

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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FOUNDATION AND SUPERSTRUCTURE.

At last the scales are beginning to fall from the eyes of the workers, and the tide of Imperialism and Reaction—synonymous terms in reality—has touched high-water mark. Now the organised workers, as well as others, after their shortsighted, selfish, and—it must be said—brutal indifference to the rights of others, find their own position so insidiously undermined that instead of making progress against the forces of capitalism, they find all their energy directed to the recovery of lost ground.

What is the position of Trade Unionism at the present moment? Simply this, that the capitalist, like any highwayman, is holding a pistol to its head and demanding its purse. And this is being done, not with a show of force which our continental brethren would have to face. In "liberty-loving England" the ruling classes do not proceed in this fashion. They are far too cunning and play the game to the tune that suits the national temperament. They have at their command an instrument of which the British workingman is vastly proud, and notwithstanding the innumerable times it has betrayed him, a thing he is constantly invoking to aid him in his struggles—the machinery of the law.

Many a time and oft have we Anarchists been called "dreamy revolutionists" or even denounced as enemies of the people because we have attacked law and authority in all its forms. If at the present moment the trade unionists would look a little further ahead than their noses they would realize the truth of all we have said and they would recognise that there is more salvation in a general strike than in parliamentary committees.

With the co-operators, who have also recently held their annual Congress, the case is somewhat different. They are on firmer ground because their work is almost entirely confined to the economic struggle; and although lordly exploiters and rich nobodies patronise them exceedingly, they cannot circumvent them to anything like the same extent as the employers are able to do with the unions. Nevertheless, they find themselves fighting again a battle they thought had been won. Who would have prophesied fifteen years ago that today they would again be doing battle for free, unsectarian education? The pack of wolves that is in power today has brought infamy and disgrace upon us abroad, and retrogression and misery at home; but they have been aided and abetted by the narrow-mindedness and stupidity of that section of the people which has opposed revolutionary Socialism with the parrot-cries of "law and order," and while trade was good took no thought for the morrow but joined in the hue and cry of unctuous middle-class respectability against the doctrines of Socialists and Anarchists. As a result the unions went to sleep, the co-operators dozed over their five per cent dividends, and the government made war for the conquest of new markets.

Such selfishness and apathy gave *carte blanche* to the Chamberlainism that is now attacking all that was best in English advanced movements.

But now that there are signs of the slow awakening of the masses, what is to be done in the future? We reply, that unless a vigorous propaganda by all Socialists, attacking the very foundations of the present system, be undertaken, this country will be doomed for another generation to fight for nothing else but the recovery of lost ground. The preaching of palliatives and stepping-stones is not work for Socialists. A Socialist society cannot be built on a capitalist foundation; and however much good work may be done by Radicals, Progressives, Co-operators, and the like, it is for the Socialist as well as the Anarchists to preach now and always those pure revolutionary principles that make no compromise with any injustice, but work and wait for the overthrow of this infamous system of exploitation which destroys whole nations for the sake of profit, and makes our so-called civilisation a mockery for nine-tenths of mankind.

This fear of attacking the root-evil of things—this hope of building a fair superstructure on a rotten foundation—is what is deceiving the mass of the workers today. The trade unionist is for legal methods; he thinks the law will help him; he trusts it; and now it has him by the throat. Now he thinks politicians will amend it for him, or make new laws in his behalf. He forgets that it is the *interpretation* of these laws that ruins him and that the *interpreters are his masters*. Let him ponder over the working of the Employers' Liability Act passed especially in his interest. No; to understand his true position the worker must be an Anarchist, end all legal forms, and in their place substitute free agreements when wage-slavery is ended.

So, too, with the co-operators; who, whilst striving to work an excellent principle on a capitalist basis, find their societies honeycombed with all the vices and corruptions of the very system they are organised to combat.

There is no hope to end war; there is no hope to attain justice, freedom, well-being, the solidarity of races, till the great principles we strive for become the foundation of a truly human society.

FROM A UNITED STATES' PRISON.

MACQUEEN'S LETTER.

Briefly putting it, the present case stands thus: There were extensive labor troubles in Paterson which, owing to the ignorance and apathy of the leaders, seemed likely to fail. The local comrades who run *La Question Sociale* determined to take the matter up and advocate a general strike. To this end a number of enthusiastic meetings were held, addressed by Galleani, Grossmann and myself, the success of which so encouraged the comrades that they determined to set aside a part of the paper for the English propaganda, and invited me to come over and take charge with the idea of starting an English supplement every week after the strike. This was and may still be possible; for the strikers are all with us. Well, our organisation went on well, meeting after meeting declared for the general strike, and we made the leaders toe the line. One day was fixed for the strike, and over 8,000 people assembled in a park near Paterson to declare it, and then march peaceably on the mills and close every one up. The meeting over, we marched; and everywhere the workers enthusiastically joined us. But out came the police, and they shot, and found that for every shot on their part they got a dozen back. In a short while it was hell! The mills were smashed, and for five hours we had possession of the town. Many people were shot, some seriously, others slightly. I was shot in the leg and another comrade in the mouth. The police were then armed with shotguns, and of course won. But it was too late; all Paterson mills were on strike. The general strike was an accomplished fact.

The militia came, about 40 men and women were arrested, and warrants issued for three of us. Grossmann and I were arrested in New York, and, at the time of writing, he is awaiting extradition while I am under £1,000 bail to appear in October to answer the charge of inciting to riot and shooting liege subjects of the United States. Bail is very hard to get in such a large sum, and I may have to stay here three months without trial, with the moral certainty of two or three years to follow. As for Grossmann, I think he can get off; he was not here on the day of the riot and can prove an alibi.

But they haven't killed the propaganda. Every day comes out a fresh manifesto from us, many of them written out of jail—and they don't half like it. *La Question Sociale* still appears in spite of their attempts to stop it. In fact, summing it all up, recent events have done the Paterson and New Jersey movement a tremendous lot of good.

[Bail in \$5,000 has since been procured and MacQueen is now at liberty till the trial comes on.]

A DANGEROUS FALLACY.

The decision of the Italian Socialists at the Imola congress to adopt political methods for the attainment of Socialism has brought forth the usual stale and unprofitable arguments of these political reformers who call themselves Socialists as to the advantage of the ballot-box over the barricade. *The New Age*, for instance, foolishly taking the word "revolutionary" as indicating violence and bloodshed, says that quick-firing guns have rendered barricades impossible and that they will "in the future give place to the more certain because more sane policy" of the reformist. All this implies a total misconception of the situation. It ought not to be necessary to remind the *New Age* that Socialism—not "reform", but true SOCIALISM—implies a revolution, not necessarily of violence and bloodshed, but essentially of thought and action. On the other hand, mere political reform may cost a community more lives, more human suffering than the overthrow of a rotten economic system. Another point, totally ignored by the reformers, is the fact that these very "reformers" themselves become the users of those quick-firing guns against the people when they find themselves in power. It is sufficient to mention only Millerand's responsibility in the French government. Finally, it must be clear to all unprejudiced persons that the quick-firing guns are waiting just as patiently for the "reformer" who gives trouble as for the most militant Anarchist. With this difference, however, that the Anarchist is most likely to bring the fire down on himself; and the reformer, more probably, will bring it on the people whilst he remains safely in the background. Absurd, you say? Not at all. Recently the "reformers" tried their peaceful methods with the Belgian government. What happened? Many of the unfortunate people were killed or wounded. But Van der Velde we believe is still living comfortably in the land of plenty.

When reflecting upon the power of money it should be remembered that, after all, it cannot be eaten. The producers of food, clothing and shelter constitute the power that dominates in the last event.—*Coast Seamen's Journal*.

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NOTES.

LIFE IN JOHANNESBURG.

It is unfortunately true that some of the English women were the worst offenders during the war-fever in their cries of vengeance against the Boers. Whether any of them have ventured to emigrate to the Transvaal now that the Union Jack flies there, we cannot tell; but at any rate there are some women in Johannesburg who must be disillusioned by this time. Indeed, according to a report in the *Daily News* there is a section of women workers there that one would only expect to find among the advanced women let us say of an American city. Speaking of the conditions and regulations in force with respect to women, one of them remarked:

"Are we children? Are we undergraduates trying to break college regulations and escape censure? We are a body of women earning our living independently of men. We teach, we type, we earn our wherewithal honestly. Why should we not be allowed to live freely and unrestrictedly, with no stringent regulations to hamper social intercourse? All we ask is housing accommodation. A woman's reputation rests with her alone. If she is respectable she will guard 'les convenances'; if she misuses her title-deed to a respectable home it is neither difficult nor very dreadful to make complaints to the landlord. Surely this is enough. If women can stand alone in the world they don't want twenty women over their heads to enforce the Ten Commandments. We do not ask a charitable institution. We pay as men do. But we want a roof."

After this we can only say we should like to hear their opinions on the "regulations" in the concentration camps.

THE STATE AS EMPLOYER.

The bitter cry of the post-office employees is once more raised against the State as an employer. Mr. Garland in his address to the Congress of Postal Servants observed: "The Post Office of today was frequently referred to in terms of praise as the crowning example of State Socialism. All round them they saw a movement directed towards the nationalisation of many industries and the municipalisation of others, and the Post Office was pointed to as a practical example of the benefits from such a course. It would be well, however, for both public and workers to examine and put right the principles and methods underlying the Postal administration before they hurried to place under the same management other industries and other workers."

So we have always said; and perhaps we may be permitted to advise 'both workers and public' to read Kropotkin's pamphlet "The State: its Historic Role." However, it is not difficult to discover the "principles and methods" on which all State-organised industries are run. They are simply these: Slavery in its worst form; sweating in its worst form; and, above all, officialism in its worst form. Result: expense, corruption, disorganisation (or, in other words, lack of adaptability to required ends) and a crushing down of all progressive forces in the community.

We are quite aware that State Socialists tell us all this is going to be quite different when they run the machine. They are grievously mistaken. They will have to do these things if they use this machinery because it was constructed for this work, and no other. We don't think they will have the opportunity of trying their hand, as we believe that the capitalist will manage somehow to hold on to it till he is finally overthrown and expropriated. But however that may be, it behoves the people and the workers, as Mr. Garland said, to examine these things and find better methods—of organising these industries before selling themselves body and soul to the State.

TO FRIENDS AND SUBSCRIBERS.

We find it impossible with our present resources to continue to print *Freedom* with a four-page supplement. At such times as these when all advanced movements suffer from the reaction it is to be expected that Anarchist publications would have their struggle intensified. We, however, shall keep on to the best of our ability, and *Freedom* will be published as regularly as the support we receive will permit us to appear. We can only ask comrades and friends to aid us as best they can to carry on our work, which is all the more necessary because the tide is against us.

A SUGGESTION.

The great obstacle which confronts Anarchism in England lies in the so-called "practical" disposition of the people. The term "practical" is

used in this connection to denote a disinclination to concern oneself with anything beyond details which directly fall under the cognizance of the senses.

The average Englishman is as a rule contented with a modicum of creature comforts and such recreation as is afforded by "sport," music-hall militarism, and gaudy public functions. He certainly expresses discontent when the first of these is deficient, yet loudly as he may grumble he has a rooted repugnance to looking under the surface of things or reasoning upon the causes which operate to his detriment with a view to their removal.

It is probable that this practical disposition or, as it may be more correctly termed, shortsighted indolence, will continue to be a serious check to the diffusion of Anarchism in England during the period of preparation and educational propagandism, and that we need not hope to see any revolutionary change at home until such has been to some extent effected abroad, in which case the accomplished fact will have an effect upon the masses of our countrymen far surpassing any other imaginable means of enlightenment.

From the foregoing considerations I conclude that, instead of growing discouraged at the want of that wider local success for which we may have hoped, we should endeavour to win over to our organisation as many as possible of those exceptional persons who are to be found in all classes of society—persons who have not only a heart to feel, but also an intelligence which does not begrudge the labour of thinking—and putting ourselves in closer relationship with the revolutionary forces—Russian, French, Spanish and Italian—which to so large an extent make London a base of operations, give them much-needed aid and encouragement.

Our party is before all and above all other parties an international one, and it behoves us to keep well before our minds the fact that whatsoever is done for Anarchism in whatsoever land is done for us and in furtherance of our hopes and of our aspirations. HENRY GLASSE.

THE LAW'S FOLLY.

A man was condemned yesterday to a year's imprisonment.

His crime? Oh, a very simple one:—He had no money; was out of work; was homeless.

It is, then, a crime to be without money? No. To be out of work? No. To be homeless? No.

How then?

This: From those three facts, non-punishable in themselves, Society has constituted an entity it names Vagabondage or Vagrancy. And Vagabondage is an offence! Vagabondage—composed of three non-offences—is punishable! Such is the marvellous, stupefying decision of jurists!

How would they explain their decision? Thus: that a man without a home, work, or money, might be tempted to procure all three by pernicious means.

That is to say, that Society, ever prudent, punishes offences which are not yet committed, which possibly may never be committed. It manufactures crime-lymph; by what vehicle?—the prison!

For example:

A man has been arrested for the first time because he has neither money, work, nor home. He is sentenced (leniently) to one week's imprisonment.

But it is hardly possible that during his eight days captivity he can procure a home, work, or money.

Liberated, he wanders away. A policeman noting his miserable appearance, questions him.

No money, no work, no home. Therefore a vagrant. Worse still—has just left prison. Therefore dangerous.

An old offender he is again dragged before the magistrate, who this time inflicts a sentence of three month's imprisonment, during which period it still remains impossible for him to procure either money, work, or domicile.

Once more liberated, he meets yet another policeman, who perceiving that he is homeless, and without money or work, escorts him to the station.

Then some sententious magistrate says to this man, bewildered by the stupidity and ferocity of social laws:

"You are incorrigible. One year's hard labor."

Can one wonder if on quitting jail this vagrant should reason: Since I am being continually convicted while innocent of committing any offence, it will be better to enter on a life of crime, for that will not cost me dearer and may bring me the means of livelihood.—*Le Radical*.

LIBERTARIAN LITERATURE:

We have received the following papers and pamphlets:

El Corsario, published at Valencia, Spain (Lepanto 16, 4°), in place of *La Humanidad Libre*.

El Porta Voz, Review published at Buenos Aires, Sarandi 639.

Michal Bakunin, V. Dave's pamphlet translated into Czech language, edited by *Novy Kult*, 45 Praha-Olsany.

Der Generalstreik, by S. Nacht, published by "International Society for printing Sociological works," 33 Gresse Street, London, W.

El Trabajo, new weekly published by Society of the *Maison du Peuple* at Buenos Aires, Charcas 1,149.

Pure Economy, pamphlet on Productive, Unproductive, and Destructive Labor, by J. H. Rowell; published by the Free Socialist Union, Austin, Illinois.

New Book of Kings, by Morrison Davidson, published by F. R. Henderson, 26 Paternoster Square, E.C.; cloth 2s., paper 1s.

La Comédie Italienne en France et le Théâtre de la Foire, by N. M. Bernadin. Schleicher frères, Paris, 2fr.50.

This is the first volume of the Illustrated Theatrical Library, edited by M. Paul Ginisty. Its author, *lauréat* of the French Academy, gives a graphic and entertaining account of the settlement in France of Italian comedy from 1570 to 1791, and its influence upon the French school. From the forgotten and mutilated works of the writers of that period M. Bernadin has distilled much of the essence of early Italian comedy, and shown in conjunction with the travelling shows of the fair and boulevard how strongly it affected the national theatre. Liberty in the drama is as essential as liberty to the individual, and the travelling companies who roamed about France showed up the foibles of their age with pitiless accuracy if with a grossness that led to frequent unpleasantness from the powers that be. The Italian, however, is a born humourist, and his travesties of manners and morals in all ages have influenced other than French dramatists. The stage, when not given over to mere buffoonery and sensationalism, can be the means of rapping in splendid lessons to humanity and governments. Humanity ponders over them; but governments, when hit, quail and suppress. Only lately, at the bidding of the Clerical party in Spain, young Alfonso refused to confer a decoration already offered to the author (Galdos) of the play *Electra*. Such cases are familiar. Church and State fear every dramatist who has the courage to hold them up to the ridicule and censure they so richly merit. So the liberty of the Stage, as liberty everywhere, has ever been more or less fettered.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

ITALY.—The *Grido della Folla* (Cry of the People), our new contemporary recently started in Milan, has so far travelled in stormy waters. The first numbers were suppressed, and when it continued to appear its editor and staff were suppressed, either by being arrested or kept out of the city. In spite of this *Il Grido* is not yet silenced, and we heartily wish more power to its voice. Justice is pretty well an unknown quantity in government circles anywhere, but determinedly so where Anarchists are concerned. A comrade was lately sentenced to a term of imprisonment in Rome through inability to pay a fine for a press offence. When the day came for his liberation he was detained in prison until the authorities could arrange for his removal to his birth-place, refusing to permit his return to Milan where he had his home and occupation. The comrades imprisoned at Ancona since 1900 for associating with Anarchists and editing the *Agitazione* of that day, have at length been freed, and we surmise are likely to add a good deal of pent-up energy to the movement. Peter Gori has been making an extended lecture tour in the country. At Genoa the Socialists were invited to meet him in debate, but as usual preferred silence. Still, they show more of a taste for action in Italy than elsewhere. Lately they provoked an election riot near Rome and were not dispersed till fired on, some two dozen on each side being more or less wounded. In Milan the child workers have shown some of the spirit of their fathers. The factory lads under 14 and the poor little girl messengers of the shops and dressmakers came out on strike recently. They work 10 to 14 hours a day for an average daily wage of threepence. They have been cajoled back to hard labor of course on a promise of a rise. At Lugarno an Italian countess, well known, so the story goes, in society, has been arrested for distributing pamphlets and preaching revolt among the workers. Would we had more such, for an earnest woman with a gift of oratory can pierce darknesses that men cannot reach. It is known there are women of "birth and breeding" nowadays everywhere to whom the idea of international brotherhood has become a conviction, who in the midst of their own peaceful happy homes note that the poor are oppressed, that justice and mercy are mere terms of convenience to their own and neighbouring governments. But it requires indomitable spirit and courage for a bourgeois woman to step out from her own rank and say openly and in the revolutionary sense: "From today I am with the people, for the people; I will work for them, speak for them, help them against their oppressors to the utmost!" Her own house rises at once against her; she is tabooed, ostracised, held up to the ridicule and scorn of her own little world—the little world on which till then she had lavished all that love and devotion so inseparable to true womanhood and which has never yet overleaped the bounds of home and custom but the community has been the better for it. But it requires courage to face contumely, misrepresentation, and family persecution, the covert sneer, the scoffing—"quite mad, poor soul; ought to be shut up!" All honor, therefore, to the women who dare and do, to those who with eyes fixed on what is right and just dare follow their convictions to the end, in spite of tradition, custom and position.

Four years of solitary imprisonment have already told on Luccheni. A report is current that he is slowly losing his reason. He has become subject to fits of moody irritation, in one of which lately he tried to throttle a warder. For this he was placed in the dark cell. We shall probably hear one day that he has been assisted to death like Bresci.

GERMANY.—A worker in Hamburg made some flippant remarks upon William the other day. Overheard by some wandering spy or keen constable, he was arraigned and sentenced to four months imprisonment, the jail being the very best school for teaching men to revere their rulers. William has aired his army and himself in Posen, in order to let the Prussian Poles know who is master. All Prussian Poland has been thrown into sullen discontent by the little despot's efforts to force his language and customs upon a conquered district.

His reception has been of the chilliest, and scores of spies and secret police went before to seek out any militant old woman with a rotten potato in her pocket. One Polish wag at least scored, if a tale going the round of the papers is true: the police at Prague received a post-card in German purporting to be an official request to have the same printed in the Police Gazette. This was done forthwith, and the sensation among the German-speaking authorities may be imagined when they read: "The Emperor William having just escaped from Count von Bulow's lunatic asylum, was last heard of at Marienburg, where he suffered from a flood of talkativeness against the Polish people. A warrant for his arrest should be promptly issued."

Comrade Weidner, of Friedrichshagen, has resuscitated *Der Arme Teufel*, the paper once identified with Reitzel in America. After his death there was more than one attempt to re-start the publication over there, but each failed in turn. We wish the new German edition good luck and a long life. But governments everywhere are trying to strangle every new-born or active effort to open the eyes of the sleeping. In Roumania P. Musoi has been editing the *Revista Ideei* for two years and circulating libertarian literature; an order has gone forth that all country parcels shall be seized in the post. Such literature is not to pass outside of Bucharest. Yet we have no doubt it will.

RUSSIA.—The traveller De Windt who has been making a journey to America overland from Paris during the past six months, states that when struggling through north-eastern Siberia he visited Kolymsk, a district to which politicals who have aroused the special ire of the Russian government are exiled. Their lot he describes as pitiable in the extreme. He was the first visitor the colony had seen for 30 years; there had been four suicides and three had gone mad in two years. It is a station quite outside the pale of humanity with a winter of ten months duration.

Revolutionary propaganda is still being carried on quietly among the troops, the officers winking or assisting. Well thumbed anti-military pamphlets are found in the soldiers' mattresses, the mouth of a cannon hid a thousand leaflets, an old priest when searched bristled with revolutionary papers which he had been distributing as tracts, in the pocket of a young officer on whom suspicion fell a scrap of paper was found on which lay the legend "Try to distribute at once. Your colonel." Punishment succeeds punishment; but the flood of literature flows on steadily. *Soldiers to their comrades*, ran the title of one document discovered, and the following phrase occurred: "It is 'by order of his Majesty' that all edicts are passed. It is the Tsar, therefore, who is responsible for all the outrages we suffer, for the death ever before us. *It will be for us to judge him.* We should defend, not the Tsar, but the people; not the rich, but the peasants and workers against the rich. Let us adhere to the cause of the people and cry with them: '*Down with the Tsar!*' Let him give us liberty or quit his throne. Let us conquer liberty for all. The power is ours if with one accord we refuse to fire on the people. The peasants and workers are with us, and we have bullets and bayonets in our hands."

[The above notes were written for August number, which we have been unable to print until now.]

MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN.

[A sketch of the French Penal Colony of New Caledonia, condensed from *In an unknown Prison Land*, by G. Griffiths. Continued.]

I once paid a visit to the worst part of the men's side at Broadmoor, but I don't think it was quite as bad as the long corridor which led through that gruesome home of madness. On either hand were heavy, black-painted, iron doors, and inside these a hinged grating through which the prisoner could be fed. The cells were about 9 feet by 6. They had neither furniture nor bedclothes in them—the bedclothes would have been torn up into strips for hanging or strangling purposes. Never did I see such a series of pitiful parodies of manhood as I saw when those cell doors were opened. Some were crouched down in the corners of their cells, others were walking up and down the narrow limits of their cells, staring with horribly vacant eyes at the roof or floor. One man was lying down scraping with bleeding fingers at the black asphalted floor under the impression that he was burrowing his way to freedom. But the most horrible sight I saw was a gaunt-faced, square-built man of middle height who got up out of a corner as his cell door opened, and stood in the middle facing us. He never moved muscle or winked an eye-lid. His eyes looked at us with the steady burning stare of hate and ferocity. His lips were drawn back from his teeth like the lips of an ape. he was simply the incarnation of savagery and despair. He had gone mad in the Black Cell.

At Bourail I was introduced to one of the most picturesque and interesting characters that I met in the colony. We pulled up at the top of a hill. On the right hand stood a rude cabin of mud and wattles thatched with palm leaves, and out of this came to greet us a strange, half-savage figure, long-haired, long-bearded, with mild and intelligent features and soft brown eyes. This was the Pole, Berezwski, who more than 30 years ago fired a couple of shots into the carriage in which Napoleon III. and Alexander II. were driving up the Champs Elysées.

Another of the convicts, a very intelligent Arab, told me with quiet pride, the story of his escape from New Caledonia 12 years before. He had got to Australia in an open boat, with a pair of oars, the branch of a tree for a mast and a shirt for a sail. He made his way to Europe, roamed the Mediterranean as a sailor for 9 years, and then at Marseilles he had made friends with a man who turned out to be a *mouchard*.

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