

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

WHAT WE CAN DO.

We are certainly disinclined to throw our energies into electoral struggles, because as Anarchists we are opposed to all government whether elective or otherwise, and therefore cannot consistently profess interest in that which we heartily loathe and execrate, and also because long experience has taught us that electoral politics are but a fraudulent device for confirming power in the hands of those who by their cunning or wealth have already usurped it; but are we therefore justly open to the reproach flung at us by parliamentary Socialists: that we have no alternative to political action except that of a violent revolution, and that as the latter is only available at special times and under conditions which but rarely occur, we are in the meanwhile condemning ourselves to impotence, and wasting valuable time and opportunities in inaction?

Let us look into this matter. In the first place, in preparing men's minds to take advantage of the revolutionary crises which are from time to time offered in turn to the people of every country, we are surely far from failing to do good and profitable work; and of this we may feel confident when we see how often grand opportunities have been lost through lack of those clearly defined ideas which it is our business as Anarchists to spread and to impress upon those around us, and which, in proportion to our success in so doing, will give direction and completeness to future changes. But putting aside all expectation of revolutionary epochs and all preparation for the glorious opportunities to be found therein, is it not true that there is an infinity of ways whereby we may in our daily lives, persevering and without any very heroic self-sacrifice, work for the cause of Freedom? The Christian devotee asks himself: "What can I this day do for Christ?" Let us ask ourselves what we can daily do that shall tend towards Emancipation—Anarchy.

On every side we are confined, hampered, and galled by innumerable restrictions; checks of all kinds are imposed upon our every act, our every expression; the artificial is everywhere present to compress, gag and curb the natural, to clip the wings that aspire to soar, and to prune into some fantastic shape the tree that seeks to spread widely and develop luxuriantly. The Law is present to bend our necks, Superstition is here to terrify us with its phantoms, Prejudice importunes us to listen to its promptings, while an unreasoning Public Opinion—sprung we know not whence, but paralysing us with the fear of what people will think of us, how will they treat us, and what will become of us—presses upon us like a suffocating atmosphere. A fawning courtier to every tyranny, an applauder of every injustice, and an insolent bully to every misfortune is this same Public Opinion.

It is in these conditions and at the same time *against* these conditions that we have to contend. What's to be done? We may and ought, within the limits of the possible, to refuse to allow ourselves to be fettered by any restrictions of whatever nature; that is to say, though we may often have to submit or give way to superior force, we must resist so far as is possible and whenever possible; we are not called upon to throw away our means of livelihood nor to place ourselves by any imprudent act at the mercy of our enemies; we may and often shall have to submit, but we need not pretend that we do so voluntarily, nor profess to recognise the right of others to coerce us. If we are slaves, let us at least be unwilling ones, for the willing slave is the most degraded of all, the slave in heart is the object of just contempt. We may often evade the Law, if not always in the letter at least in the spirit, without danger to ourselves—let us then do so. We may treat Superstition with contempt and Prejudice with indifference—let us do so. We may in many ways ignore Public Opinion and take our stand upon common sense; we may assist or at least encourage with our sympathy those who refuse submission to authority, and we may honor all those who make personal sacrifices for the purpose of breaking down among the masses that apathy and that cowardly fear which alone give authority and law a firm basis. When we hear of an illegal act performed out of love for liberty, let us not be afraid to say: "Well done!" even though we ourselves may not be prepared at the moment to follow the example. When we see others pay a base respect to the position of an individual, let us not hesitate to say: "Position is nothing; a man can be no more than a man."

By thus persistently working for Freedom we shall awaken others to the hollowness of the shams which still awe the masses, we shall modify public opinion or at least divide it, our boldness will weaken the force of prejudice and our hostility to Law will create imitators who will vie with and even outstrip our zeal; in this way the administration of the law will be impeded and the machine itself become clogged and continually less efficient, for like all institutions its working depends upon the willing co-operation of the people at large, and with the withdrawal of that goodwill its action is progressively weakened until it comes to a

standstill. Each one of us steadily and persistently contributing his efforts to dilapidate and undermine the odious fabric of existing society with its proud towers and melancholy dungeons, we shall be preparing in the most effectual manner possible for that General Strike against Wage-work, War, Rent, Taxes and Servitude which will be the Social Revolution.

HENRY GLASSE.

THE MORAL OF DEWSBURY.

Social Democracy has had another trial of strength—political strength—at Dewsbury and has been thrown. To us, and for the matter of that to every man, woman and child in Dewsbury, it would have made not one iota of difference, as Jack Williams would say, whether Quelch beat Runciman or Runciman beat Quelch. The latter happened to be the result, and the difference is felt by Quelch and by nobody else. Always excepting those optimistic and long-suffering persons who work and subscribe for the forlorn hopes of political Social Democracy. These unfortunates have not even the empty glory of a "victory" to comfort themselves with. And how many they number may be seen by the long lists of names published in *Justice* of those whose donations are given to meet the expenses of the election. How much good Socialist literature could have been printed and circulated, or how much good work could have been compassed in other ways we leave our friends of the S.D.F. to estimate. As it is, the money might as well have been thrown in the sea. For the Social Democrats need not delude themselves that they have accomplished any real educational work by their campaign in Dewsbury. Neither would they be wise to suppose that the 1,597 votes cast for Quelch imply that 1,597 Socialists voted. The fallacy of this supposition has been pointed out again and again with regard to the political victories of the Social Democrats in Germany. Many of these voters are Radical and Democratic without being Socialist in the mildest sense of the word.

But however that may be, the fact remains that if Quelch had been returned there would simply have been another deadhead in the House of Commons. Nothing would or could have resulted from it beneficial to Dewsbury or anywhere else. Does he imagine he could voice the wrongs of the people *there*? Balfour and Chamberlain and the Speaker would have seen to that. And, if he spoke, what papers would report him fairly? All this is from the point of view of political action being effective, and quite independent of the fact that we as Anarchists object just as much to being ruled by Quelch, Hyndman, Burns or Hardie as we do by Balfour or Bannerman.

But there is even another point of view which shows how disastrous is the policy of Socialists having any part in parliamentary elections. That is the disheartening—and, we will say, demoralising—effect upon the people of the quarrels and splits which occur so frequently in the Socialist party itself when elections are taking place. The Dewsbury election has borne its evil fruit in this respect, and we ask any fair-minded friend of the Socialist cause if he can read Quelch in *Justice* or Hardie in the *Labor Leader* on that subject without feeling that, whatever has been gained in votes, the effect on the *morale* of the movement is deplorable. The battle of Codlin and Short crops up again with all its meanness and stupidity; and we hear of Quelch being "foisted" on the constituency, while he complains of "the malignant and unwarranted, although futile, opposition of a few men like Hardie." There is little here surely to inspire the workers to make sacrifices for the cause!

It is like a breath of fresh air to turn to another column of *Justice* and read Hyndman pounding the capitalist system with all its ugliness and degradation, and insisting "how the economic side of what we teach must inevitably lead on the physical, mental, moral, social, artistic transformation of the entire community. To talk of anything but complete revolution amid such conditions is a mere trifling with the subject." How true! But how often it needs repeating, when we see people wasting paper, money, time and energy on elections! It was these ideas that aroused enthusiasm in the early days of the Federation and it is to these ideas they must return if they really wish to overthrow the capitalist system. When supporters of Parliament are themselves in despair at its rottenness, we must all feel that a clear call for a return to revolutionary propaganda is the one great thing needed at the present moment.

Is it not true that, besides "Labor Members," Burns and Hardie are in Parliament to voice what each conceives to be in the best interest of of their conception of Socialism? Is it not evident they lack even the opportunity for this? And is it not in the parks and in the halls they return again to stir the minds of the people? Was Burns' "Straight Tip to the Workers" delivered in Parliament? No; nor will any other Socialist ever preach Socialism to the people through that medium.

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NOTES.

HOW THE RICH LIVE.

The sordid squabbles of the well-to-do that are "settled" in the legal courts are scarcely less edifying though perhaps more instructive than the squabbles that are settled in the courts of the slums. In the latter case the "settlements" no doubt are more satisfactory to all concerned, and neither party has any cause to complain of the law's delay.

Recently a rich married woman—a "millionaire's daughter," as she boasted, but let her name be forgotten—quarrelled with her mother over some money matters and went to law. The hearing of the case threw some sidelights on how the rich live. For this poor soul, it appears, had only £4,000 a year to exist upon; and, as she told the court, being the daughter of a millionaire she could not make both ends meet on this paltry income. Now the wretched slaves of workers who think it so necessary to have rich folk "to make it good for trade" should note the case of this poor woman who couldn't live on £80 per week.

This £80, it is true, would pay the wages of 80 families according to the returns of the incomes of a large proportion of the working class. But those "backless, boneless creatures," as Dan Chatteerton would say, who cannot work out for themselves a simple problem in economics, and who think it a far greater privilege to support some idle, useless woman in all her wanton whims and fancies than to spend five minutes in thinking over the injustice and hardship that degrades and decimates their own class—they, we imagine, will see no moral in all this, and are probably even now chuckling over the prospect of a fine burst of trade through the thousands that will be spent on the coronation. Truly the English are a long-headed race!

TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE.

We need not apologise for harping so much on the "Dewsbury fight," as it is called. It is the burning question of the moment for all Socialists, and for the Anarchists, who feel convinced of the disastrous effect on the future of Socialism should the various organisations combine in one political party; it is an object lesson that shows how true our conviction is likely to prove. We therefore give the following quotations, which are taken, strange as it may seem, from the advocates of political action, and ask what the poor bewildered worker whose vote is "solicited" is likely to make of it all, what principles of Socialism will be made plain to him by all these cross purposes. Cuninghame-Graham writes in the *Clarion* as follows:

"The life of a real Socialist member of Parliament would not in my opinion be a life to be envied. If the man has any megrims in his head about being a statesman, and getting laws put on the Statute book, he is clearly a megalomaniac, and his place is not in Parliament.

"Socialists for years to come will be able to do nothing in Parliament but make themselves objectionable. They can help to discredit Parliament, and in so doing would be furthering the cause of Socialism; for Parliament, constituted as it is at present, is the greatest enemy of the people (after the so-called 'free Press') that exists in England."

In "Echoes of the Week" in the same paper we read:

"The delegation of responsibility and of executive power is to be avoided wherever possible. Nothing should be left to delegates that may be done by the employer;.....

"For they [the delegates] are the most pernicious parasites that cling most readily and tenaciously to office—the Uriah Heeps of politics—canting, crawling, grovelling, snivelling, snuffing, and lying for preferment—the posing Pecksniffs (at a price) with a passion for pelf, place, and power—the Machiavellian plenipotentiaries of every craft save statecraft; astute adventurers with pumpkin heads and vermicelli legs, omnipotent in pretence and impotent in practice; the crackpot Cromwells with aristocratic airs, unspirited h's, and corduroy breeches; the blatant, bumptious, bungling Bismarcks with a capital "M" and a double "s"; the haloed, halloing, drum-and-fife Jesuses with a crucified expression and an unlimited genius for self-advertisement—these are the

cankers that democratic sloth and representative licence too much tend to run to."

The *New Age* advises us that

"..... if it had been possible for a strong Radical anti-Imperialist to take the field, the support of the S.D.F. and the I.L.P. might well have been looked for. Such a man would have had the Irish vote, and would have polled a very much larger Radical vote than Mr. Quelch did, and if he had not won the seat he would at least have taught the Liberal Imperialists a lesson.... If workingmen would take a really serious view of politics, and put aside a few pence every week, to be devoted to an annual subscription to a political organisation such as really voiced their sentiments, they would very quickly revolutionise the House of Commons. The Democratic Penny, intelligently used, would be found to be vastly more powerful than the Plutocratic Pound. That is the moral of Dewsbury. But there is yet another lesson to be learned from the contest. It is that the mere exploitation of an opportunity by a particular section of advanced political thinkers is not an unmixed good."

Keir Hardie in the *Labor Leader* thinks that

"Never in the history of the labor movement was a chance of winning a seat so wantonly thrown away as this was by Mr. Quelch and his friends. It is no exaggeration to say that had they kept faith with the Trade Unionists and the I.L.P., Harry Quelch might to-night have been member for Dewsbury."

And finally H. Quelch harmonises the whole matter by telling us in *Justice* that he does not know

"of any election which has awakened greater interest than this of Dewsbury; certainly there has been none which has evoked more spontaneous an outburst of approval from Socialists generally."

We fear the workingman will not discern the dawn of his emancipation in all this Babel of counsel.

PROUDHON'S MUTUALISM and ANARCHISM.

Notwithstanding the fatal influence of the dialectic metaphysics of Hegel, Proudhon has been able to develop all the ideas which were already expressed in his first memoir on property. We have in view not only his famous and at once striking and courageous aphorisms, such as:

"Slavery is assassination,"
"Property is theft,"
"God is the evil,"

but also the claims which, though not his exclusively, were however formulated and developed for the first time by him in his works, and which may be reduced to the following three fundamental principles of the whole philosophy of Proudhon:

1. Economic, social liberty of the individual, which he expresses well by saying: "Man protests against being organised and treated as a tool." If we remember the events of these last forty years, be they manifestations, struggles for communal liberty or acts of individual revolt; or, finally, the emancipating tendency in philosophy (W. Wundt, H. Spencer, J. S. Mill, Guyau and others); in literature, poetry, drama, fiction (W. Whitman, Ibsen, Mackay, Hauptmann, Tolstoi and Zola in late years), it will be recognised how correct Proudhon was in affirming this truth.*

In reality, humanity by its best representatives is always aspiring towards a social order where man will be free, not "organised" by authoritative prescriptions given in the name of some stupid fictions known as God, or State, or Majority.

As quoted by Proudhon, J. J. Rousseau said: "It is against natural order that the smallest number should be governed by the largest."†

2. The second principle defended by Proudhon in opposition to the more or less authoritative systems which were in vogue before the sanguinary days of June, 1848, is mutualism in production and exchange. According to Proudhon, his *Workers Associations*, free organisations of absolutely free men, had to replace the future organisation of authoritarian Communism as well as the slavery of the capitalist wage-system. It is just for his opposition to the authoritarian Communism of a Socialist State, for his assertion of the right of each member of these freely organised groups of workers to dispose freely of the products of his labor, that Proudhon was treated as bourgeois and individualist. Is it necessary to say that it was a misunderstanding?

At the time that he was engaged in his polemics, often unjust, against the Communists and revolutionary Socialists, he could have been reproached, it is true, that he preached simply individualist co-operation. But the serious political events of the period, the sanguinary struggle for the social reforms of that time are far from us at present, and we can judge better than the two opposing parties—both sincerely Socialist and certainly both ardent defenders of the people.

What did Proudhon understand by Mutualism? Neither more nor less than the collectivism adopted in 1868 by the great International Workingmen's Association.‡

"In face of the persons and families whose work forms the object of the association, the society (of free producers) has as rules:

"That each individual employed in the association, man, woman, child, head of an office, foreman, worker, apprentice, has an undivided right on the society.

"That he has the right to successively fill all its functions, all its grades, according to fitness of sex, talent seniority;

"That his education, his instruction and his apprenticeship must consequently be so arranged as to enable him to properly bear his share of repugnant and difficult duties, to follow a course of technical work and instruction, and be assured at the period of maturity of an encyclopedian fitness and a sufficient income;

"That the functions are elective and the rules submitted to be adopted by the members;

"That the salary is proportioned to the nature of the function, to the importance of the talent, to the extent of the responsibility;

"That each member participates in the benefits as well as in the charges of the society in proportion to his services;

"That everyone is free to leave the association at his own will, consequently to demand his account and liquidate his rights, and reciprocally the society is always at liberty to accept new members.

"These general ideas... furnish the solution of two important problems of social economy: that of the collective force and that of division of labor."§

It is obvious that Proudhon is far enough from the individualists of our days. Not only does he recognise a pact, a social contract between free associates, but he recognises also collective education, elections for offices, work, even all difficult tasks, always collective. Concerning the accusations of parliamentarian Collectivists, I believe that the majority do not know by whom the Collectivist idea was formulated. Whilst the ambitious and the aspirants for power in a Collectivist State calumniate Proudhon in order to draw from him the attention and sympathy of the proletariat so that the latter should not see that the real Collectivism has been conceived outside of any bureaucratic and authoritarian regulations, Proudhon, borrowing the idea of Collectivity from the Saint Simonists, like Fourier took all measures to guarantee the complete liberty of each member. The aspirants for power do their utmost to prevent the masses from seeing that the system of *phalansteres* of Fournier, the Communism of Robert Owen or the Collectivism of Proudhon had to come into realisation as a true Socialist organisation by society itself by the suppression of the State and its officials, including future legislators and administrators of Collectivism.

In his ideas on social organisation as well as in others, Proudhon differs absolutely from the legendary individualist. Far from denying organisation altogether, he wished to substitute for the State an autonomous society, for political organisation economic organisation, for central administration "Workers' Associations" federated on an Anarchist basis or, according to his own expression, on the principle of "self-government." The sixth and seventh parts of his constructive work, *General Idea*, etc., bear the titles: "Organisation of economic forces" and "Dissolution of the government in an economic organisation." (To be concluded.)

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY and ANARCHISM.

In *Justice* for Feb. 8th, D. B. M. contributes an article "Some Words in defence of Fichte and Lassalle," being a reply to Geoffrey Langtofts' article in the *Fortnightly Review* on "Assassination a Fruit of Socialism." Social Democrats of all schools naturally resent the imputation implied in the title, though there is as much sense in it as if it had been worded "Assassination a Fruit of Anarchism." The most correct title would have been "Assassination a Fruit of Social Conditions"; but then Mr. Langtofts' article would have had to have been re-written by the light of truth and common sense, and that would not have answered his purpose.

D. B. M. is quite right in saying that Anarchists and Socialists are not identical in their teachings and programmes, but is not correct in saying we should disclaim any affinity in methods and programme with Socialism. On the contrary, we affirm with perfect truth that Anarchism is Socialism *without government*; Social Democracy when it is not advanced Radicalism is simply a mitigated wage-system under State control.

Of course, many Social Democrats look to Communism as the ultimate outcome of an economic revolution. But when they preach this they have to leave Social Democracy behind—its State organisations would never fit the free and healthy life of the Commune.

D. B. M., in defending Fichte from the charge of having advocated Anarchism, is really over zealous. No doubt Fichte, like many Socialists, regarded Anarchism as an ideal condition which might be realised in a far distant future—so, at least he implies when he says "there will come a point when all relations of the State will become superfluous." But there is no occasion for D. B. M. to confuse and pervert the true meaning of Anarchism; to make the ridiculous assumption that the crimes of the State are forms of Anarchy; to assert that the millionaire and the pauper are the makers of Anarchy, when she knows full well they are the children of the wage-system and monopoly. All this comes of that slavish adherence to the Marxian view that all things are *anathema* that do not fit the one and only creed of political and economic evolution.

* Prof. W. Wundt, "Relation of Philosophy, etc." 1889. J. S. Mill "On Liberty." M. Guyau "La Morale sans sanction ni obligation." Tolstoy and Ibsen, Hauptmann and Mackay are well known for their glorification of the individual and of liberty in morality and politics.

† "L'Idée générale de la Révolution 1851," page 280.

‡ By a strange misunderstanding Collectivism is often attributed to Marx, who was and remained all his life purely Communist.

§ "L'Idée générale de la Révolution," page 256-257.

"A SPONTANEOUS TRIBUTE.

How describe him? 'Midst a million he were easily discerned;
You shall know him by the orchid in the coat that he has turned.
You shall know him by the feather in the cap that he has doffed
Unto all the brazen deities at whom of old he scoffed;
By the grace of his allusions to the sponge that was outwung,
Or the spoon that seems allied to something forkish in his tongue;
By the charm of that urbanity our German kin recall;
By those suave and noble manners he has taught the grateful Gaul.
Seer and sage, there is none like him, Britain's, Brummagem's High
Priest;
Peel and Fox and Burke and Chatham were not like him in the least.
Spare him, Fate, to light and lead us and fresh flowers of speech to cull,
And the annals of the nation he adorns shall not be dull.

WILLIAM WATSON."

[The above poem appeared in the *Daily News* of February 6th. It deserves to be reprinted in every journal that desires to awaken the people to the truth about its Brummagem idol.]

PETTY TYRANNY OF THE STATE.

We have always contended that all men, however good, will always exercise the power placed in their hands in the way that pleases them best; and the methods of the Postal officials in the two "freest countries in the world" are a striking example of this.

In the United States, Anthony Comstock, the chosen one of the good Christians of that Republic, who has the moral superintendence of what is sent through the mails, says in a letter addressed to the Hon. C. L. Merriam M.C., dated Brooklyn, N.Y., January 18, 1873: "There were four publishers on the 2nd of March last; to day three of these are in their graves, and it is charged by their friends that I worried them to death. Be that as it may, I am sure that the world is better off without them."

In this same spirit of Christian love he managed to kill off the fourth, and has now dropped on *Discontent*, a paper published by our comrades at Home, Washington; and, in order to conceal the outrageous nature of the prosecution, the indictment contains the following plea: That the incriminating articles were "so grossly obscene, lewd and lascivious, that the same would be offensive to the court and unfit and improper to be placed on the records thereof."

After the act of Czolgosz, *Free Society* was suppressed by the arrest of the whole staff; but immediately on their release they restarted the paper. The postal authorities, however, for three weeks refused to allow them to use the mails at all.

Now that the trial of our comrades of *Discontent* was drawing close, in order to prevent them from laying the facts of the case before the public, the P. O. received the paper as it was posted weekly and quietly sequestered it without notice or reason given. On this coming to the knowledge of the publishers they made a vigorous protest, and the paper was released and sent on.

In this country, besides displaying quite as much Christian love as their American cousins, the postal authorities rip open all letters containing cards or valentines addressed to comrades and delivers them open with or without contents. I have remarked to them that although brute force and monopoly enable them to do this in spite of me, they might resecure them. I receive a reply to the effect that my mail has "evidently been delivered with all proper care."

We cannot perceive that Social Democrats or other governmental monopolists would be different in office.

T. C.

P.S.—The *Discontent* trial takes place this month, and as the expense of defence is great and money always scarce among Anarchists, comrades and sympathisers with Free Press should even now send contributions to the treasurer, O. A. Verity, at Home, Wash., U.S.A.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

[The following remarks taken from a letter addressed to a comrade by a Spanish worker, may interest our readers.]

Upon my arrival in England the previous conception I had entertained of the English workingman and his economic situation was somewhat rudely dispelled. I had imagined him to be rather enlightened, and his position, if not one of relative ease, at least to harmonise in some degree with the life of a worker. My eyes have been opened since working in England. In the district where I have lived, the workingmen appear especially to lack education, and their apathy while living under the worst conditions possible has led me to examine into their intellectual condition. If misery is supposed to produce Anarchists, these workers should be Anarchists; yet amongst these people there is not a trace of Anarchism. If to be an Anarchist a certain intellectual capacity is requisite, the English worker who is not one can have but little of that capacity. What I do know is that the workers defend many things that are entirely against their interests—such as nationality, religion, the principles of authority and private property. I did not come to this country to seek fortune or happiness, but partly to familiarise myself with the language whilst earning my daily bread.

