

Freedom

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The Commune of Paris.

The 18th of March, 1871, is a date which will count in history. On that day the people of Paris rose up against its Government and proclaimed that henceforward the great city intended to be a free, independent Commune.

This time Paris did not intend to govern France. It simply asserted its right to be a free, self-governed unit. Its population was ready to accept even more than its due share of the military defence of the country; it was ready to accept its share of the national debt; ready to federate with all other parts of France for common action. But it refused to be governed by the amphibious Government, republican by name and monarchist in reality, which had seized the power after the overthrow of Napoleon III.

It claimed the right to give itself its own democratic Government, and to take those measures concerning industries, trade, education, and so on as the population of Paris itself would like to take. If its population desired to take a step in the Socialist direction, let it be free to take that step, without being compelled to restrain itself because there exist people in France who still swear by the name of an emperor or a king.

Many causes had contributed to that result. Since the suppression of the Revolution of 1848, and during the dark years of the Second Empire, everything had been done in France to kill intellectual life in the provinces. Therefore Paris had developed immensely in advance of the remainder of France. Then, the tradition of the revolutionary Commune of Paris of the years 1792 and 1793—the Commune which dominated the Convention and took the lead of all revolutionary measures—had been revived, so soon as a new popular movement in the Socialist direction had begun in France. At the same time, the idea that the State might take social reform into its hands was abandoned after the failure of State Socialism in 1848. And finally, the people of Paris, after having passed five months in isolation from the outer world during the siege, must have realised in itself such a tremendous creative force that it felt it could make some use of it.

The whole movement was thoroughly popular. It was the working men of Paris who had all the management of it—that extremely intelligent, bright population, engaged for the most part in small industries which maintain the intelligence, the inventiveness, and the artistic and creative power of the worker. A population, revolutionary through its history and full of organising capacities, of which it gave such wonderful proofs in the gloomiest years of the great Revolution and during the last siege. Now they were the masters of their city. They were the elected heads of the militia battalions, the mayors of the vestries, the military commanders of the fortifications, the palaces, the barracks; the heads of all the treasuries of wealth and art which the great world-city contains in its walls. And—what stupefied the world—they managed all that in the most democratic spirit (the highest salary of a functionary was 11s. a day), and with such an order that the foreigners who had remained in Paris could not find words to express their admiration.

In one of the pamphlets published by FREEDOM, *The Paris Commune*, the readers will find more about this wonderful movement, and still more about the horrible ways in which it was suppressed by the French middle classes after an existence of seventy days.

With the Prussian guns turned against Paris, immediately after a terrible war, this movement could not possibly succeed. The only possibility of success was if several other large cities had followed the example of Paris, and also proclaimed the Commune, and constituted a federation of rebel cities. But those which followed Paris, like Saint-Etienne, were few. The idea of independent cities becoming centres of a Socialistic Revolution had not yet ripened. Nay, the very ideas as to how a city might proceed for beginning such a revolution were not yet sufficiently clear, even in Paris, and the Commune did not take the lead in a Communistic revolution which might have given it more chances of success.

And then, one important thing must not be forgotten. We have read so much about barricades and street fighting that many of us have come to conceive a revolution as a few days' street fight in a city. This is why the workers have been so solemnly taught lately

that revolutions are no longer possible—this being taught on the very eve of the Russian Revolution!

A fight which brings about only a change of government is *not* a revolution. It is only one of its first episodes. Because a revolution consists—as we see it now in Russia and saw a hundred years ago in France—of thousands and thousands of small acts, individual and collective. Thousands of insurrections, in towns and villages, of the masses and of separate individuals; thousands of partial acts by which the *old institutions* are destroyed on the spot; thousands of individual and collective refusals of obedience, of payment of taxes, of accepting rules and obligations; thousands of violations of the old laws—this is what revolutions have been and are still nowadays.

But this *takes time*, and this is what the Paris Commune, being isolated and having to concentrate its attention on self-defence, had not the advantage of. It lived only seventy days.

Besides, the very ideas about what Socialism means were not yet sufficiently clear. The International Working Men's Association had been at work only a few years; it had only just begun to work out the leading ideas of modern Socialism and Anarchism. The *Expropriation* of all that is necessary for Living and Producing was a word that had hardly been pronounced then in small circles. The necessity of *Direct Action* on behalf of the workers themselves was not yet understood, and too much trust was laid in the elected Government of the Commune.

And yet, a great historical significance lies in the Paris Commune of 1871. It has shown us the way.

We now know one great thing: It is *not* through the Government nor through the State that the Great Revolution will come.

It is from the free, independent, self-acting Communes.

This is the political form which Socialist creative action will assume. Autocracy was the political form of aristocratic rule. Parliament is the political form of middle-class rule.

The Commune will be the political form of Socialism.

Each Revolution gives the elements for the subsequent Evolution. So it was with the Paris Commune. The enormous spread of the so-called Municipal Socialism in France, Germany and Britain is a direct outcome of the Commune of 1871. All over the world the working men saw that it is to the Commune—not to the State—and to the Trade unions—not to the Ministry—that they must look for the organisation of *collective enjoyment of wealth and collective production*. To the Commune they will look now for beginning the Social Revolution.

Moreover, another great object lesson was given. *It is the enjoyment of commodities and wealth which must come FIRST. Production must come next. Then only will it be guided by the needs of the Commune and the nation, and not by capitalist greed.*

This is an extremely important point.—Communism first! Socialised production next! This is the lesson of the last half-century. And the Commune gives the practical instrument for realising it.

This is what our Paris brothers did in 1871. They opened a new era for the future: the era of Socialist Communes.

Their attempt was stifled in blood. Once more the great heart of the world was bled for the world's enlightenment.

The orgies of the White Terror after the fall of the Commune were simply unimaginable in their bloodthirstiness. Something similar went on lately in Moscow.

But even these orgies of White Terror gave us a lesson: It is this:—In revolutions don't do things by halves! What was the use of the Communards protecting middle-class property? What was the use of their mounting guard round the National Bank? They were shot by the hundred with machine guns and buried—the shrieking wounded and the dead in the same quicklime beds—just as if they had pillaged all middle-class properties and all banks. "You have made us tremble: this is enough,—you shall die!"

Therefore, let the workers remember it. The moment they touch *anything* in our middle-class society they will be treated as the worst brigands. And as everything holds together in modern capitalism, let them be bold in whatever they begin. Expropriation on a small scale would be treated as robbery. The Commune must be made on a grand scale—with a grand, all-embracing conception of Socialist aims and of the general welfare. Then only will it have a chance of success. Then only will it answer its historical mission: that of being the medium for the coming Social Revolution.

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NOTES.

LABOUR POLITICS.

The new brooms of the Labour party have begun to sweep, and the dusty and musty atmosphere of the Commons has been quite agitated as a result. After what the past few years of Tory tactics have given us it is not difficult to make some show of meaning business. But already we begin to see how these new parties are likely to work. The I.L.P. takes the place of the advanced Radical wing, and in that position will use the whip on the "compact Liberal majority." As a result, some of the stains of the years of reaction will be wiped out, and if popular agitations are maintained, some reforms due twenty years ago will be carried out. It is an interesting situation for all of us to watch. But the real lever of the workers' emancipation lies outside of the public arena, and the great work to be done in the field of direct action will have no help from these new champions of Parliamentary methods. The Anarchists, however, find in this a field of action that will prove most fertile in the coming years, and they turn to it full of hope.

EXAMPLE BETTER THAN POLITICS.

Here are the details of what the press calls a "Hebridean Revolution":

An Edinburgh wire says that the crofters of Stoneybridge township have marched on and seized the Ormiate lands, near Loch Olay, and are occupying the Ormiate hills for cattle grazing.

The cottars of Howbeg, headed by pipers and with flags flying, marched on the farms of Ormiate and Bornish (the property of Lady Gordon Cathcart), and took possession.

They divided the land up, and are proceeding to manure the ground for potato cultivation. The Barra cottars who seized the Island of Vattersay three weeks ago are still in full possession, and have the land under cultivation.

Whatever comes of it, this is a splendid example of Direct Action, and we would that the workers of England might turn their eyes from St. Stephens and learn the true moral of it.

TOO OLD AT 35!

We read that on 26th January "a well-known London firm of caterers turned off, with one week's notice, their whole staff of waitresses, and filled their places with younger girls at lower wages."

It is a fine specimen of the exploiting spirit! A woman of 35 at ten shillings per week is "too old" when girls of 20 can be had for seven shillings. So these unfortunate victims are sacrificed for the benefit of the bloodsucking shareholders. And these unfortunate sisters of our, unemployed, drifting hither and thither, finally broken and crushed, as many will be, on the wheel of capitalism, will die before their time, while the doughty champions of labour at Westminster are clamouring for old-pensions to begin at 65! What a godsend palliatives will prove—to the governing classes.

EXECUTION OF RUSSIAN ANARCHISTS.

The *Temps Nouveau* of 27th January gives some of the names of our brave comrades who have become martyrs to the reaction. They have been shot for being Anarchist Communists and taking active part in the recent revolts. Their names are: Rosenzweig, Holschein, Rincivd, Scheier, and Pfeffer. Five others have also been shot whose names are not yet to hand. All were proud to call themselves Anarchists even in the face of their murderers. No words can measure the loss of these brave young souls—but they died like heroes in a great cause.

IMPORTANT!

Will any comrades who are able and willing to give any sort of assistance in a Children's Sunday-school in the East-end kindly communicate with Lillian Wess, 64, Capworth Street, Leyton, who will be glad to hear from any one interested in the subject?

MEMOIRS OF AN INTERNATIONALIST.

L'Internationale. Documents et Souvenirs (1864-1878). Par James Guillaume. Vol. I., Paris, 1905, X., 302 pp., gr. 8vo. 4 francs.

Those who are interested in large movements, definite results, practical politics, need not look at this volume, which does nothing to meet the usual desire for prompt, if superficial, information on the subject of the International Working Men's Association. Those who esteem painstaking historic research, which is the basis of even the smallest real historic knowledge, will read this volume of James Guillaume's memoirs with delight, and consider it as one of the very few serious contributions which we possess as yet towards a real history of Socialism.

Forty years have gone since the foundation of the International (St. Martin's Hall, September 28, 1864), and many features of the organisation of that society seem to us quite obsolete now. Who would think now of a Central Council, residing in London, to connect the different national groups, to supervise their policy, etc? Two legends have grown round this central body—the bourgeois legend, which ascribes to it the mysterious power of a centre of conspirators, and the Social Democratic legend, which makes the brain of Karl Marx rule the General Council, and by its intermediary the whole working-class movement of the sixties and early seventies. The truth has to be found by careful research, and the result is entirely in favour of common-sense. From 1864 to 1869 the Council did not interfere with the Continental movement to any serious extent, and hence was benevolently tolerated; from 1869 to 1872, when its powers were extended—just to make it look a little more lively—it misused its authority, as was to be expected, and thereby created a general revolt, which did infinite good by making people see the evils of authority, even if wielded by the most trusted Social Revolutionists. *Anarchism* as a general movement was the direct outcome of this revolt, which centred in the historic figures of Marx and Bakunin, but had many younger supporters as well on both sides, and among the foremost ones in the struggle against authority was James Guillaume, the present author.

The details of this struggle are of larger interest than the mere internal history of a society. This struggle is almost like a chapter from a far-off Utopia acted in real life. I mean this: the International comprehended all the many different types of Socialists and Anarchists of the time, and it was believed—by all parties even, at first—that some sort of an equitable, honest government like the General Council, consisting of picked Socialists and trade unionists, was possible and useful. Actual experience proved the contrary, and in the course of this resistance, afterwards revolt, the ideas of Anarchism were by and by worked out, and—in the form of a free organisation accepted by the Geneva Congress of 1873—even put in practice, to make way some years later for even looser bonds. The authoritarian Council, on the other hand, transplanted to the United States in 1872, shrivelled up very soon, to become a little mummy incapable of anything but further internal quarrelling and fantastic decrees of excommunication against the rest of the International, which hardly knew of its continued existence, until its extinction in 1876. This is the most striking Utopian story, the refutation of governmentalism by actual experience.

Up till now this history could be gathered from the *Mémoire* presented by the Jurassien Federation of the International to the other Federations, a book published in 1873 and written by James Guillaume (not signed). The three volumes which Guillaume is now preparing are, so to speak, an infinitely enlarged and rearranged edition of this *Mémoire*. But all to whom the *Mémoire* of 1873 is accessible could do nothing better than to read it before reading the present volume; this will enable them to see at once the relative importance of the different matters which Guillaume now discusses at full length. If possible, the Marxist publications should also be read first, chiefly *L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste* . . . of 1873. It is difficult to find a greater tissue of perfidious misrepresentations and lies than this pamphlet, and yet its lies are reproduced and engrossed as gospel truth in the German history of the International by G. Jaeckh (1904), which *Justice* recently translated. To expose these falsehoods and to demonstrate the real facts by documents, letters, etc., Guillaume had to discuss many facts at greater length than the casual reader would think necessary. This book will be the more useful and interesting, the better the reader is prepared to appreciate by previous studies the importance of the very great number of facts discussed or alluded to.

Apart from destroying once for all the Marxist legends about the International, the book contains many contributions towards a history of the Socialist and Anarchist movement in the Swiss Jura, chiefly in the canton of Neuchâtel. This is not of local interest only, as might be supposed. The real importance of the work of the International can, perhaps, best be studied from this example where we have to do with highly-skilled and intelligent workers, enjoying almost complete political freedom and a certain material well-being—most of which is changed for the worse to-day.

To what extent has the International affected or helped the local movements in different countries?

In the thirties and forties most Socialists gathered round certain men, and formed the schools of Owen, Fourier, Proudhon, and many others. The Chartists and the French propagandists from 1848 to 1851 alone gathered larger masses to form, to some extent, Socialist Labour parties. In the fifties all this dwindled down, but when in the early

sixties—after Garibaldi did dare and do, and a new spirit of enthusiasm arose everywhere—when in the sixties, then, the subterranean movement came to the surface again, the time of the old *schools* was gone, and the idea to create working men's *parties* sprung up everywhere—in Paris with Tolain and others, in Germany with Lassalle, in England with the Reform Movement, etc. Whilst the old schools were continually fighting and refuting each other and their different ideas could not be amalgamated, the new parties were all united in the struggle for power, and could only profit by solidarity with other parties in other countries—not in their own, of course. The Parisians, themselves a few hundreds at the beginning, were glad to throw in the face of their opponents the hundreds of thousands of British trade unionists with whom they were allied in the International—and the young English Reform leaders, at the time when Garibaldi and Mazzini were known and honoured by the English masses, were delighted to be able to record the solidarity of the Paris workers with them, and so on. Thus between these two young straggling groups of politicians the International originated, a sort of *entente cordiale*, hardly anything else in the opinion of these groups. It seems due to the useful selection of the first members of the Central Council among French and German Socialist refugees and others—a selection and preparatory efforts due to Le Lubez—that the superficial political element of London and Paris Labour politicians was counterbalanced by real Socialists, among whom Karl Marx, by his talent and writing power, soon predominated. Next to this the Congresses held in London, Switzerland, and Belgium easily permitted to distinguish mere oratory, Reform talk, from real Socialist aspirations, and a *milieu* was created for international emulation between State and anti-State Socialists. The General Council was no doubt a useful intermediary in many matters, and enjoyed general confidence. But here its rôle ends; and as this is not at all the Marxist view of the case, the fact has to be demonstrated.

The London groups considered the council their work, and elected delegates to the Council which the Council thought wise to accept, whilst adding other members from its own choice. These English sections, which knew matters too well to respect the Council as something unknown and far-distant, had to strive for years to make the Council grant them the constitution of a separate British Federation, as Marx wanted to “wield the lever” of the Revolution himself. The French sections, during those years of excitement which preceded the fall of the Empire and the Commune, certainly acted for themselves and needed no advice nor direction from the General Council. The large Lassalleian movement in Germany was outside of the International, and the slow, arduous ways by which Bebel, Liebknecht and others won over the democratic societies of Germany to Socialism could not be shortened by Marx in London. The Belgian movement dated from the beginning of the sixties, before the International existed, and the Belgians were on good terms with the General Council just because it interfered in no way whatever with their movement. The Italian movement in Naples, Sicily, the Romagna, Florence, Milan, etc., was begun by the friends of Bakunin. In Spain, Bakunin's friend Fanelli founded the first sections of the International; besides, the workers in Catalonia had long since had their own societies, hence the rapid spread and strength of the Spanish International, etc.

In Switzerland democratic societies and trade organisations existed, which easily changed names to become sections of the International. But they continued their electoral politics, and their Socialism was of the deepest blue. In the Jurassian Mountains, however, these sections by and by threw over politics, and became frankly anti-political Collectivist groups. This was done under the influence of actual experience, political and economical, and the details of this typical evolution fill a large part of Guillaume's book. Again, this reads like Utopia in real life. Here are, as I said before, working men using the political machinery under the most favourable conditions possible, and yet they arrive at the complete rejection of electoral politics.

Thus, this part of the story—the emancipation of the Jurassian workers from politics, is as typical as the other part, the emancipation of the International from authority and the origin of the modern Anarchist movement. And the characters are all alive and soon become familiar to the readers—Bakunin, Constant Meuron, Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, Perron, Varlin, De Paepe, Paul Robin, and ever so many others.

Of the book itself, it may be said that the author who, after leaving Switzerland in 1878, has for many years studied the history of the French Revolution from documents, has made every effort to be scrupulously exact, and discusses on each doubtful detail the value of his sources, etc. He used quantities of old letters written by himself at the time, the contemporary publications now almost lost, and he has been able to supplement this by the great number of documents and letters of Bakunin which came to light since those days.

As he tells the greater part of the events almost day by day as they happened, events of general and of minor importance are often put side by side, and the accidental reader will find this a drawback. It ought, however, to give an impulse to him to master the subject more thoroughly, for almost everything is of a certain importance. This history has been, and is being, to such an extent falsified by Marxist writers that the ocular demonstration of their bad faith is also of typical value, and the reader who knows the tales of Marx will enjoy the complete demolition of the Marxist system of writing history.

It is a great pity that other countries have as yet no similar books on the International. Anselmo Lorenzo published three years ago

El Proletariado Militante, the origin and first years of the International in Spain, an interesting book and written in the best of intentions, but also a sign of how much of that history is already lost and will never be recovered. In Angeloni's *History of Socialism in Italy* the International is treated quite superficially; here I hope that Enrico Malatesta will give us at last a book of memoirs that will tell this story as he alone now can tell it in full. P. Kropotkin's memoirs give us glimpses of the International in Switzerland in the seventies, but as he hurries towards the end of the book they are far too short, and will also, I hope, find further extension some day. The story of the Belgian International remains to be written, not to speak of that of the English International, which, however, was less brilliant than that of other countries, as even those Englishmen who emancipated themselves from the General Council remained under the thralldom of politics.

At present Guillaume is alone in the field, and is working on his last two volumes which will bring his story to the Hague Congress (1872) and to the Berne trial (1877) respectively. N.

The book can be obtained, post-paid, for four francs from *Les Temps Nouveaux*, 5, rue Broca, Paris.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Switzerland.

We have received the following from a Swiss friend:—

The Russian Revolution and the spirit of the new French syndicalist (trade unionist) movement have not been without influence on the Swiss movement; and all of us who are known as revolutionaries have been, I am glad to say, much in request for the past month, and almost daily we have had to make reports on anti-militarism, direct action, and the general strike. It is a joy to see how eagerly even our Swiss trade unionists, in spite of the lively opposition of the trade unionist officials, take up the “new” ideas; and this they do with a natural aptitude that proves they thoroughly understand them.

We have also gained a great number of comrades who are ardent co-workers, and for the first time for years one feels in the circle of fellow-workers a warm feeling of brotherhood—that feeling which we have missed so much of late. We have founded an Anti-militarist League, which already has many sections in Switzerland, and to which in Zurich about half of the unions belong. But we always consider as our chief aim not this organisation, which should only be a means of propaganda, but the educational work carried out on the broader lines. Thus we have also begun an agitation in the country by the aid of leaflets, so as to spread among the peasants the idea of throwing off the burden of mortgages, and of introducing communal ownership; and now we intend to attack regularly one place after another.

Friedeberg, from Berlin, was here lately. He has just made a tour of propaganda through Germany; he is convinced that the spirit of the German unions is quite different from what people imagined it was after the Congress of the union officials in Cologne. He intends to make a similar tour for us in Switzerland at the end of February.

Later on our friend wrote:—

On January 21 last a Swiss anti-militarist gathering took place at Lucerne. It consisted of delegates from the German and French Swiss, and also the Italians, representing about 4,000 men. The Zurich comrades proposed that Dr. Friedeberg should make a lecturing tour through all Switzerland and speak about his Anarchist-Socialism. Thereupon there arose a very hot and interesting debate about Parliamentarism, and the result was that all the delegates agreed decidedly with his standpoint (i.e., against Parliamentarism). Charles Naine, with whom I had a long conversation, told me that he shared entirely the views of the *Réveil* of Geneva (the organ of our comrades Bertoni and Heizig). It may also interest you to know that all the Swiss delegates, with one exception, were manual workers, the youngest of them being thirty-five, and all of them pure-bred Swiss. P.

Russia.

“On the last day that I was in Riga two girls received fifty strokes of the lash for stitching a red flag.” So writes a well-known correspondent to a London daily, and the brief sentence sums up the present situation in Russia as a greater flow of rhetoric might not. It is the old, old Russia of the whip, the chain, and the scaffold, the Tsardom that, unashamed, has faced the world since Peter the Great put his only son to the torture and stood gloating over his agony. Each Tsar that has reigned after this supreme devil has ruled his people in the same way when they showed restiveness. And now the weakest and smallest of the brood shuffles about his palace-prison impervious to the cry of his suffering people, applauding the cruelty of his officials, or by very silence ratifying it. Him we can leave to fate. “On somebody's soul all this must fall,” said an *isvostchik* to a friend of the writer. It will. A few extracts from a recent letter from one of the capitals may interest our readers: “From the first moment of arrival the prevailing feeling of suppression took hold of one, and is only strengthened by later impressions. Just now everything goes smoothly, traffic, business, etc.; the streets are full of people, but everything is so sullen, so lifeless; but for the occasional shout of a sleigh-driver one would think it a city of ghosts—no gaiety, no smile even. . . . On every street corner stands an armed policeman with a loaded rifle beside him, and the troops are ready at a moment's notice to begin their bloody work at the slightest attempt at street disturbance. Forty thousand men and women are in prison as ‘politicals’—bad food, ill-treatment, and typhus are helping to kill them off as much as the soldiers' bullets. Every morning the papers contain endless orders from the different governors, each more senseless and cruel than the other. One was to the effect that if in a certain southern village a single dagger was found, the place would be burnt to the ground. Of the cruelties going on in the Baltic provinces I cannot write—to think of them makes one not only sick, but savage. It is a stifling condition. A day of retribution must come. . . . Could you but see

the poverty-stricken villages! And to know that hunger dwells in each hut, that the people are packed together in a small space like herrings, that they are not shot because their labour is needed, while they are but dirt in the eyes of the Government! . . . Forgive me for saying so much about the conditions here—but one cannot forget them—one *breathes* them." (That last—what a significant phrase!)

Until with increased pay and better food the Government had again got the whip-hand of the troops, a show of leniency, of, it may be, studied pusillanimity, seemed best for coping with the situation; but once with an army behind him, Nicholas again is master for a time. Perhaps it is best so. Future Gaps and leaders will not again point to a Duma as a possible step to freedom: the people themselves now know that not a promise, not a word spoken by their rulers is to be believed; these will lie and lie, kill and kill. So has it always been, so in Russia will it always be while an autocrat sits on the throne. Both must go. But meanwhile? Meanwhile every thinking man, every out-spoken woman, the "intellectuals," Socialists, peasants, all who of late have dared to act or speak freely, are being massacred or imprisoned. When the reactionist party grows weary of the smell of blood it will pause—and then, then the peasants will have something to say. Now they are sullen and silent. They see their women stripped and lashed by soldiers, their homes burnt, their trusted leaders shot without trial before their eyes. Defenceless, their arms gone, they can but stand and wait. "On somebody's soul all this must fall."

One of the signs of the times is the increase of Anarchist groups. One year ago Russia hardly knew what Anarchism meant. Now it is no longer so, for the new field has proved a fruitful soil. As usual, the habitual activity and determination of those of our creed has led to extreme measures being taken against them by the Government. For avowed Anarchists there is no quarter. They are shot or hung without trial in batches wherever found. And this is happening so frequently where a bomb explodes or an official is executed, that it is quite apparent the name is used by the authorities to cloak their constant butcheries of revolutionary Socialists. Russia is too vast for Anarchist influence to have risen in one year to the height claimed for it by Witte's mercenaries, and the crimson hands of the *gendarmes* and Cossacks need whitewash even in Russia. Anarchist? Hang him. Social-Democrat? Call him Anarchist and shoot him. How simple, and saves so much trouble! Well, brothers, if in life we two of a creed differ, death makes us one, and to die for a people and a cause under any name, be it Socialist or Anarchist, folds us in the self-same and sublime shroud.

France.

Anti-militarism is at present the chief point of interest in French revolutionary circles. The savage sentences passed recently on the signers of the Paris poster that drew down the thunder of the law have neither scotched nor killed the advocacy of human brotherhood by anti-militarists as the authorities hoped they would. This placard had perhaps twenty signatories; now we hear of others posted boldly in every leading garrison town, some with eighty-three signatures, others with over a thousand, all calling upon the conscripts to refuse to fight another nation at the mere command of the governing party. No people, as the posters point out, has a constant desire to fly at its neighbour's throat—ill-feeling is always to be placed at the doors of the respective Cabinets, seldom to the nations themselves. The propaganda increases daily and the authorities are at their wits' end how to suppress it. At present they content themselves with fines and imprisonment, both of which are cheerfully borne by the delinquents, and as these swell in numbers (witness the thousand odd signatures attached to a recent placard), prosecution becomes costly. Taken in its entirety, the question is by no means an easy one. There are times when men must fight—that is, so long as the present system lasts. It is hardly likely that the Germans could walk rough-shod over France without the hottest anti-militarist rising in wounded pride to knock down one of them, and after that as many as he could. Human nature is the rock-bed of all action. No man will stand calmly by to see wife and children ill-treated or his house burnt over his head. At such moments he must raise his hand or be no man. But it is only those countries where conscription is rife that know the true meaning of a standing army, of militarism. Even in England, without conscription, the viciousness of barrack-life is an open secret, while the camps in India are hotbeds of unspeakable degradation and vice. These things, though never publicly alluded to, are well known. Still, in England only a percentage of the population is liable to contamination—on the Continent every woman's son has to pass through the fire. And no matter how peaceably disposed a man by nature may be, there is something that essentially brutalises him when for one or three years he lives surrounded by talk or scenes of blood and away from all that is elevating to the mind and morals. You have but to look down a weekly list of murders, of assault and cruelty of one form or another, to note that in almost every single case the criminal has been or is a soldier. The nations are slowly awakening to the full horror of militarism, and France, as usual, is to the fore. Also as usual, it is a question the people will have to solve for themselves—no Government will help them to it, but rather baffle them to the utmost.

The Workers' Friend Club and Institute,
165, JUBILEE STREET, MILE END, E.

LECTURES

Every SUNDAY MORNING at 11.30.

Sunday, 11th March.

F. KITZ.

Plan of Campaign against Landlordism and Capitalism.

Sunday, 18th March.

A. MARSH.

Rebels at Mile End in A.D. 1381, and other English Revolts.

Sunday, 25th March.

F. KITZ.

Our Ideal: the Abolition of Wage Slavery.

LITERARY NOTE.

M. Nettlau writes: In *Freedom*, December last, I called attention to an early English Anarchist pamphlet which seems almost lost now, and I guessed that its author was A. C. Cuddon. This is confirmed by a paper which Mr. B. R. Tucker, editor of *Liberty* (P.O. Box 1,312, New York), kindly sent me. *The Periodical Letter on the Principles and Progress of the Equity Movement*, vol. I., No. 4, Josiah Warren's paper (*Modern Times*), contains long extracts from "Tract No. 1" of the "London Confederation of Rational Reformers" (pp. 52-57), besides a letter from J. Warren to A. C. Cuddon, in which the words occur—"believing you to have been the author of the foregoing tract."

The question remains, What became of A. C. Cuddon after 1862, and are there other Anarchist writings of his besides the tract and the statement of principles (1854), the notes to Burke's *Vindication* (1858), which can safely be ascribed to him, and the articles in the *Working Man* and the *Cosmopolitan Review* (1861-1862)?

OPENING OF A NEW CLUB IN THE EAST END.

There has been much rejoicing among the Jewish comrades recently, and February 3 was quite a red-letter day for them. The "Workers' Friend" Club was opened on that day at Jubilee Street, Mile End. The meeting was well attended, and the hall, though large, was packed almost to overflowing. Comrade Rocker opened proceedings, and spoke of the many trials and persecutions which had been their experience during the last few years, and how it had finally culminated in the determination to get a place of their own. This had now been accomplished by the Federation of Yiddish-speaking Anarchist groups.

There was a great burst of enthusiasm when Kropotkin arrived, and cheer after cheer went up as he made his way to the platform. He began by saying how much pleasure it gave him to be present on such an occasion, and he sincerely congratulated the comrades on securing this fine hall for their new home, and also that it had been done out of their own hard-earned pence without any middle-class assistance. He wished them every success in their undertaking. He also made touching reference to our comrades in Russia. "The hearts of our brothers," he said, "will be gladdened to know that here in London you have a home where they will be sure of finding a welcome awaiting them if circumstances should force them to leave the land where they are now fighting so nobly for the cause of Liberty."

Comrade J. Turner gave a short but very interesting account of the old Berner Street Club, which many comrades will no doubt remember. He expressed the hope and belief that this new venture would prove the means of helping on both the English and Jewish propaganda, and would bring both sections more in touch with each other. E. Leggatt and others also spoke. Letters and telegrams from comrades in Hull, Norwich, and Belfast, also from Comrade Malatesta, were received, each wishing hearty success and prosperity. Vocal and instrumental music, followed by dancing, brought a very enjoyable evening to a close.

English classes are in progress, also lectures in Yiddish, and a series of technical lectures is being arranged. On Sunday mornings English lectures on the Social question are being given, whilst Sunday evenings are pleasantly occupied by readings from famous thinkers.

A Sunday School for the children is to be started as soon as arrangements are complete. It is to be hoped that all comrades who are able will find an opportunity to visit the club, and thus give the comrades the encouragement they deserve.

LILLIAN WESS.

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