conscience, of the enfranchisement of the individual and the minority from every guardianship of the State and authority. In prison, in exile he remained faithful to this pledge of his youth; even death surprised him in the middle of his unfinished work: *de la Capacité Politique de la classe Ouvrière*.

Towards the time when "*What is Property?*" appeared, Paris had become the real centre where innovators, political revolutionists, Socialists, literary men, even musicians met. Among other remarkable young persons there were Marx, Bakounine, Herzen and Grün, all Socialists, ardent philosophers and revolutionists, and all (except Herzen) fervent neo-Hegelists. They were not long beginning a friendship with the young Proudhon who was so brilliant and courageous in his destructive work. In turn they passed days and nights in discussion with him, teaching him metaphysical philosophy and the dialectical method of demonstration—demonstration by antithesis: an unscientific, arbitrary method by which one can prove all possible absurdities, but never a truth or any law of positive science. From its inventor, Zenon of Eleus—who proved by dialectics this absurdity: that Achilles never would outrun a tortoise walking before him in a distance of 100 steps—to Marx—who formulated in such a pedantic terminology his pretended and absurd law of the concentration of capital—this method has only rendered the most brilliant intelligence less clear. This is what happened also with Proudhon.

From his great work (1844-46) *System of Economic Contradictions*, which was already conceived according to metaphysics, we see Proudhon struggling with his own contradictions. His biographer, J. Langlois, tells us that Proudhon recognised three authorities who had a decisive influence on his development: the Bible, Adam Smith and, lastly, Hegel. In his youth, crushed by misery, without any notion of inductive science, his genius exerted itself in analysing the legends and primitive legislation of nomadic and barbarous Israel. The great work of Adam Smith emancipated him from all theological errors; and we see him logical, clear, powerful in his first memoir on property. But Hegel and his dialectics plunged him into speculations often deplorable. And his opponents did not fail to ridicule him—especially Marx, Engels and their disciples.

Strange aberrations! the same Marx who was one of those who taught Proudhon the dialectics of Hegel scoffed at him afterwards and treated him as a sophist. Yet Proudhon never committed an error so monstrous and sophistical as the fantastic law of the concentration of capital, which is a masterpiece of sophistical dialectics. And, unlike Engels, he never justified slavery, exploitation and all the social iniquities by abominable sophisms. He never said that it was not force and violence, but the metaphysical laws of production which created a society of abomination and actual desolation. And, moreover, never did he propagate this error: that "every economic struggle is a class struggle and, as such, political—that is to say, parliamentary and legal." Proudhon was too much of a Frenchman, too much of a peasant of sound common sense to arrive at such stupidities and immoralities.

W. TCHERKESOV.

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