

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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1904.

The past year has but a dull and dismal record for those who are concerned for the future of humanity. The bitter fruit of Imperialism has come home to the masses with starvation at their doors. The curse of Chamberlainism is being realised amidst scenes of social misery which even a canting capitalist press cannot hide from us. All the evils that it was foreseen would result from the crushing of the liberties of a weaker nation have fallen on the shoulders of the selfish and short-sighted British workers. This is the saddest but most certain lesson of the year. Another fact, however, which impresses one almost as definitely, and which was clearly inevitable under the circumstances, is the formation of a distinct Labour Party, to be exploited as far as possible by Social Democrats, who hope to gain seats by this means, and to urge on petty reforms which properly speaking belong to the province of progressive Radicalism. From this it may be seen that an organised effort is to be made to throw the Socialist forces into political channels. All direct action by the workers themselves is to be eschewed and denounced, while a caucus of ambitious "leaders" and officials will probably select the candidates with the necessary due regard to their mediocrity of intellect and servility of character.

To such a pass has English Socialism arrived since the days when the red flag was waved for freedom, and the cheers for the Social Revolution meant the *real* economic emancipation of the people. And here the reflection is borne in upon us of the strange contradiction which can be traced in the English character in the method of its revolts and revolutions. Certainly no nation has spilled more blood in its internal convulsions and rebellions, and the object once achieved, no nation has shown such an anxiety to put the stamp of legality on its actions as the English,—a form of insanity which has opened the way to kings, priests, and politicians to undo or neutralise the good work of the rebels, and to impose fresh burdens on the people. To-day we see the same spirit manifested in the demand for more laws to feed children, to find employment, to shorten hours, to house the workers, and all the rest of it, made by those who, in the days gone by, never tired of telling us that nothing less than the socialisation of the means of production would benefit the workers.

Yet in spite of the false spirit shown by the "leaders" who have deserted their old ideals, the true spirit of revolt is not yet dead, and the past year has shown us some encouraging examples of this spirit, which in reality never dies. And fortunate indeed is it for us all that such is the case, for truly rebels are as the salt of the earth, and what they have won for us is the heritage that makes it possible for humanity to lift its head to-day.

The strike of the mill hands in Lancashire, of the telephone girls at Holborn, and of the tea packers at the Co-operative Wholesale at Leman Street are admirable examples of the best spirit to be found in the Labour movement. The unqualified success of the tea packers and telephonists was undoubtedly due to the spontaneous yet decided action of the girls. There was no hesitation, no wavering in the feelings of solidarity, but immediate and direct action. It may be argued that these were very small matters, and so indeed they were so far as mere numbers were concerned. But that only brings home the moral with more force; for these young people of the "weaker sex" were unorganised and inexperienced, and since we are told that only strong and wealthy unions can hope to win strikes, we think the lesson may well be learned by the workers that it is boldness and courage which win the day, and not the halting methods adopted by official red tape. With strikes it is as true as with anything else, that those who hesitate are lost.

The past year will be noticeable for the malignity of the capitalist attack on the unions, for the use of legal weapons has bumped the scales on the side of the employer. The funds of the unions have been endangered, and the field of battle has been changed from the factory to the law courts, where nine times out of ten the workers will be worsted, and the employers and lawyers will shake hands like the good friends they always are. The gravity of the situation has, however, aroused many to the importance of trade unionism as a force that will help to win the revolution when the day comes, and in England, as elsewhere, we may look forward to new and increased activities amongst the organised workers.

Little remains to be said of the dead year that can bring much cheer to the heart of the reformer, least of all to the Socialist and

Anarchist. The good news of the general strike in Italy and South America, the anti-political attitude of the French trade unions, and last but not least the news just to hand of the winning of the eight hours' day by the Colorado miners, after a brave and desperate fight with the soldiery of "Free America," all this is enough to give us hope for the future. But war still reigns in the East, and the overthrow of the Czar's despotism by the Russian people was not destined to brighten the year 1904.

We have to remember also that at home in the past year we have seen a growing form of despotism in the vile press that supports all reaction, and which probably is not equalled in any civilised country. The iniquity of its methods will have to be fought and crushed if we are not to sink lower than France under the third Napoleon. No wonder that in such an atmosphere we witness the wretched, hysterical religious outbreaks that we now see emasculating the people.

It is to the awakening of the masses that we must look for the overthrow of these monstrous and morbid growths of a decaying and outworn system. Let us all work for this end in the coming year, and spite of all give our cheers for the Social Revolution.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

The following sketch of Comrade McAra in the Meadows, Edinburgh, on a Sunday afternoon, will be read with interest:—

The personality of one particular "orator" seems to outrival all the others, for round him the greatest crowd is invariably attracted. He is a short, squat fellow, with a peculiarly square jaw; not much to look at, but his flow of ideas—whether his own or not one cannot say—is remarkable. He will speak for hours on end, and hold the interested attention of his crowd all the time. He is primarily an apostle of Anarchism, and his hero is Peter Kropotkin, a Russian writer, but he takes in the whole universe of controversy one Sunday or another, and talks of everything with the same conviction and apparent authority with which he lays down the law as to the abolition of all forms of government. One day you will find him raking up old history in the matter of the South African war, again he is on the tariff reform question. Another day the Russo-Japanese war occupies his attention. He is always up-to-date, and the North Sea incident or the Church crisis will be the subject of his oratory in turn. The most amusing characteristic of these gentlemen is that each is thoroughly convinced that his particular pet scheme constitutes the panacea for all the ills that this distracted world is heir to. Our Anarchist friend will tell you that all the other orators are shams—Socialists (if they are Socialists and nothing more), Independent Labour Partyites, Co-operators—these are all more or less frauds as not getting deep enough down into the heart of the trouble. Of course, he will go on to say, there are bigger frauds than these in the world, the Church of England, for instance, or even our Church at home, two sections of which are to-day flying at each other's throats for the loves and fishes.

Militarism is, of course, a favourite subject, and it is with great delight that he brings his powers of sarcasm to bear on what he regards as the evils of the system. Such material as the subject affords will keep him going for a whole afternoon. But his work is not altogether disinterested. He has at his feet a pile of literature, which he endeavours to dispose of, and he very adroitly brings his discourse round to a point which may be likely to favour the sale of one or other of his pamphlets. He will conclude a dissertation on the evils of militarism, by directing the attention of the crowd to "a little pamphlet." "Here you are," he will say, "War," by Peter Kropotkin, only a penny." But to be quite fair with him, he prefers to hear his own voice to selling pamphlets, which, at the probable profit of three-pence a dozen, is very thankless work when the bulk of his crowd are there to get their entertainment for nothing. Sales are therefore slow, and it is with a show of impatient disappointment, but really with a sense of satisfaction, that he gets back to more genial work, and resumes his argument. He pleads for an ideal of society, where each shall govern himself according to his own will, and for the acknowledgment of the equal rights of all members of society to accumulated wealth. Nationalisation of the means of production is not enough for him, for in that he simply sees a number of his fellow workmen as his masters, and his experience is that the most tyrannical master is the foreman who has risen from the ranks. So Communism is the one and only solution.—*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch.*

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NOTES.

THE SITUATION IN FRANCE.

The *Labour Leader* of December 30th, referring to the attempt to unite the Socialist Parliamentary parties in France, has the following remarks:—

Now when this work is begun the French trade unions will be a formidable obstacle in the way. For some time they have been showing a distrust of Parliamentary action, and a disposition to go back to revolution and the general strike. At the present time this tendency is more pronounced than ever, so that it looks as if the fight between Jaurist and Guesdist, which raged so fiercely at Amsterdam, will now again be transformed into a fight between Socialist and Anarchist, between the man who believes in a political fight for freedom, and the man whose only weapon for reform is to throw all things into disorder.

Yes, undoubtedly there is going to be this fight, and the outcome of it will be a distinct Revolutionary Labour party on the one hand, and a Democratic Radical party, calling itself Socialist, on the other. It will be purely political, and emasculated accordingly so far as any good for true Socialism is concerned. But is it necessary for the *Labour Leader* to cultivate the cant of "law 'n order," as it does in its concluding reference to the Anarchists? Was it the Anarchists who created the "disorder" at the Amsterdam Congress, or in the Hungarian Diet, etc., etc.? And is the capitalist "order" which we see around us to become sanctified after all in the eyes of your Socialist politician? It really seems so.

PROPAGANDA IN MELBOURNE.

Comrade Fleming is continuing his spirited and courageous propaganda in Melbourne, although standing almost alone. He sends us a report of the Chicago Commemoration meeting which he organised, and tells us that the Temperance Hall was crowded. Tom Mann was at Ballarat, or would have been pleased to be present. Fleming sent the following invitation to the Trades Council, who, for political purposes, have been hobnobbing with a millionaire named Sir Rupert Clarke:—

Sirs,—You are invited to be present at the commemoration of the anniversary of the Government assassination of the Chicago Anarchist Martyrs. The meeting will be held at the Temperance Hall, Russell Street, Thursday, November 10th, at 8 p.m. They were poor men and unionists judicially murdered by millionaires. Ah! when will you cease seeking, and fawning on men like Sir Rupert Clarke, whose wealth and title compel him to be an enemy of the poor worker. Yet you asked this parasite to preside at a workers' meeting. What a dastardly insult! I should not have mentioned this had you not displayed such brutal callousness when asked for the old Trades Hall, which, to your cowardly shame, you refused. You who ought to revere the memory of the dead brave martyrs of labour prefer lickspittling a millionaire, labour's enemy.

This outspoken condemnation seems to have been well deserved.

THE EIGHT HOURS' LAW.

The fight for the Eight Hours' Day is becoming of vital importance for more reasons than one, for independently of the benefits it would ensure to the workers generally it raises so many subsidiary points between labour and capital that this agitation alone may be the cause of far-reaching developments in the Labour movement. It is a striking fact that at the very time the French unions, with their clear, logical grasp of the situation, have decided to abandon political for direct action, the news reaches us that the New York Court of Appeal has decided that the State eight hours' law is unconstitutional! So much for the legal eight hours. The French workers have realised that to rely on the law is to build on sand, and MM. Millerand and Jaurès having given the final cold douche to their fading hopes in political action, have wisely decided to trust to their own initiative and organisation. And now comes the news that the Colorado miners have won

their eight hours' day after a sanguinary struggle. They will not lose it again in a hurry. The moral is indeed crushing for the Parliamentarians.

GROWTH OF TRADE UNIONISM IN AMERICA.

The *Literary Digest* for December 10th gives a clear and instructive account of the growth of trade unionism in the United States. The figures for the Federation of Labour, which started in 1881 with 50,000, and stands in 1904 at 1,700,000, give some indication of how in spite of untold difficulties and obstacles, including armed Pinkerton police, who did the murdering business for the capitalists at so much per man, in spite of failures in strikes and disastrous results to their funds, the solidarity of the workers' organisation shows a wonderful increase, even in proportion to population. What it might have been had the "leaders" shown more honesty and more intelligence we can only guess; but we can see clearly that in the United States, as here, the coming struggle between labour and capital is not to be fought out in the House of Representatives or the House of Commons, but in the mines, in the factories, in the workshops, where the great labour unions will meet the capitalist combines on their own ground and fight them face to face. Those days are drawing near, and that is why we return to this subject again and again, and insist that here lies the real field of action. Strengthen your unions. Leave politics to the politicians.

THE COLORADO MINERS' STRIKE.

The latest private information from Colorado, U.S.A., says that the strike at Telluride in that State has after all resulted in the mine-owners conceding the eight-hour day for all mill men in that district. "They have adopted the identical scale and hours that the Union offered in its ultimatum. But the 'Telluride Miners' Union,' where is it? Its members are scattered in every mining camp between British Columbia and Old Mexico, some are in South America, a few in South Africa. So the 'Union dominance' that the mine-owners complained of in the past will not trouble them for some time, and both sides will consider it a victory for themselves."

One thing stands out quite clear, however,—that while the miners failed to secure the eight-hour law, they have now got the eight-hour working day without the law. The fight has been long, brutal and bloody. The Union is broken! But the end is attained! It will not be long before another Union is formed. Association is instinctive among men. Other struggles will arise to tax its wisdom and resources. And when they do, the knowledge that this one ended as it has will cheer them in the fight. Many men have sacrificed themselves that others might enjoy life more. So on this occasion. Some day the labour struggle will not be a haggle over wages and hours, or an attempt to secure political power, but a supreme effort to be rid of all economic and political exploiters.

JOSIAH WARREN AND MODERN TIMES.

From Houghton, Mifflin & Co.'s press there have recently come two volumes which in the immediate future and for a long time will command the closest attention of progressive people,—namely, the "Autobiography, Memories, and Experiences" of Moncure Daniel Conway. Bearing testimony of one of the gentlest, clearest-sighted, and steadfastest spirits of the age, these volumes furnish a source of unfailing delight to the kindred reader. However, it is not the purpose here to write a review, but to quote from Mr. Conway's delightful pages a sketch of Josiah Warren and his social experiment in the village of Modern Times that will be of peculiar interest to the reader. Mr. Conway writes:—

"Among the many letters that I received from out-of-the-way people and places, one was dated at 'Modern Times, N.Y.' It seemed to have come from some place in Bunyan's dreamland. Writing to a friend in New York, I inquired if he knew anything about such a place. 'It is,' he answered, 'a village on Long Island founded on the principle that each person shall mind his or her own business.' The place seemed even more mythical than before, but one evening when I had been addressing some working men on the relations between capital and labour, a stranger of prepossessing appearance approached me, and said, 'If you ever visit Modern Times you will find out that the troubles of labour come from the existence of money.' Whereupon he disappeared.

"During my next summer vacation I visited New York, was ferried over to Brooklyn, and learned that by travelling one or two hours on the railway down Long Island I would come to 'Thompson's Station,' and five or six miles off would find Modern Times. It was twilight when I reached Thompson's, and there was no means of reaching the village I sought except on foot. That did not matter, for my valise was light, but the road was solitary, sometimes forked, the forest dense, and it became quite dark. At length, however, I reached a more open space, the moon gave some light, and I met a woman who said I was close upon the village. I asked if there was any hotel, and she replied, 'None that I know of,' passed on quickly, and left me to consider that more interest in other people's affairs might occasionally be desirable. It was not yet nine, but the street I entered was silent. I had with me a letter once received from Modern Times, and on inquiry found at last the founder of the village, Josiah Warren. He gave me welcome, and there being no hotel, and money not being current in the village, I was taken to the house of a gentleman and lady, provided with a supper and an agreeable bedroom, whereof I was much in need. The lady

of the house was beautiful, and startled me by an allusion to a Utopian village in one of Zschokke's tales. 'You will not find us,' she said, 'a Goldenthal; we are rather poor; but if you are interested in our ideas you may find us worthy of a visit.' I have idealised this lovely woman, and indeed the village, in my *Pine and Palm*, but her actual history was more thrilling than is there told of Maria Shelton, and the village appears to me in the retrospect more romantic than my Bonheur.

"Josiah Warren, then about fifty years of age, was a short thick-set man with a severe countenance but somewhat restless eye. His forehead was large, descending to a full brow; his lower face was not of equal strength, but indicative of the mild enthusiasm which in later years I found typical of the old English reformer. He was indeed one of these, and I think had been in Robert Owen's community at New Lanark. He had, however, an entirely original sociology. Convinced that the disproportion between wages and the time and labour spent in production created the evils of drudgery and pauperism, luxury and idleness, he determined to bring about a system of 'equitable commerce,' by which each product should have its price measured by its cost. If it were a shoe, for example, the separate cost of leather, pegs, thread, etc., was to be estimated, and the time taken in putting them together, and the sum would be enough to decide the relative value of the shoe in other articles the shoemaker might require. With this idea in his mind, he invested what little capital he had in a shop in Cincinnati, where he sold miscellaneous articles, somewhat under their prices in other shops. These shopkeepers broke up his establishment by circulating a rumour that Warren was selling off damaged stock. He concluded that his plan would succeed only in a world where other tradesmen adopted it, and after some years established a small community in Tuscarawas, Ohio, which was unable to sustain itself, perhaps, because of the crudity of the idea as it then stood in his mind; for when, some twenty years later, he founded Modern Times, there were other elements introduced.

"The commercial basis of this village was that cost is the limit of price, and that time is the standard of value. This standard was variable with corn. Another principle was that the most disagreeable labour is entitled to the highest compensation.

"The social basis of the village was expressed in the phrase 'individual sovereignty.' The principle that there should be absolutely no interference with personal liberty was pressed to an extent which would have delighted Mill and Herbert Spencer. This individual sovereignty was encouraged. Nothing was in such disrepute as sameness; nothing more applauded than variety, no fault more venial than eccentricity.

"The arrangements of marriage were left entirely to the individual men and women. They could be married formally or otherwise, live in the same or separate houses, and have their relation known or unknown. The relation could be dissolved at pleasure, without any formulas. Certain customs had grown out of this absence of marriage laws. Privacy was general; it was not polite to inquire who might be the father of a newly-born child, or who was the husband or wife of any one. Those who stood in the relation of husband or wife wore upon the finger a red thread; so long as the badge was visible, the person was understood to be married. If it disappeared, the marriage was at an end.

"The village consisted of about fifty cottages, neat and cheerful in their green and white; nearly all with well-tilled gardens. They all gathered in their little temple, the men rather disappointing me by the lack of individuality in their dress, but the ladies exhibiting a variety of pleasing costumes. For a time it was a silent meeting. Then the entire company joined in singing 'There's a good time coming,' and after I had read some passages from the Bible and from Emerson another hymn was sung concerning an expected day,—

'When the Might with the Right
And the Truth shall be.'

After my discourse, which was upon the Spirit of the Age, it was announced that there would be in the afternoon a meeting for conversation.

"The afternoon discussion ranged over the problems of Education, Law, Politics, Sex, Trade, Marriage. It exhibited every kind of ability, and also illustrated the principle of individuality to the rare extent of in no wise exciting a dispute or a sharp word. Except that all were unorthodox, each had an opinion of his or her own; this being so frankly expressed that behind each opened a vista of strange experiences.

"Josiah Warren showed me through his printing office and other institutions of the place. He also gave me one of the little notes used as currency among them. It has at one end an oval engraving of Commerce, with a barrel and a box beside her, and a ship near by; at the other end a device of Atlas supporting the sphere; beneath this a watch, and between these words, 'Time is Wealth.' In the centre is a figure of Justice, with scales and sword, also a sister genius with spear and wreath, whose name I do not know, between these being a shield inscribed, 'Labor for Labor.' Above these the following: 'Not transferable,' 'Limit of issue 200 hours.' 'The most disagreeable labour is entitled to the highest compensation,' 'Due to ——— Five Hours in Professional Services, or eighty pounds of corn.' Then follows a written signature and the engraved word 'Physician.'

"Late in the evening a little company gathered in the porch of the house in which I was staying, where there was informal conversation, and now and then a song. Out there in the moonlight went on an exchange of confidences, however abstract the phrases; beyond the soft tones I could hear the shriek of tempests that wreck lives. Not from happy homes had gathered these Thelemites with their motto, *Fay ce que voudras*.

"Some years later, when the plague of war was filling the land, I thought of their retreat as not so much a Thélème as a garden like that outside Florence, where Boccaccio pictures his ladies and gentlemen beguiling each other with beautiful tales while the plague was raging in the city. Modern Times had not been founded with reference to war. Those gentle people had suffered enough of life's struggle, and desired only to be left in peace. But where could peace be found? I never visited Modern Times again, but heard that soon after the war broke out most of those I had seen there sailed from Montauk Point on a small ship, and fixed their tents on some peaceful shore in South America."

From *Liberty* (New York), December.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

(FROM A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT.)

(Concluded from page 48).

Perhaps it is too much to demand such sacrifice, and perhaps, also, owing to traditional prejudice, will people last become intelligent in foreign matters, and first in their own domestic matters. Let us look at the inner policy of the various Social Democratic and Labour parties. This year of congresses—the International Socialist, the Anti-Militarist, the Freethinkers', the Co-operators',—ought to have shown us these inner politics at their best, as everything is usually brushed up and repaired for congress use.

The Amsterdam International Congress was even to bring us the long-lost international regulation of *Socialist tactics*. Instead, it did the very useful thing of demonstrating the utter futility of international cast-iron rules, from which the futility of national and local rules, of rules in general, follows. For both Jaurès and Bebel, speaking for the large political Socialist movements of France and Germany, made good their case. Both wasted their time in trying to convince or refute the other side. For both are, since they deal with politics, necessarily results of the political situations of their countries, which are considerably different.

If we look back at the time in the nineties when Burns and Keir Hardie first entered Parliament, a certain parallel with the situation of Jaurès and Bebel will be found, which is, of course, far from being an analogy. Burns, though he had been "the man with the red flag," was at once recognised by the bourgeois Parliamentarians as one of their own flesh and blood, as one who might easily be petted into becoming a mere appendix of the Liberal party—and so is Jaurès considered, the old moderate Republican whose Socialism does not frighten a mouse in France. When Keir Hardie, after the West Ham election, first entered Parliament in 1895, the feeling was that here was something new, something distinctly hostile, anti-bourgeois, daring to stand up even against Liberalism, and he was isolated and hated. The further developments of his case do not concern us here; but as in those days of 1895, so since the sixties right along the German Social Democrats in Parliament have been hated and shunned by their opponents with true bourgeois instinct; Liebknecht and Bebel for years only spoke in the face of shouting, insults, laughter and howlings, and this led Liebknecht to his early anti-Parliamentarian remarks in 1869. It was only when, after the elections of 1886 and later on, numbers of insignificant men were elected Socialist deputies, who took up small reform measures patching up this or that paltry evil, that the attitude of the bourgeois changed just a very little. They put great hopes in Vollmar, who has not yet fulfilled them; and it was only when Bernstein came forward that the bourgeois instinct told them: here at last is a Socialist who will do no harm to us; let us get him, and maybe some of the party will rally round us. Perhaps they are mistaken even in Bernstein. Anyhow, this shows that if the German Socialists have no results to show in spite of their large numbers, they preserved their political honour instead of bartering it away for spoils. Some real results they have won right along by trade union action, which is neither weak nor neglected in that country. In France, on the other hand, everybody has been "Socialist" for many years; the millionaire stockbroker who has just become Minister of War, is a prominent "Socialist Radical," etc. The Socialist party in Parliament has never taken up that attitude of intransigency which the German party, even with Bernstein and Vollmar among them, still maintains. When the War Budget is under discussion, the onslaughts of Bebel on the Minister of War and militarism are something which no French Socialist would dare to say in the Chamber, or the general patriotism of all parties would burst out and drive him from political life. The anti-militarist propaganda in the country which possesses *Biribi* (the military penal settlements in Algiers) is carried on entirely outside Parliament, almost solely by Anarchists, as no man who wants votes dares to speak up against militarism. When André, the late Minister of War, was shown to be carrying on the notorious spy system by Freemasons—a system detestable in any case, whatever it be—who jumped up in his defence? Jaurès it was, before all, the firmest supporter of the present system in France. By the way, Comrade Delessalle, in the *Temps Nouveau*, states that Millerand carried on a similar spy system against labour leaders whilst he, the "Socialist,"—now a tool of the clericals—was Minister of Commerce.

Under these conditions the results of the discussion on Socialist tactics at Amsterdam may be summed up thus: the bourgeois always receive with open arms Socialists who desert their party—Millerand, Burns, Jaurès, and the like—and if these gentlemen come forward afterwards and are proud of their shame they resemble the fox in the fable who advised all other foxes to have their tails cut off because he had lost his own.

By the way, far too much is made here and there out of alleged dealings of German Socialists with clericals. It is true that for local Bavarian elections Vollmar allied himself with clericals against a weak and enervated Liberal party, an action which created general disgust, and it is a great shame that Bebel quite recently in the Reichstag tried to defend it. It is also true that at second ballots between clericals and outspoken anti-Socialist Liberals of the capitalist and manufacturers type, Socialists voted for the clerical to throw out the anti-Socialist, a policy which is also strongly censured. But in Parliament an alliance, however temporary, with clericals never happened, to my knowledge, and what gave rise to the misunderstanding is this,—that a clause in favour of labour is sometimes opposed by the Liberals, who are before all anti-Socialists, and carried by the votes of Conservatives, clericals and Socialists. But on all questions involving in the slightest degree political liberty, education, etc., the Socialists have always either voted with the Liberals and Radicals, or, as mostly happened, stood up alone against all. As the clericals still control vast industrial districts, they try to show to the electors some interest in labour, just as Conservatives would do in Lancashire; the Socialists accept this as instalments, but never tire of exposing the humbug of the thing, and try to wrest these districts from their clerical exploiters.

In the really industrial districts of France and Germany, the position and action of Socialists is not much different; it differs only in the political centres, since whoever enters politics is tarred with the same brush, and drags with him the claims of political developments and the traditions of centuries.

* *

At all these Socialist Congresses the skeleton in the cupboard is the *General Strike*. It will come out somehow; and it did at the meetings held in Berlin, at the German Congress at Bremen, at the Austrian Congress at Salzburg, etc., though all the political leaders look at it with the highest displeasure and wish it buried at the bottom of the sea. Some try to emasculate it and make it palatable by transforming it into a few days' strike demonstration to get political measures passed, a larger franchise for local Diets, and the like. We saw this put in practice in Belgium and in Sweden, with small results. Whilst they talked of all this at the German Congresses, the Italian general strike came on overnight and did something more than all these deliberations.

Still Anarchists must become aware of these developments. The general

* * Any books on Anarchism, Socialism, or kindred subjects forwarded (if obtainable) on receipt of order and cash. Inquiries answered on receipt of stamped envelope.

strike idea is about to pass out of their hands into those of larger masses of people with no very definite, hardly Socialist, aims. It has become an everyday weapon in the labour struggle, and there is not a locality all over the world to-day where the smallest provocation may not bring about overnight a series of strikes of sympathy and solidarity which may find their echo and repetition all over the town, the district, the whole country. Each demand of labour carries this implicit threat with it. The mobility and quickness shown here is immense; the spread of such strikes is only limited by the pace of the telegraph. The formal apparatus works with wonderful precision; what is wanting, however, are the revolutionary aims, the true conception of what a general strike should lead to—all this at the present time exists only in the minds of Anarchists.

If the many general strikes of late years were examined in this respect, the result would be deplorable, and we should in the end see once more that Anarchism can only exist where there are Anarchists, that the use of mere forms—the strike is just a form, like the voting paper is, unless the proper meaning is given to it—that mere forms, then, can be taught, imitated, will almost multiply by themselves, but that the right contents can only be given by those who perfectly know their own minds. There is no “royal road” to Anarchism, neither by the general strike nor by any definite method; no Anarchism without Anarchists,—the mere revolutionary situation, even accomplished facts, nothing can help us over this apparent truism.

Looking from this standpoint at the *syndicalist* or *anti-political trade unionist* movement, which the Congress held at Bourges showed to be making such headway in France, I recognise that this personal contact offers Anarchists some practical work, and splendid opportunities to many to become acquainted with our ideas; but otherwise it is an ordinary trade unionist movement which the growing industrialism of France and the tedious disgust with politics after a century of political struggles were bound to produce. In Spain this movement was inaugurated by Anarchists thirty-five years ago; in England, by men of all shades of opinion a century ago. It is simply the labour movement, and will advance the aims of labour by all useful means; it has to unite the largest possible number of workers against the capitalists, whose solidarity and ferocity augment everywhere,—witness the scenes in Colorado! It cannot afford, therefore, to be sectarian in any way; a trade federation, headed by Anarchists in France and Spain, by Social Democrats in Germany, by officials of Liberal or Tory opinions in England, *e.g.*, has to co-operate in a case given, and to make any idea predominant outside the ranks of those who hold it would be an unfair act, damaging the common cause. Hence, as with regard to the general strike, the effect of this sphere of action of Anarchists is also limited, and *propaganda pure and simple* remains as the only real means to further Anarchism after all.

I by no means understand by this a dry and pedantic propaganda of certain principles. I mean by it handing over, by the clear understanding of what freedom implies, the key, so to speak, of all criticism of existing coercive institutions, and of all reconstruction—hypothetical, as it always must be, before actual experience—of free institutions. The next step would be that each one should leave as soon as possible the field of generalities which so easily engenders doctrinarism, and apply himself to the domain of action for which his faculties and inclinations render him fittest. This particular sphere or object will look quite different to him now that he looks at it with Anarchist eyes; he will make new progress, will influence by his example others working in the same particular cause, and, in short, will create for himself a sphere of useful and pleasant activity where his faculties will be employed to the best advantage.

Such centres—to use this misleading word—of *applied Anarchist activity* would everywhere form little oases round which sympathisers would gather, which would make propaganda by their very existence and example.

This may seem too rosy talk to hardworking men, but these have their field of action in the unions and in strikes where their initiative could do wonders, and is so often sadly missed. Anarchism should be raised from being a bread-and-butter question to one of the means to help the workers. It is, in this daily struggle for better conditions, on one level with all forms of Socialism, and its true sense can never make itself felt properly, as the necessity of mass movements, of opposing force by force, continually makes it place freedom on one side and make use of the fists, so to speak. Therefore anything done to demonstrate and realise, as far as possible to-day, the positive possibilities of Anarchism, is of an immense value. France is foremost in this, and Paris in France. Art, literature, the theatre, not less than the daily life, can in a measure become impregnated with Anarchism, which creates a wonderful atmosphere for propaganda.

As in other years, I draw attention this year to all these possibilities, deprecating none of the present means of action, but wishing to see them multiplied, intensified, to awaken all the energies yet slumbering to-day.

We regret to state that *Free Society* has ceased publication owing to lack of support. Comrade Isaak informs us, however, that a monthly magazine will be published this month, the subscription for which will be 4s. yearly, and 5d. for single copies. Comrades who have paid in advance for *Free Society* will receive copies of the new magazine to the value of money paid. We shall be pleased to receive subscriptions for the new magazine.

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