

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY

Progressive Italy.

The Socialist movement in Italy is a thing to be watched day by day as a careful naturalist would watch the age-long swelling and kicking of some unique chrysalis whose term of quiescence is unknown. And now above all would he watch the chrysalis of this butterfly, Liberty, whom so many chase on the wing, and chasing maim, when the wing-sheaths are breaking to the discovery of the colour of the wings. To complete the simile, the kicking of the tail is the Right and Left of the movement, and the sheltering outgrown sheath party dogma.

There was plenty of kicking at last year's Socialist Party Congress, and as it seems likely to be remembered as the last of many similar struggles, it is worth looking at the figures of the final division. A Reformist and a Revolutionary motion were put, and the result was, in members represented, 12,255 for the former and 7,410 for the latter, leaving a further 12,560 abstainers. Of the questions involved that of the General Strike was the chief, and with it, of course, that of the utility of parliamentary action. By the majority this was claimed to be the decisive voice of Socialist Italy, forgetting that a trained voice does not always best express the feelings.

During the next few months there were three small cold-blooded massacres of strikers in the south of the country. Finally, one near Genoa touched the national heart, which, according to the mind made up at the Congress, should have protested through its political representatives and been comforted. Protest was made, extending knowledge of the facts to those whose exclusive hobby is politics, but without other result. On further provocation the leaders sat in serious council to consider whether the General Strike might possibly have a political utility. They opened their council-room windows to the sight of the General Strike in full swing. It is to the Camera del Lavoro of Milan that the honour falls of having been the initiator of that wonderful proof of working-class solidarity, and it was that body which administered the city of Milan during five peaceful days of revolution. The strike was general and, despite provocation, peaceful throughout the country. Cities and towns, and even remote villages, went solid for at least one day, the Monday; the Government was cowed, Parliament was dismissed, and an "appeal" was made to the country.

Never did parliamentary Socialists face an election with heavier hearts. At the last moment one of their best candidates resigned for better employment under stress of the most bare-faced illegalities on the part of the upholders of the law, the military selection of voters; and corruption was rife than usual. They lost votes among both extremes, those who feared the General Strike and those who approved it; their candle went out at both ends. Their actual loss in seats was, nevertheless, insignificant. The capitalist press rejoiced over the defeat of Socialism.

Apart from the triumph in solidarity of the General Strike, it also attained its particular object in the fact that although the same Government resumed power there has as yet been no recurrence of the tragedies. The Government became more wary, and allowed itself to do no more than hint at the illegalising of strikes in the public services. This became an excellent key to propaganda, and it was soon seen that the first aim would be at the railways.

The Italian railways are the property of the State, farmed out to speculative(?) capitalists under guarantee of a return of 5 per cent. on the rent. The pay of the men is miserable, the organisation of their work abominable, their own organisation admirable. Some time ago they put their demands to the Government in a memorandum. These were for an immediate increase of wages for all grades, and, as the present leases of the railways expire in a few months, that the Government should nationalise them under an autonomous administration. So alive is the Italian working-man to general principles that it was further agreed that the wages question could stand over for solution under the autonomous administration if the Government would promise to grant this latter. After a long delay, the answer came in the shape of a proposed Bill to retain 10,560 kilometres of road under national administration. It may be noted in passing that the remaining 2,050 kilometres of road left in the hands of the capitalist are the most paying in the land. The men's term of "autonomous administration" was also adopted, and moreover there was to be an arbitration board for the settling of differences of employment, to which the men would send two representatives. "Autonomous administration"? Administration, not by the Executive, but by Bills passed through the House of Deputies! And the other members of the arbitration board besides the two working men? Three high

State officials and two representatives of the management! And having a board of arbitration, says pater Government, of course you will not need the strike, so we will make that illegal, and militarise you if you break the law. The Italian Socialist party, parliamentary though it be, at once disclaimed the "statisation" project of the Government, and was ready to back the men in whatever action they thought fit. Undoubtedly, had it been in the summer, when there are no rich foreigners travelling around Italy, the action would have been a general strike. As it was, the leaders of the men were persuaded by the shop-keepers, hotel-keepers and the trades dependent on the foreigners that such a course would be ruinous to the country. The result was that legal obstruction was had recourse to. The companies' regulations were adhered to scrupulously, and trains ran anything from two to seventeen hours late. The goods traffic practically came to a standstill, and the country was driving to a panic, the bourgeoisie to a frenzy, when the Ministry resigned, and the obstruction, as if that had been its object, ceased.

The workings of committees are sometimes little less inscrutable than those of Fate. The projected Bill was a red rag to the railway bull, which, having lost sight of, he knows not where to turn. For three weeks the Government has been playing its safest game, that of not forming a Ministry.

It is patent that the crisis in the country is more than a Cabinet crisis, and it is notable that the Socialist party is saying less than usual about the great things to be achieved through parliamentary action. Let the summer come, and with it the exodus of foreigners, who pervert the progress of the country with their wealth, and then the Socialist movement will have a fair chance of displaying its present Anarchist tendencies. The growing power of the Camere del Lavoro is perhaps the most important point of the movement. These local organisations are more influenced by the Anarchist groups than are the national Trade Unions, as evidenced in a joint Congress held in January last. With these and the Socialist party headed away from State Socialism by actualities, who will deny that the Italian chrysalis is worthy the most careful watching?

LOUISE MICHEL.

And so the light is quenched at length within thy glorious eyes!
And silent evermore the magic music of thy matchless tones!
Apostle of eternal truth, the sacred cause which never dies!
Uncheck'd by scheming statecraft's fictive walls, nor wrangling
priests' empurpled zones!
Humanity, for countless aeons crush'd beneath the cruel heels
Of selfish superstitions, with their mule-packs of unending lies,
Found vent at length within thy frame so frail to break its lip-law
seals,
To voice for liberty its long arrears of fierce imprison'd cries!
To preach the new religion which is older than the oldest old,
As drawing from all Nature's earliest dawn its breath of life:
The sympathetic touch of atom unto atom in the universal fold;
For all things breathing, equity and love replacing hate and strife!
O heroine matchless, naught could daunt, the dungeon, exile, nor the
threaten'd axe,
Nor jackal yelpings of the fleeting frenzy of the passing hour,
Nor, worse, the waiting years of brute indifference, the longing soul
which racks,
To help all beings in all ages is thy life's great priceless dower!
So long as moves upon the rolling surface of our mother earth
One hopeful heart with thoughts uplifted o'er surrounding clods,
Thy name shall symbolize the summit of all human worth,
With reasoning love dethroning hideous nightmares of barbaric
gods!
Boston, January, 1905. LOTHROP WITHINGTON.

"The King and the Anarchist."

This story will be published in pamphlet form, and should make excellent propaganda. Single copies 2d.; post free 2½d.; 2s. 6d. for twenty-four, carriage paid. It will be on sale about the end of April. Orders received now will be attended to immediately after printing.

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NOTES.

A PROTEST.

We are quite at one with the *Labour Leader* in its protest against the vagaries of the aristocratic (so-called) Socialist who has become one of the latest members of the S.D.F. Of course the whole business is a stupid farce, in which the biter will certainly get bitten, but we cannot refrain from asking if the lady of Warwick has been taken into the fold as a "class-conscious Socialist"? If not, by whose ukase has this all-important article of the faith been set aside? We ask these things because we understand the lady of Warwick holds very strong views as to the necessity of retaining monarchy (limited?) at the head of the Socialist State. Possibly some compromise can be arranged in this matter by Hyndman, Quelch & Co., but we are afraid that Marx and Engels in their materialist explanation of history forgot to provide for this particular development. At any rate, we shall expect to see another plank added to the platform of the S.D.F. just to oblige her ladyship. The scientific basis of Social Democracy will then stand somewhat as follows:—State aid for the unemployed; free maintenance of children; old-age pensions—and a merry monarch. As means to attain these ends: adult suffrage, swell dinners, and a red motor car. It is not quite all we used to dream of when we gave our cheers for the social revolution. But 'tis enough, 'twill serve to hold high the banner of the ideal according to Social Democracy!

"DE PROFUNDIS."

Wilde's "De Profundis," it is said, is attracting a wide circle of readers, interested no doubt in the morbid self-revelation of a broken man soothing the misery of his prison life with piteous platitudes about humility and resignation. It is a sad spectacle, but we would advise those whose hearts may have been touched by the prison agonies of a sensitive man to bethink themselves of the whole question of prisons and legal punishment. Some years ago this subject was being discussed, and some agitation seemed to be growing that promised hope of reforms. Nothing, however, has been done, and the thousands of unhappy victims on whom our brutal system takes its vengeance are enduring these tortures without the power of expressing all they suffer. "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" would far better repay perusal than "De Profundis," for here we have the most scathing indictment of our prison system ever written. Let the English people recall those heart-rending lines:—

The vilest deeds, like poison weeds,
Bloom well in prison air:
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there:
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the Warder is Despair.

RELIEF FUND For Russian Revolutionists.

As this is a moment when every possible help should be given to our comrades in their terrible struggle with autocracy, we appeal to all friends to send their help. However small it will be welcome, and will be faithfully directed into the right channels.

	£	s.	d.
Previously acknowledged	..	..	1 7 0
W. Fraser	..	..	0 1 0
J. Muller	..	..	0 2 6
K. W. and M. H.	..	..	0 10 0
S. M. (Neath)	..	..	0 1 0
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THE USE OF FORCE.

(Continuation of the discussion from last number.)

Objector remarks: 1stly, "The reforms we both earnestly desire can be effected without bloodshed at all."

2ndly, "What good could a handful of Anarchists do even if they were successful? I can only see rivers of blood similar to that described in *Cæsar's Column*, or after the revolutions which have taken place in France at various periods."

3rdly, "Within our own recollection it was lawful to hold property in human beings, but in the course of time all these things came to be looked on in a different light, and these bad man-made laws were repealed."

4thly, "Out of this week's *Reynolds's* I send you a cutting which shows the stupidity of the average Anarchist." (The cutting referred to is from *Reynolds's* of the 8th January, 1905, whence it appears that a man, who is not stated to have acknowledged himself an Anarchist, was accused by the police of saying: "If the King don't come out and speak to you strike off his crown." Also, "I want to remove this King from the throne, and set up a Republican Government.")

REPLY.

Thanks for your letter dated 1st February. . . . I think it is useless for us to continue further the discussion as to the use or non-use of force. You are against it as being under all circumstances wrong when used between men. I, on the other hand, affirm the right to use force in self-defence, i.e., for obtaining and securing personal and social rights.

You say that the reforms we desire can be effected without bloodshed. I am quite willing to see them so effected, if possible. But in the case of their being able to be secured at a given moment by forcible revolutionary action, and by that alone, would you favour such action? From the tone of your letters I judge that you would not. Thus you would be prepared to forego a successful revolution for the time, at least, and wait for a peaceable one at some indefinite date. I want no putting off. I wish to use all opportunities and miss none. You say: "What good could a handful of Anarchists do even if they were successful?" To this I reply: If they were successful, they would at least have freed themselves. Is that nothing? Would not their example be contagious? Who, even among cowards, would be willing to be a slave when he saw what others (on our supposition, a mere handful) had accomplished? You speak of the revolutions in France as though they had accomplished nothing! Did not the Great Revolution deal a mortal blow to Monarchy in France, and also to feudalism? You speak of slavery in America. How was it abolished? As the result of one of the bloodiest wars of modern times. It was not because it came to be looked upon "in a different light" by the slave owners, but because they were compelled to liberate their slaves at the bayonet's point. You say: "Force must be overcome by reason." In reply, I say that those who maintain the world in subjection will never yield to reason unsupported by force. I repeat that there are many of our opponents who know as well as we do that their domination is unjust and I really think it waste of time to try to convert them. We must work to convert—that is, to enlighten—a sufficient number of those who are their tools through ignorance or misapprehension, and when we have done so the time for action will come. I don't believe in Tolstoy's non-resistance, neither do I believe in what is commonly called Christianity, but where is the inconsistency in my quoting his denunciation of Government? Why you should regard the account in *Reynolds's* which you send me as characteristic of the stupidity of the "average Anarchist" I cannot conceive; surely the average Anarchist does know enough of Anarchism to know that a republic is just as much a Government as is a monarchy, and that both are, as such, equally abhorrent to true freedom.

The whole thing resolves itself into the questions—1stly: Is it morally right to use force for the attainment or preservation of one's rights? To this I reply, *Yes*. 2ndly: Can we hope by arguments or reasoning to make the oppressors of the people come down from their vantage ground, and admit that they have no more rights than the rest of mankind? To this I reply, emphatically, *No*.

If you answer this I shall leave you with the last word, for I do not feel that there is any use in our prolonging the discussion. The standpoints we respectively occupy are too divergent, and from differing first principles and axioms we cannot expect to arrive at the same conclusions.

Of one thing I am sure. The ruling classes, the capitalists and military parties, will never prosecute those of your opinions as they persecute us. And they know who are their enemies.

Unwittingly, you are working against the accomplishment of the changes which you, in common with others, advocate theoretically.

HENRY GLASSE.

Paris Commune Meeting.

A successful meeting in commemoration of the Paris Commune was held in Wonderland, Whitechapel, on Friday, March 17th. Comrades Kitz, Tcherkesoff, Sachs, Roker, Leggatt, Morleit, and Withington spoke, and the keynote of the speeches was that the workers should study the history of that momentous struggle, find out why it failed, and thereby be better prepared to take advantage of any opportunity that may arise to throw off the yoke of the oppressors. Recent events have shown that ruling classes are not likely to surrender their privileges without fighting, and those who think that they can get any substantial benefits by sending "Labour Members" to Westminster will find themselves woefully mistaken.

THE KING AND THE ANARCHIST.

A TALE OF THE TIMES.

By "LIBERTAS."

III.

The King had the courage of the average man. His first impulse, therefore, as his gaze fixed the other's, was to knock him down, especially as in spite of his being much the bigger of the two the Anarchist looked so dog-weary that it seemed no formidable task to throw him and then rid his pockets of such concealed weapons as they held. But prudence quickly got the better of valour, and he decided instead to hasten to the Castle and put his police on the alert. As his excitement subsided, however, and their eyes still met, another thought came to the King. "This," he mused, "is the first Anarchist I have met, and the police will take care he is the last. Strange that in spite of his bloody creed I note no symptom of the violence claimed for his kind! Scores of such calm faces do I see daily among the law-abiding section of my worker subjects, none too many, if truth be told, quite so intelligent. I might do worse than improve the occasion and teach him loyalty—if indeed he is Stirn the Anarchist? They say these wretches worship notoriety. Surely he meets my eye too frankly to be the arch-villain my police are hounding? A minor star, maybe, of the Anarchist firmament aping a greater. Let us see."

And at once he demanded abruptly, irrelevantly as it seemed, "You are aware that this road is private property—that you are trespassing?"

"Quite so," answered the Anarchist with a candid assurance that confounded the King. "*Crown lands. Trespassers beware!*" (with a gesture he indicated the notice-board). "I stumbled upon that by chance, but as Anarchist and Man its threat means little to me. The land belongs to the people, not only to the King. When I do not demolish such symbols of illegal ownership, I ignore them. Besides," and he sighed heavily, "grass is pleasanter to walk on than the highroad when, dead-weary, one has to drag a wounded foot."

"You said you were making for the city; we stand here miles from the direct route."

"That is not my fault."

"Whose then?"

"The King's."

"The King's?"

"Aye. Over yonder lies his country palace, where he is now in residence. His laws against Anarchists are none too gentle, those of his police, if unwritten, still less so. Did I follow the main road, and, being near the castle, chance upon his bodyguard, advance would be hindered by my certain arrest."

"That is possible. What then?"

The sunken blue eyes seemed to probe the King's. "I have no wish to be hindered. For days I have been hurrying to the city, and can only reach it by stealth. Because I believe in Liberty, because I robbed a wealthy citizen of half-a-pound of meat to still the cries of my famished children, I am banished the country. What matter that I had already paid the penalty of my so-called *crime*? What matter that go where I would the police were ever at my elbow, preventing my obtaining work by sinister whispers to would-be employers? Forced into idleness, closely watched as a man secretly devising mischief, they next expel me to run the gauntlet in a strange land. And yet, as I stand under the blue sky, I am guiltless of other offence than that named, while the mischief I devise is but to teach my fellows that they are *men*, not slaves to be eternally priest-ridden, labour-ridden, police-ridden. My present mission compelled me to re-cross the frontier. By night I hurry forward, by day, as now, I seek a hidden corner in which to rest. Broken with fatigue and suspense, nearing my journey's end, will you bar my way?"

"That depends on why without a police permit you have dared to re-enter the country."

"That is soon told." The Anarchist paused, looked at the sunlit water as though he found some subtle comfort in its dimpled face, then rested his eyes again on the King's. "My brother lies in prison. We grew up side by side. He——"

Something seemed to choke the speaker; his head sank forward suddenly, and in the silence that followed a little snake slid out from between some broken stones, beside the King and fixed a bright eye on the two men. But neither of them saw it.

"The judges" (the voice seemed strangled) "have condemned him to death. He is my only brother—he lay in my arms as a babe, we played together, struggled for daily bread, rejoiced and sorrowed together—and so I go to him. Not that he will die"—the bowed head was raised, and once again patient eyes searched the King's—"but they may imprison him long years. The King has the last word in questions of life and death; he

will spare the father of three motherless children, let alone an innocent man."

The King, as has been said, was no coward. Few Kings are, they have too much self-conceit. Though his eyes fell before those others into which a slow agony seemed creeping and he furtively watched a strong right hand where it hung clenched and rigid within striking distance, he answered: "If you mean Karl Stirn, the man condemned to death for attempting the life of the manager of the Vulcan Works, a most worthy citizen and gentleman——"

"The same—Karl Stirn—my brother!"

"His death-warrant was signed this morning."

Silence. Boris snapped at a fly. The little snake wriggling about the pinnacle of stones laid its ugly flat head on the top-most, where it basked in the sun and made forked lightning. A breath of soft sweet air stole along the stream, wrinkling its waters as it passed, then died away like a sigh. From somewhere high up in the ether liquid notes came dropping, for larks sing on though human hearts are breaking. But the King still watched the strong right hand; it never moved though its muscles tightened.

All at once a bitter cry shattered the harmony around.

"You dare not—you dare not!" said the Anarchist, turning so fiercely upon him that the King's meagre form seemed to shrivel as a fly's might before the white-heat of a blast-furnace. Until now human suffering in the raw had been as unknown to him as human fustian. It was not pleasant to look upon. Though secretly congratulating himself on the *finesse* by which he had unmasked the real Michael Stirn, the villain "wanted" by his police, he yet drew back a step.

"What have I to do with it?" he demanded, and whistled to Boris. But the dog seemed deaf.

With a quick movement the Anarchist thrust his hand into a frayed pocket. The King watched with a sudden in-drawing of his breath. Why had he not ordered every Anarchist to be shot at sight? Surely now the hidden revolver that would end his reign—Ha! what was that? On the open palm of the hand which the Anarchist was holding towards him lay a brown coin.

"Not a bad likeness," he commented. And though his eyes shone like red coals, the strangely humorous smile was again on his lips.

"So! you knew me?"

"How not? If the King's land be private property, his countenance at least is not."

The King, astonished and crestfallen, was silent. The tables seemed turned. All the gracious affability with which he had begun and carried on the conversation was as pearls cast before—no, he could not say "swine," as he looked up into that grief-stricken face—but at least it was disconcerting that an Anarchist of all men should have had the better of him.

"You are the King, the people's symbol of Justice and Equity—why desecrate your office by condemning men—in this case an innocent man—to death?" went on the voice, troubled yet stern.

"It was his judges, not I, who condemned him," answered the King, shirking responsibility like a true son of Father Adam; "neither is he innocent, and you know it."

"He is innocent, and if the judges condemned, you endorse."

"I cannot argue the point," returned the King. "Your brother was arrested red-handed after firing two shots at an estimable gentleman."

"The shots went past the estimable gentleman, whose self-esteem alone was wounded. Think of the fearful provocation—the weeks of slow starvation, the refusal of the owners to treat with their men, of the manager to discuss their wrongs, while flaunting in their eyes the wealth gained by their labour. I say that my brother stands guiltless of any crime, least of all of one that merits death—that in your heart you know it."

Kings have consciences like other men, and under all its State trappings that of Karl R. winced. He knew well that when he signed the warrant he had barely cast a thought at its purport, nor until reminded of it by his secretary remembered even the offence for which he sent a man to death.

"I will never give in to false sentiment," he mused, as once before that morning. But the position was becoming so strained that he felt the time had come to end it. And this he would at once have done by retracing his steps, but for the knowledge that in so doing he would turn his back to the enemy, which no good soldier must ever do. As for that idiot of a dog——

Almost as though divining his thought the Anarchist resumed quietly, "You need fear nothing, I am not armed."

"What matter if you were?" retorted the King with ill-concealed mortification; "you would gain nothing by my death."

"Believe me, I never desired it."

"Pshaw! you and the breed of malcontents from which you spring batten on blood! Your one ideal is murder, and since

to attack the police too probably means a bullet through your own skins, murder of the highest, which at least brings notoriety."

"Who says so?"

The calm judicial question affronted the King. "The whole world!" he scoffed angrily.

"You mean of journalists and police, professions which when not paid to lie usually find it convenient to do so. You imply it is cowardice that keeps our hands off a strong and prejudiced enemy. Is it, then, safer to attack a King, whose assailant faces instant death or capture by those around? Again, the police in the main act under a sense, if a mistaken one, of duty; few Kings but disregard theirs. Are we miscreants, notoriety-mongers, cowardly assassins who batten on blood, whose ideal is murder? Press words, police phrases. I have told you the story of my life—do I look like a man who battens on blood?"

The King, meeting the clear, steadfast eyes in the gaunt, hunger-bitten frame before him, shifted his gaze uneasily.

"If," resumed the Anarchist, "Society is so constituted that the rich have no incentive to crime, the poor every incentive, then Society itself becomes the factor of criminals, and Anarchists the men who refuse to become what Society would make them. It suits the ruling class to divide mankind into servitors and the served. Yet from of old the served, the 'masters,' have felt the injustice of this division. To ease their guilt they coined another on whom to lay the blame. So they tell us it is by *God's* will we labour for life in sweat and sorrow, nor ever taste of the fruit of this labour; by *God's* will perish in shoals in workshop and mine; by *God's* will our sons become food for powder, our daughters drift on the street; by *God's* will the poor are harried, while the idle rich wallow in peace. Though to us you prate of the honour and glory of labour, how many among you are willing to share in that honour and glory, to fling off broadcloth, bend your necks to the yoke, and labour as we labour, day in, day out, ill or well, Necessity the task-master, Hunger the whip?"

"Well, well, those are questions for theologians and economists to settle," answered the King impatiently; "sensible men must take the world as they find it; we cannot all be masters. I was born a King, you an artisan—you would like to change places?"

The Anarchist smiled. "No, in spite of the press charge of envy, that is a pitch, to you of honour, to us of dishonour, to which none of my 'breed' aspire. For Kings reign no longer by virtue of the people's love, but through the dread inspired by the massed forces behind the throne. When a man seeks to be free, to live as his conscience and not as the State dictates, the police, who typify the Law, the soldier Compulsion in arms, the priest Superstition rampant, these three, the powers behind the throne, pounce upon that man, and if they cannot quench the spirit of revolt they slay him. So through the ages millions of men and women have suffered or died for Liberty and Conscience, their brothers, hypnotised by State and Church, applauding or in helpless silence passing on. But to-day the eyes of men are opening. Myriads from force of habit still submit to abuses and wrongs, but they no longer say 'these are right, therefore must be borne.' The Church still storms, the State enslaves, but men ask of each other, 'What is this Church? What is this State?' There is an uplifting of souls, a groping of hand for hand, clouds fall from heavy feet, hope springs to tear-dimmed eyes; Liberty, moulding her song to the throb of every heart, breathes life into dead bones, and to none does her call ring home with such force as to her foster-children the Anarchists. They it is who when danger threatens are the first to spring to her aid, the first to confront tyranny and oppression, the first to preach revolt, the last to submit to despotism. Hail to thee, Anarchism, thou Fighting element in the spirit of Discontent! Hail to thee, whose touch on man's soul, if intangible, once felt is ineffaceable, beating down the false, lifting up the true; strong in death, defiant in life; whose watchword is Brotherhood, whose battle-cry Freedom!"

As the impassioned words rang out the Anarchist appeared to the King transfixed. Like a wrestler exulting in strength that presaged victory, his form seemed to expand; there was noble dignity in the uplifted head, the light of a great purpose, of supreme courage, shone in the steadfast eyes that looked beyond the King to the hills behind which the world lay.

The scoffing serenity of the monarch became visibly disturbed. His Chief of Police had called these men "arrant cowards," "contemptible carrion." How reconcile such epithets with the words and bearing of Michael Stirn, Anarchist? Yet, would a distinguished police official lie, and lie to his Sovereign? Could there be smoke without fire? Nay, the cloven foot must show itself; a clever, plausible rogue might fool others, but not Karl Rex.

"Strange," he therefore observed, a fine smile of irony restoring his equanimity, "that you should outrage two such noble sentiments as Freedom and Brotherhood by deeds which

make humanity shudder; that in your efforts to reform the universe the cowardly bomb and pitiless dagger should be your weapons; that with such you strike impartially at rich and poor, innocent and guilty alike!"

"Sad it may be, but not strange," answered the Anarchist, a look of pain in the eyes he withdrew from the hills to fix once more on the King. "If sensible men (I use your phrase) are to take the world as they find it, what of those who wish to leave it better than they find it, and of those who rather than see it bettered rise in their strength to impede all efforts at betterment? What is the position to-day? On one hand we find a small community of men who not only through fraud and force have possessed themselves of every rod of ground, of all the economic wealth of the world, but who control the actual means, the opportunity, the tools, that go to produce that wealth. On the other, an inert mass of semi-conscious humanity, a dense multitude of ignorant toilers exploited till death for the price of a crust of bread. Now, what if a man, of a sudden awakening to the full comprehension of these things, becomes also conscious of their injustice, of the rights due himself and fellows as *men*? 'Are we not worth more than the crust of bread so hardly won?' he ponders. He looks around. On every side his brothers are struggling, agonising, dying for that pitiful crust, the very sum of life to them—and there within reach lies plenty for all. But the plenty has a ring of steel round it, and a fence of bludgeons, and is shrouded by the King's mantle, the Church's robe. He stretches forth a hand—and is torn to pieces. Well, but say that his death-cry at length rings home, and one and yet another rises until Discontent, twin-sister to Progress, has seized on the multitude? Then, only *then*, is it, when a wall of desperate and menacing faces confronts those serried forces, that crumbs from that plenty are doled out by its guardians, yet so slowly, so grudgingly, that the world lies white with the bones of the millions who perished while they waited. So much for Yesterday. But To-day the hewer of wood and stone, the despised of the ages, has risen through the bitter stress of struggle and failure to a fuller conception of his powers and manhood. Why wait when he can at least assert if not emancipate himself? To-day you dare not slay as often as of old when we stretch out a hand, since our death-rattle disquiets the world. We are learning to drive home our protests against wrongs that except for forcible protest, you refuse to admit. It is War—guerrilla warfare if you choose—but the arms are with you, and we have but the weapons our own hands can fashion. And I say that the State soldier who at the word of command fires into a throng of unarmed strikers, heedless of the women and children in its midst, is a thousand times more accurst than the man who, maddened by unjust suffering, fires the home or casts a bomb at the resorts of the rich. The first, wantonly obedient, aims at his brothers; the second at a pitiless enemy. The innocent victims of our reprisals are bitterly mourned, and at best have been few. Who shall sum up the lives you have sacrificed on the altar of your lusts, your ambitions, your cupidity? Bid the soldier fire a second time on a throng whose only weapon is a stone, and he does it. Bid the police clear the streets; are they tender of young or old, of those they trample or beat to death in the process? Yet the sight of one torn woman or child for ever paralyses the hand of the militant Anarchist. He fights not to take but to save life, not to enslave but to liberate, not to foster abuses but to ensure reforms. If he teaches resistance it is because bitter experience has taught him that a menacing front, a threat to retaliate—by his forefathers in the past, by himself in the present—alone forces attention to his pressing needs or just demands, alone opens the wilfully blind eyes of the 'classes' to the iniquitous system on which they only thrive. All, all has been taken from us, and when never so peacefully we urge our claims, with your laws you muzzle the press, the meetings, the lips of the worker. If, justly resenting, he resists, you 'make an example' of him. Is it then strange if on occasion the desire creeps into the mind of some desperately tried and wronged man to make an example of his oppressors? Conceive what your thoughts might have been had you, like myself, seen your wife sink at your feet dead of starvation and overwork through the callous act of a capitalist. Or what your own hand might have done if, like my brother, your brain had been fired by a long course of reduced wages, culminating on the brink of winter in the bread being torn from your own and children's mouths through the petty spite and rapacity of the man who closed the works. But no! you cannot understand these things. As I said, we may fathom your joy, but you can never fathom our misery."

A perplexed look had wiped out the truculency on the King's features. For the first time in his life he was thinking. Thinking so deeply that he noted no more than the Anarchist, whose gaze of sad inquiry still rested on him, that, as though a deep note of human sorrow had pierced the sky, the little brown bird had ceased to sing and dropped like a stone to earth, or that low, sullen growls came from

where the wolf-hound lay, his watchful eyes fixed across the stream.

For some minutes the King had been reseated, and as if appraising the meagre form opposite him, the eyes of Michael Stirn travelled slowly from the insignificant features that spoke to conduct moulded only on impulse, till they reached the small, delicate feet, and there they paused, rivetted. For round one of the slender ankles on which the King prided himself was twisted what seemed a coil of dull yellow ribbon, but above the coil hovered an ugly flat head, its bright eyes fixed greedily on a patch of flesh that showed through a rent made in the silken sock as the wearer sped across country.

Lost in problems that he had considered fit only for economists and theologians, the King was oblivious to sight and sound. He did not feel the slowly tightening grip of the snake, nor note the change that had come over the man facing him, a fateful change had he known it.

Gone was the calm strength, the proud patience, the self-control, and every other sign of the finer instincts governing his being. Once more red fire had leapt to the eyes, to flame like an angry torch; but more than all there had settled on the features, like some devilish mask, an expression of such fierce and concentrated hatred, such vindictive malice, as truly seemed a heritage bequeathed from those long ages of suffering, humiliation and injustice with which until now the "classes" have burdened the "masses."

The would-be murderer of his brother, the hereditary arch-enemy of the individual rights of men, the head of a despotic State, was at the Anarchist's mercy. One involuntary contraction of a muscle, and venom would be coursing through the King's veins that meant death to one of his weak fibre.

But the King thought on and saw nothing of the silent struggle that blanched the face and clenched the hands of the man opposite, nor noted the proud toss of the head that, as if finally disposing of the matter, drowned the lust of revenge in the sweet waters of Mercy. All passed unheeded. Only when the silence was suddenly broken by a low tense voice that seemed to fall from afar, such was its commanding tone that he instinctively obeyed.

"Do not stir! A poisonous snake is about to strike your foot—I can kill it. So!"

Dimly as in a waking dream the King saw a hand flash through the air. The next instant, as something seemed wrenched from his ankle, came three short, sharp reports from across the stream, and a man writhed in helpless agony at his feet.

So rapidly did this and what followed occur, that dazed with bewilderment the startled King sat motionless. Before he could spring from his seat the sound of men dashing through water was heard, of swift orders spoken in a familiar voice, and on the writhing form three others had cast themselves, two with their knees crushing the ribs, a third pounding the feebly moving head on the flints beneath it.

Then the King came to himself. Refusing to become a victim to false sentiment, he had ridden over a battle-field still reeking of powder, had seen disembowelled horses and mangled men by the score, but nothing there had sickened him as did this onslaught on a stricken man.

"Off from him, brutes!" he shouted, hot with shame and rage. "Pierced through throat and back the man is powerless. Call your men off, Steinkop! Before Heaven this thing is horrible."

"He deserves all we can give him," returned the Chief of Police calmly. "You may thank Heaven, sir, as I do," he added piously, "that we thought fit to track your steps this morning; another moment and you would have been stabbed to the heart. We would have shot him ten minutes ago but for fear of harming you."

"Stab me? He has no arms. He has saved my life—see!" And the King pointed to the limp body of the throttled reptile lying where it had been flung across some stones.

The police official smiled with pitiful indulgence. "I think we know our business, sir. The man at your feet is Stirn, the desperate Anarchist of whom we warned you. From information received, he designed to assassinate your majesty."

"Lies!" ejaculated the King, as with a gesture of despair he threw himself against the massive bodies that were crushing out the life under them. He might as well have tried to move mountains.

"Leave him to us. Stand back, sir; these devils are up to tricks even in their death-throes!" expostulated the Chief of Police, his voice, if deferential, harsh; for no man, were he twenty times a King must interfere with the police in the execution of their duty.

The King raved and swore in his impotency, but only when they thought they had pounded and choked it enough did Matthias and his fellows rise from the prostrate form to look

upon their handiwork. It was a sight meet for savage eyes. Blood lay on the flints on which the head had been battered, ran from a gaping wound in the neck, stained the little flowers blooming around, trickled, a growing stream, about their roots. But a convulsive gasp for breath showed life lingered, and shuddering the King stooped.

"Bring water!" he commanded.

What? Fetch drink to a dying Anarchist? That was hangman's work.

The King noted the hesitancy. In a moment, tearing the hat off his head, he had dashed to the stream, and was back to sprinkle the ashen face with reviving drops.

"Stirn," he murmured brokenly, in such sorrow and shame as he had never thought to feel, "Stirn, it was not my fault—only believe me."

Would those eyes never open? Would this fresh victim of a false system die cursing him, as he had right to do?

There was a flicker of the eyelids; for the last time dim blue eyes probed his; then, as the King bent lower, the lips parted, and a faint whisper reached his ear.

"I understand. Yet—as head of the System—the King—is—responsible."

Thus, by an Anarchist's last words, and not by his knife, was this King stabbed to the heart.

A moment more, and with what seemed the shadow of the humorous smile again hovering over his lips, Michael Stirn turned his face to the sky and died.

There was a knell for the passing soul.

"One less!" muttered the Chief of Police, his steely eyes glittering.



EPILOGUE.

Within three hours jubilation reigned in the city. Bells were ringing, *Te Deums* being sung in the churches, newspaper offices and taverns besieged by hurrahing crowds bent on news, or tipsiness cloaked under the loyal phrase "Here's to the King!" As the ministers and courtiers hurried towards the Castle the streets grew white with posters. On every hand one read: "Attempted Assassination of the King! Horrible Anarchist Plot! Saved by Chief Steinkop! Desperate Struggle of Police with Assassin! His Confession and Suicide!" The royal apartments were littered with congratulatory telegrams, and these the King read with a set face and eyes that still saw nothing but a dead man lying by a sunny stream. He had found it impossible to stem the tide. Police and press lies were already ahead of him by the time he had retraced his steps to the Castle and sick at heart sought the privacy of his apartments. Chief Steinkop had not initiated a bicycle brigade for nothing.

But one thing the King could do—he could cancel that death warrant. It had added a keener edge to his distress that Stirn had died before he could be told that this injustice should at least be righted. So the Home Secretary was sent for.

"Karl Stirn is not to die," said this other Karl briefly, after telling his tale.

"But, sir——" began the amazed Home Secretary.

"Further, I wish him to be liberated to-night."

"Dear, dear," thought the minister, shaking his bald head, "the shock has turned his majesty's brain." For he had long since been telephoned the police report, and on the strength of it ordered the Governor of the prison to keep the condemned man in strictest seclusion prior to examination by a police tribunal. For of course he was implicated in the plot. Wonderful indeed were the ways of Providence, that saved kings and capitalists and fell foul of vermin like Anarchists! After this pious reflection he answered the King soothingly.

"Very good, sir; but since you liberate him it will be unnecessary to cancel the warrant." And a smile of faint irony played about his lips.

"How so?"

"As the brother of your would-be assassin, your loyal subjects will tear him to pieces in five minutes."

"Well," mused the King, inwardly fuming as he paced the floor, "I can at least respite him."

"That, certainly. In any case I should have counselled such a course. We must get to the bottom of this affair in order to

protect ourselves against the Anarchist danger, against a sect whose fundamental principle is terror and murder."

"Am I to be believed, or only the police?" suddenly stormed the King, as the merry music of bells floated through the window.

But he did not wait for an answer. Laughing harshly, he hurried to the Queen. "You still believe the story as I told it, my dear?" he suggested.

The Queen looked pained, but she returned quite frankly: "No, Karl, I cannot. That man hypnotised you. A thing quite possible, for, as the dear Archbishop said the other day, Anarchists are in league with Hell and the Devil." (She crossed herself.) "You *thought* you saw a snake in this wretch's hand—it was really a knife. I have just seen our good Steinkop—"

Then the King gave it up.

Like all impulsive persons he was of a loquacious nature; but he became silent and morose, strolling about his great park like an unquiet spirit, his dog at his heels. Still, on the day of the national thanksgiving he went submissively to church, though he shocked the Court by a droll laugh when the Archbishop, tears of emotion trickling down his nose, extolled his courage in the supreme hour of danger; and fumbled at his throat as if choked on allusion being made to his noble if mistaken clemency towards the assassin's brother, now respited, —mistaken (and here the venerable prelate's voice pealed through the cathedral) "because humanity is thrown away upon Anarchists: the mob fears nothing so much as the police and the hangman, and the surest way to cow Anarchism is to raise the gallows on high and make an example of its votaries."

Karl Stirn faced his brother's accusers boldly; there was no getting to the bottom of the affair. As Steinkop, with well-simulated wrath, informed the Home Secretary, "these scoundrels either tell everything or shut their mouths like oysters." Karl Stirn told his tormentors in the plain unvarnished tongue of the worker, the tongue that accompanied by a flashing eye and a clenched hand is understood of all, that they lied. That in common with every true Anarchist his brother held human life in passionate sanctity; that though he might fight for his own and his fellows' rights and liberties to the death, he struck at systems and not defenceless men; that for one act by an Anarchist driven desperate by injustice or want there were twenty by desperate non-Anarchist workers like himself. Further, that if he died, he died; but that if he lived (for they had offered life as a bait) he would carry the fiery torch of Anarchism himself into every home where misery and discontent nested. They were abashed by the sturdy vehemence of the man they had meant to bully, and one more irreconcilable he was hurried to his cell.

Later, the death sentence was annulled. It was ramoured, as in every such case, that he had gone into penal servitude. But, as the King thought to himself, what is the use of being a King if one cannot do as one chooses? So he interviewed the proprietors of the Vulcan Works, of whom the manager was one. These gentlemen, albeit wondering at the royal whim, were so honoured by the distinction conferred on them that they incontinently repudiated any vindictive feeling towards their late employee. The bullets had gone wide of their mark; he had been six months in solitary confinement, had, so to speak, felt the noose about his neck; and though, as the manager snarled, the only way to handle workmen in these democratic days was to slap them in the face when they threatened revolt, a show of leniency on special occasions was not amiss to keep them in good temper. Profuse in expressions of loyalty, the "estimable gentleman" then bowed and with his colleagues withdrew.

The King lost no time in carrying out his design. He sent word to the Home Secretary that he would be visiting the city the following day, and desired that the prisoner should be released and brought before him.

But the two Karls did not meet. True, the liberation had taken place, but, through a "clerical error," in quite another manner to that intended by his majesty. For the prisoner was roused at midnight, escorted by police to the frontier, and there released under threat of severe penalties did he ever return. Had Steinkop, too, thought what is the use of being head of the Secret Police if one cannot do as one chooses?

The King knew that any endeavour to place the blame was useless; each official would screen the other. He said nothing as the Home Secretary dilated on the unconscionable impudence of present-day clerks, but his thoughts reverted to another "error" of which he might never have heard but for a chance remark of the Court Physician.

He had given instructions that the body of Michael Stirn should receive immediate and decent burial. Instead—well, for months hot controversy raged in the medical schools over the analysis of an Anarchist. For, to the wrathful dismay of

every doctor and physiologist, there was no symptom of disease in the brain. Not only was it absolutely healthy, but of a size and weight that indicated unusual mental capacity. Nor was there a trace of alcoholism in the body. These facts combined upset all their theories on the vicious habits, imbecile delusions and insanity of Anarchists, and kept the medical faculty and criminologists in what threatened to become an interminable turmoil of bitter wrangling and dispute.

Some months later Chief of Police Steinkop retired.

The press said the increasing strain of his anxious position, coupled with the shock sustained by the attempt on the King's life, had undermined his health. The King read these comments and smiled. Slowly his eyes had begun to open, police lies to stick in his throat. In his sleeping as in his waking dreams he still heard the bark of those three revolvers, witnessed again that savage yet so-called legal assault on a dying "suspect"; perpetual contact with its perpetrators depressed now that new feelings and emotions stirred his breast. But for the Queen he would have dispensed altogether with police functionaries about his person, only she nearly swooned at the suggestion. To her mind the Anarchist, instigated by his noisome father the Devil, was ever on the prowl to snatch her infant from her arms, her husband off his throne; prayer might weaken the Devil's snares, but who save the police could protect their dear anatomies?

He yielded to her terror, but neglected "our good Steinkop," much to that gentleman's amazement and disgust. For every police official, be he chief or constable, has so exalted an opinion of his own dignity and worth that to be treated with less respect than the profession demands becomes an unpardonable offence. His royal master no longer sought out the Chief for pleasant little chats or counsel—that was a slight. His pay for the exceptional service rendered the State was not increased with the decoration pinned on his breast—palpable outrage. His three subordinates, if promoted, had against his wishes been transferred to other spheres—insult not to be borne. So he resigned. And perhaps no man was more astounded than himself when he found his resignation accepted.

Still, there were compensations.

There was the State pension, not to mention royal gifts and handsome cheques tendered by bankers and financiers. The principal tradesmen presented him with his portrait painted by the Court artist; innumerable pieces of plate, jewellery and gold-topped walking-sticks were showered upon him by admiring colleagues and aristocrats; but for another "clerical error" his statue would have been erected in his native town. Unfortunately for the success of this scheme, projected by Stock Exchange clerks, the young treasurer of the fund emulating certain of his superiors on 'Change, waited until the sum in his charge had swelled to goodly proportions—when both vanished. Last, but not least, the Church sent him its blessing—the Church is always too poor to make gifts. So "Death on Anarchists," as with fond familiarity he was called by his staff (for all great men have their *sobriquets*), retired. He would not die in the workhouse. Only soldiers who give their life to King and country do that; the guardians of Capital and Private Property, the harassers of weak and poor banned by the law, do not.

On the anniversary of the bright summer morning on which the Anarchist had died, the King presented a new and beautiful park to the people. It comprised all the picturesquely wild tract across which he had wandered a year ago, that and much more; and the day being proclaimed a holiday, instantly beside every flower that bloomed along the stream's rim there seemed to grow a child. There was no counting these, the children. They danced round the bonfire in which all the "Trespassers Beware" boards now flamed heavenwards, waded into the water regardless of the indignity offered once royal trout, climbed those old trees that for generations had never felt the hollow of a child's foot, made the rafters of the ancient mill tremble under their happy shouts. Everywhere they sported like their play-fellows the butterflies.

But the aged folk, and the toilers who with deep sighs of contentment stretched their weary limbs upon the sunlit grass, these gazed with puzzled, wondering eyes at a strange thing that rose on the edge of the stream beside them. This was a large natural boulder of granite resting on a polished plinth of the same material. To some it recalled the early monuments of their race, that enduring still were strewn about the waste places of the country. So in those old days did their forefathers commemorate a battle won, thus honour a hero dead.

Perhaps what puzzled them most as they lay and listened to the soaring larks was the inscription—

"TO THE MAN WHO MADE A KING THINK."

IT MOVES!

At times we are inclined to be depressed at the very slow way our ideas penetrate the minds of the workpeople. So foreign is the notion of "freedom" to them that they are unable to conceive of such a social condition. Slaves, mentally and materially; at best, the bulk of them can only imagine a state where there shall be less work and better rations. The clear perception of what the social relationship would be, in a really "free society," seems utterly beyond their comprehension. A change of masters; the "right," perhaps, to "elect" them even, they can grasp! But to do without them altogether, to hope for the free co-operation of social and political equals in all the multifarious functions of modern complex civilisation, seems to scare most of them as much as Lincoln's emancipation proclamation is said to have terrified many of the Southern States of America. Frankly, of course, the aristocrat and the ruling middle class of to-day thoroughly understand what Anarchism means. Instinctively as well as intellectually they know that it implies the complete overthrow of all their privileges. That they should combat it in every way possible is to be expected. To coquet with semi-Socialists, Social Democrats, and well-meaning but simple and unsophisticated labour politicians, is the latest plan of those Conservatives who believe, like the late Lord Randolph Churchill, in combining very cautious social reform, with a general policy of political reaction! With it all, they appeal to the whole of the prejudices of the democracy—base or noble, as it suits their purpose.

Quite recently we have seen an ex-Cabinet Minister of the Conservative party attending the Trade Union Congress, and speaking at meetings—where prospective Labour, and even Revolutionary (do not tremble; it is already a toothless old lion) Social Democratic candidates have been on the same platform—in favour of "State maintenance for children." This simple, elementary social obligation would long since have been conceded by the ruling classes of this country had the workpeople shown the slightest grit and determination in those affairs that affect them most vitally. The same with "State old-age pensions." Both of these palliatives will come—as the latter has already in New Zealand, the most Conservative of our colonies—immediately the workpeople have got beyond them theoretically, and are demanding concessions which strike deeper at their economic exploitation.

From the point of view of the wage-earner, neither of these reforms will make much difference. But there is the danger that the power of the "State" over the lives of the people will be increased. The outburst of Imperial fanaticism, both here and in America, during the last decade does not tend to give confidence in the growth of sane views in the minds of the workpeople, as a result of compulsory "State" elementary education. In the most insidious fashion, the minds of the young are poisoned when most impressionable, and it is notorious that history is perverted by every Government in the world to its own glorification. And while the wealthy classes are able to correct this later on in life, the working class remains the ready prey to every political party which appeals to this muddled and erroneous view of the past, at the same time that they forge fresh fetters for the future.

While there is this danger confronting the worker if the "State" moulds the child, and controls old age for them, is there any compensating economic advantage? Would the position of the wage-earner be bettered in any way? The standard of comfort of the workpeople is, under present conditions, largely influenced by the competition among them to obtain employment, tempered by grim necessity. In so far as the wage-earners have, through their trade unions, assisted one another when out of work, this frightful indigent condition, so common among them otherwise, has been to some extent mitigated. And as there is not one of them so stupid as to desire the misery so common amongst them—though there is still the majority without the sense to try to remove the causes of it—once the horrors of hunger have been removed, wages have risen, on account of the competition no longer being between men made desperate by starvation.

But neither maintenance of the children by the community, right as it is, nor the pensioning of old age, though it be but simple social justice to those who have toiled all their lives, would seriously affect this ghastly struggle of the workers to be allowed to earn a living throughout their working lives—say, from fourteen to sixty years of age. Already the Education Acts prevent very young people competing in the labour market; old-age infirmities do the same with those who might be eligible for any prospective pension scheme. So the field of fierce competition, spurred by necessity, would remain untouched among the whole of the wage-earners! No wonder there is a complete combination of all the Conservative forces in their favour. From extreme right to extreme left, Tory Democrat to Social Democrat, *Daily Telegraph* to *Justice*, they are as one on such matters.

It is the lack of perception on the part of the workers, their inability to see beyond their nose on matters even of reform, that is so discouraging. Then, too, their knowledge of what is going on in other countries among their fellows is almost a blank. The Socialist Press of the world has in the past done something to enlighten them, but, unfortunately, since the different factions and parties have gone into

politics, to gain political power, they have become partisan and fanatical; at times even more distorted than the capitalist news agencies. To place "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" before their readers would not create that wild and often blind faith in the "Party" so necessary for political success. For the latter purpose, followers, not thinkers, are required. Compliance, not co-operation, is now the aim of the political Socialists everywhere.

For these reasons we are delighted to see *Reynolds's* giving the front page article space occasionally to some very well-informed writer on Continental matters of interest to Labour. Why *Justice* should have got so hysterical over the one on the "French Trade Congress" it is hard to understand. Apparently the writer is not an Anarchist. A cold, though kindly critical, observer of facts, with an understanding and sympathy with the workpeople, would seem to denote the position taken up; combined with a masterly insight into the military situation as it affects the workers of Europe. But it would seem that this is not what is wanted by "the" Social Democracy, at least as represented in some quarters. To pretend to be revolutionary, while really reactionary in politics, to preach political force when perfectly safe, and to be the first to denounce it in practice, this is more the line that suits the legally safe but shifty social politician.

That the writer referred to criticises Radicals, Socialists, and Anarchists indiscriminately is all the more pleasing. When the Anarchist movement fears criticism it will have already ceased to be a force for progress. Besides, the attitude taken up in the article on New Year's Day towards those who would save a system because it has a certain label attached, is more or less true, according to the circumstances. And it is to be feared there is an element of truth in the charge that when the French Republic craved for the help of all the advanced elements against the reactionary Royalists a few years ago they all, including many Anarchists, responded, without thought of reward or terms of any kind. But they certainly saved the Republic, poor as it is. Whether it would have been better to have helped in its overthrow, with the risk of even worse factions getting control, and little chance for those who desire something serious in social and industrial reorganisation to succeed, is certainly open to question.

However, the knowledge that almost every new and independent thinker and writer is driven, by the logic of facts, to take up an Anarchist attitude when facing the social and industrial position in Europe, is an encouragement!

If we wish for further proof of the correctness of the contention that politics drives its votaries into all kinds of practical compromises, and sooner or later into reaction, it is proved by the action of Keir Hardie and others on the question of women's franchise. They are ready to enfranchise property when represented by a woman, though woman as an individual apart from property would be shut out!

The most recent revolt in the ranks of the S.D.F. indicates that some of the younger element are anything but satisfied with the way things are drifting with that body. That this element is at present attempting an even more impossible task in the political arena is only because their economic and political education has so far been confined to the exploded Social Democratic theories of over fifty years ago. Altogether, the situation indicates the slow but sure development of our ideas.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Poland.

The workers' revolution spreads with ever-increasing swiftness through the country. In December it was tentative. The military authorities experienced difficulty in mobilising troops, there were constant conflicts between the people, the army, and the police; shot was met by shot, sabre by knife, telegraph wires were cut, railway lines and bridges blown up, hundreds of strikers paraded the towns with red banners and revolutionary songs; but the news of Sunday, January 22nd—St. Petersburg's "Red Sunday"—effectually fired the powder barrel in Poland. Up till then the strikes had been spasmodic and many factories were still open, but when, in spite of the Censor's efforts, word of the massacre filtered into Warsaw, the Poles rose like one man in their determination to revenge their brothers, if to throw off the Romanoffs' hated yoke were as yet impossible. The merits of the General Strike were known only theoretically in Poland, where the Socialist leaders discountenanced it, and where it had scarcely been discussed even; but instinctively the workers felt the utility of this new weapon at their disposal and flung themselves upon it, unchilled by the protests and aphorisms of their labour leaders at home or abroad. And well has it served them. Refused all right of assembly, knouted by Cossack police wherever two or three gathered together, trade unions interdicted, and every effort for labour emancipation punished as a crime, the General Strike struck hard the instant it was raised by capable and avenging, if inexperienced hands. For five days in succession the communities of Warsaw and every important town had to shift for themselves in darkness and a paralysing disorganisation of the internal economy of citizen life. Small groups of worker delegates visited every shop and factory and appealed to those therein to make common cause with the revolutionary party. They did so at the summons. Cabs, carriages, and trams were stopped, their drivers addressed, when all drove back to the yards, in many cases with their coats inside out to denote revolt. Immense crowds of men, women, and children paraded the streets, red flags waved, hymns to Freedom filled the air. Insufficient in number to cope with the throngs, police and soldiers

stayed at home, but they sent for reinforcements. Meanwhile, the people for once having the cities to themselves paid back some old scores. The spirit vaults—alcohol being a Government monopoly—were destroyed, the barrels being emptied into the gutter. In a short time twenty-three such warehouses were burning. Two gun shops were pillaged and rifles and revolvers dispersed among the strikers. Every Russian Eagle was torn down. That was the only deliberate damage done by the people, if we omit the pilfering of a confectioner's ginger-bread and cakes by a crowd of youngsters. The looting of a jeweller's premises, of which so much was heard, was done by intoxicated soldiers and not by the workers. When the General Strike was elected over, the police and military reinforcements arrived. The world knows well what followed, both in Warsaw, Lodz, and other places. To crown the butcheries in Warsaw, a boy of fifteen was hung. Boys must not steal ginger-bread in Russian Poland, but when big enough to wear "Little Nick's" uniform they may take watches if they get drunk first and bayonet a worker afterwards.

Germany.

There is to be a Trade Union Congress in Cologne towards the end of May, at which the General Strike is to be thoroughly discussed. This is quite a bold attitude on the part of German workers, who like their Teuton cousins, the English, are too well drilled by their leaders to dare to voice revolutionary opinions if they hold them. Both—and by the English is meant the Saxon and not Celtic blooded fraternity—are anti-revolutionary, preferring a pound of argument to an ounce of act. When the question was raised at recent labour congresses, English delegates at once excused themselves from discussing or voting for it. But Germany has now at length awakened to the gigantic powers of the new instrument of war, and means to examine it scientifically in the true Socialist manner, which is better than no manner at all. Meanwhile one may note that Governments are examining the question also, though with a view to its extermination.

Belgium.

The miners' strike is still much in evidence, and shows little sign of coming to a prompt end. In one district alone, 27,000 men are out. Small bottles or cartridges of explosive substance startle the mine-owners at times by popping off unexpectedly, but little damage beyond broken windows is done.

An agitation in favour of Sipido—the boy of sixteen who shot at the trian in which King Edward, then Prince of Wales, was passing through Brussels five years ago—is about to be organised. The boy was acquitted, it may be remembered, and went to Paris, which so shocked Leopold that on his next visit there he persuaded the French Government to arrest and ship Sipido back. He has been ever since in a reformatory, which in Belgium is equivalent to imprisonment.

Portugal.

Recent agitation is taking place over the hoped-for repeal of what is known as the "Law of February 13th," which has been brutally used against not Anarchists only, but everyone who made an anti-Governmental remark. The law is Draconian. It permits arrest without warrant, trial behind closed doors, and deportation without the right of appeal. Already two hundred persons have been transported to a distant Portuguese colony where fever is rife, or drafted into a military disciplinary corps. It is the determination of King Carlos and his ministers to gag free speech and thought in Portugal, for no revolutionary act preceded the law, which was simply a gratuitous attack on the rights of the people. The Portuguese are a quiet people; may a spark cross the border from fiery Spain!

REPORTS.

Australia.

Everything is exceptionally dull in Australia. Thousands are unemployed. Strong men are working for five shillings a week and their keep; they commence at sunrise and continue till dark. The capitalist press here wants immigration, wants to see the unemployed of London dumped in Australia where they would most assuredly starve.

At Newcastle, N.S.W., there is a strike of miners against the award of the Compulsory Arbitration Board. The wheelers demanded 7s. per day; the Board had decided for 6s. 6d. Now the authorities have issued 500 summonses against the men for disobeying the Board's decision, the penalty is £5 fine per man, the Union being responsible, or a term of imprisonment of one month. I have issued a leaflet on the General Strike, and sent over a number of copies. The strike has spread since, and looks ominous of trouble. If a few Anarchists were on the spot they could do some useful propaganda, but every-body who can spout wants a political job.

I am showing the uselessness of voting, and advocating revolutionary action, but it is terrible uphill work. Whether I can continue I don't know. The political Labour party in West Australia have recently passed a resolution condemning the Labour Government, which has done nothing but draw fat salaries.

J. W. FLEMING.

Leeds.

This Group, in conjunction with our Jewish comrades, held in Vicar's Croft (market) a thorough international revolutionary mass meeting on Sunday, February 12th, with the object of getting funds to aid the victims of that gilded Russian Cossack, the Czar of Holy Russia. A handbill issued by us was noted in the local press, with report of meeting, in a much abridged form.

Barton, Sollit, and Pollock spoke in fine style, and judging by the applause of our Yiddish brothers, their speakers must have given vigorous addresses. Pollock put the following resolution:—"That this meeting, representing the international federated groups of revolutionaries, send their sympathy and fraternal greetings to the victims of a brutal Russian Government, and promise all the help in their power to assist the Russian workers in their struggle for economic freedom, knowing full well that all Governments are a hindrance to that desirable end.

This was translated into Yiddish by a speaker. When Pollock asked the crowd to say "Yes" or "No" to it, a "Yes" went forth that made the welkin ring—unanimous, amidst hearty applause. They had listened to some good speeches in which was pointed out the position of the Russian peasant since the liberation of 1861, and describing the futile efforts of the intellectuals to gain freedom without having the mass of the nation behind them. DAVE.

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