

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY

THE FAILURE OF STATE-SOCIALIST LEGISLATION.

There comes to hand just now from various sources such a scathing indictment of the State-Socialist measures which have been on trial of late years that we propose to give extracts with comments, and leave unprejudiced minds to form their own conclusions.

There is in *Wilshire's Magazine* a paper on New Zealand from which it is possible to see how all the State-Socialist measures taken in this colony in the years 1865-1890 were reduced to naught by the fact that the land of the colony remained in the hands of the landlords.

The population of New Zealand numbered only 600,000 persons, but there was land enough to support 20,000,000 people; and yet, there being no enterprise on behalf of the land-owners and the capitalists, the colony was extremely poor, and more than 20,000 people had to emigrate.

Several State-Socialist measures had been passed. The telegraph lines, the railways, the telephones, had been taken over by the Government; the cities were allowed to build and operate their own street railways; some State-banking was introduced.

"But," we read in this paper, "all of these things together did not provide work for an additional man. The Government employed no more men to operate the railroads, telegraph, telephone, lighting plants, street-railway lines, etc., than did the private capitalists who formerly owned them. The Government, by owning and operating these public utilities, simply afforded an opportunity to those who were already in receipt of incomes to obtain for less money the services offered by these various utilities. In short, the Government simply reduced the cost of living."

Then the working men of New Zealand understood that so long as all the land of the country was not considered public property, so long as everyone was not entitled to get out of that land the amount which he was capable and willing to cultivate himself, nothing would be changed. This is now realised, and their cry is now for "free land."

New Zealand is thus a new proof of the truth which we have advocated:—Municipal and State Socialism, without the land being declared the property of the nation, is of no avail; just as the nationalisation of the land would be ineffective were it not accompanied by the socialisation of all the industrial capital as well.

Turning now to the *Coast Seamen's Journal*, which, like *Wilshire's*, favours political action, we find the wholesale denunciation of a "reform" that several weak-minded labour men here are wasting their time in advocating. We allude to Compulsory Arbitration, which has been on trial for some time now in New Zealand. In the *Journal* for August we read: "Criticism of the Compulsory Arbitration law is not confined to one paper, nor to one organisation, nor to one locality. In fact, that system is condemned in unmeasured terms throughout Australia."

Here is what the *New Zealand Worker* says on this subject:—

"To-day the workers who were married to the Arbitration Court are seriously considering whether it is all that they thought it.

"Looked at in the light of satisfying all the desires of the working classes, the Arbitration Court has been, and will always be, a failure.

"Regarded from the point of view of a machine for adjusting disputes and preventing strikes, it has accomplished what it was created for—prevented strikes. It has sat heavily on the chest of unionism; it has by its protracted delays in dealing with disputes half strangled some unions, but it has prevented strikes.

"So much for the good it has done! What harm has it done? It has brought into existence a form of unionism who does not conceive any greater economic truth than that an application to the Court may produce a rise of a shilling or two a week.

"It has washed out all the sentiment of unionism; it has entirely abolished the larger landscape of Labour's possibilities; and has

reduced unionism to a spineless inactive mass of political and economic inertia kneeling placidly at the feet of a tribunal for a shilling a day more.

"Not only has it done this, but it has split up the forces of Labour into isolated atoms without cohesion of any sort, until to-day we find the Labour movement in New Zealand a discordant tangle of dissimilar objectives—without any aim in common save that of getting better wages and conditions from the Arbitration Court.

"Now that the workers have failed to get all they want from the Court, what are they going to do? Wages have increased 8 per cent., the cost of living has increased 30 per cent. A clean loss to the workers of 22 per cent."

The following are the views of Secretary Belcher of the New Zealand Seamen's Union:—

"Referring to the award generally, the position is this: The seamen have not gained one single concession. On the contrary, the Court have imposed further work on the poor fellows who now work eighteen hours a day, and deprived them of an overtime payment which they have hitherto been in receipt of. And this award has been made in spite of the fact that the evidence has proved the ship-owners to be in an exceptionally prosperous condition. They are paying good dividends, are constantly adding large and costly vessels to their fleets—all paid for, on the evidence of Mr. Holdsworth, out of profits and earnings. . . . The fight has been unequal, and the power of the 'almighty dollar' has again prevailed. I always believed that truth, right and justice must prevail, but my faith in these virtues has been rudely shaken—so much so that my energies in future will be directed against arbitration, which ignores truth and justice, and throws its weight into the scale against the worker."

Finally we quote from the *Worker* of Brisbane, Queensland, one of the best of the Australian Labour papers:—

"The worker's attitude towards this measure is well known. We have no enthusiasm on the subject. We cannot pretend that we expect a good deal from it. Its inadequacy has been demonstrated in New Zealand. It has prevented strikes, but it has not done away with the necessity for strikes; that is to say, it has not prevented the exploitation of labour, nor greatly minimized it.

"Nevertheless, we recognise Industrial Arbitration as a necessary phase of our movement. The Labour parties of Australia have made up their minds that there is something in it, and whether there is or not only direct experience will convince them.

"When Labour has completed the capture of political power, it may be that the arbitration tribunal will be shaped and sharpened into an instrument to make the thieves disgorge. But that is still in the future, and for the present the question is whether arbitration makes for progress or acts as a soporific."

This is what the friends of legislative methods have to say of the first fruits of all their efforts to make a legal and peaceful transition from wage-slavery to Socialism. We regret the waste of time and energy. We regret still more that so few workers are aware of the facts.

SOCIALISM IN AUSTRALIA.

From accounts which we read in the *Socialist*, an excellent eight-page paper appearing in Melbourne, there is a very healthy activity in the advanced ranks of Socialism. Tom Mann, secretary of "The Socialist Party," is lecturing to large audiences, and the unemployed agitation is being developed and kept to the front with an energetic defiance of the authorities that will force them to consider the question. At the same time a hall has been taken and opened as "The Socialist Institute," and here the comrades are very active. We read also that a Socialist Co-operative Trading Society has been started, and Socialist Dramatic Society gives performances, and the Socialist Sunday School is proving a valuable educational agency. Some day, perhaps, London will be as advanced as Melbourne. We send hearty greetings and good wishes to our friends on the other side.

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NOTES.

TOLSTONIAN OR TERRORIST?

The *Daily News* of August 23 gives a striking instance of a Tolstonian turned Terrorist. Any ordinarily sane person can understand clearly that these very people—the Tolstonians—who erect submission into a principle would under given conditions be driven to adopt active resistance. We will do them the justice to say that no Tolstonian would stand calmly by and see wife and children outraged and murdered without raising a finger to save them. It was the wanton murder of an old white-haired Jew before the eyes of his young son that made this man a Terrorist. Here is what he says:—

"Then I became a Terrorist, as you call it. I rushed towards the troops, and tried to address an officer. I do not know what I did. I was half-demented with grief and rage. A policeman struck me on the jaw, and I was beaten almost to death by a whole company of soldiers. Then I was thrown into prison. I was packed into a cell with thirty men; there was scarcely room to move our arms. As the heat grew more oppressive and the atmosphere, already vile, grew viler still, all semblance of human beings was lost. The scene became one that only a Dante could describe. And when I came out after months of torture that hell itself might be defied to match, broken by misery and degradation, and stamped as a 'political criminal,' I began to regret bitterly my mistake. I was a Tolstonian no longer. I became a Terrorist."

It is criminal stupidity to talk of non-resistance in the face of all that is happening in Russia to-day.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF "CRIME."

Criminology has of late years become a science of much importance, and although there has been a good deal of nonsense written on the subject by those who cling to old prejudices, a deal of much-needed light has been thrown on this dark subject. In *Health* (New York) two instances are given of surgical operations performed on boys "who had exhibited unmistakable vicious tendencies." In each case injuries to the head had been sustained and trephining was resorted to, "with the result that in one case a piece of bone an inch long was removed from the brain, and in the other a depressed bone was raised, both operations being followed by marked mental and moral improvement." Had it not been for our stupid and, let us add, barbarous habit of leaving to the law, with its petrified judges and brutalised police, the treatment of our criminals, public opinion would have recognised long ago that these unfortunates—the viciously inclined—from some cause or other are *mentally crippled*. As investigations proceed it will doubtless be made clear that the "law" has been hanging and imprisoning wretched human creatures whose brains have been injured or diseased, and who, living in a state of society that favours insanity, have been driven to commit crime. The paternal State doesn't spare the rod, but it "spoils" its children all the same.

THE VALUE OF THE VOTE.

Seldom now-a-days do we read such good common-sense as Blatchford has written in the *Clarion* for August 24, on the subject of woman's suffrage. No one can put a thing more tersely than Blatchford, even when, as unhappily occurs sometimes, he puts a thing wrong. But in this case who can deny him when he says as a reason for not making a speciality of

this question:—"But I have been trying to help women and children and men, not by casting a vote once in a bundle of years, but by showing the cause of the evils under which men and women suffer, and by suggesting that the cause should be attacked and destroyed." And again: "Votes are good things to have—perhaps. But votes are not so good to have as knowledge. The most powerful human weapons are ideas. . . . Give me a womankind with their hearts and souls in a cause and that cause will be won—won without a vote." Such a breath of fresh air as this comes as a tonic after all the trash of electoral campaigning. It might even purify Worcester. Let the "Clarionettes" wear these words of Blatchford's as their badge: "It is not votes that matter; it is fervour, devotion, love."

THE ETHICS OF EXPROPRIATION.

The tactics adopted by the so-called "land-grabbers" have the advantage of calling public attention to the land question, and of worrying the authorities who are responsible for the sacred rights of private property, and that is all. It must be said, of course, that anything is better than apathy, and even the semi-farcical manoeuvres of the unemployed show what a depth of serious import there is in the whole situation, and how the necessity for drastic action presses on all sides. What is really necessary, however, at the present time is an uncompromising campaign against the whole evil of feudalism, which still curses England and bars the people from the land. Even those who only ask for radical reform of the land laws can only hope to gain it by a strong agitation. As for ourselves, who would be too glad to see the labourers turn the land thieves out neck and crop, we support the action, feeble though it be, of those who take for their use and for the means of subsistence that which every man in equity is entitled to—a piece of this earth to live on.

THE MORAL OF THE STRIKE.

We wish we had space to quote in full a remarkable article that has appeared in the *San Francisco Bulletin*, headed "Why the Working Man Wins with the Odds against Him," which bears out the argument of our French comrades that the success of a strike does not depend on financial resources. It begins by stating that "working men on strike have an advantage in their poverty that overbalances all the massed wealth of their employers. This is a paradox, but for all that it states a deep truth of political economy." After pointing out the two sides of the problem, it continues:—

Why, then, do the working men win so many strikes? Why are they so much more steadfast than the employers? Why, to consider a particular case, have wealthy shipowners in the existing strike on the water front broken away from their associates and yielded to the unions, while not one union man of the thousands that left their work has deserted his union? Isn't it strange that the men who possess the largest resources should surrender to the men whose main resource is simple fortitude and strong devotion to a principle—admirable qualities, but not nutritious?

Money, which is rated as a source of power, is rather a cause of weakness. Capital makes cowards of us all. The rich man has much to lose; the poor man, so long as he has his hands and health is confident that he can do hard labour and live, if things come to that extremity. The man of money has acquired necessities that bear him down. He lives on an expensive scale. His wife must have fine dresses and servants to help her. His daughter's social ambitions must not be thwarted. His son at college must have a liberal allowance. Luxury, long enjoyed, breaks down character. The opulent man fears a diminution of his copious revenues more than the mechanic fears downright penury. The capitalist cannot bear to view his pile of hoarded wealth dwindle. His joy has been to behold it grow larger from year to year, and he has become by a slow process the slave of his superfluous capital. In him the desire for more money is often stronger than any sense of fidelity to his class or his colleagues. When he enters into a compact with other employers he looks on the combination purely from the point of commercial self-interest, and when he sees that his interest would be served by breaking away from his associates he breaks away without any sense of shame, for he feels that any of them would do the same thing. His fellow employers are his competitors, and he does not love them. If he were to ruin their business he would profit by their loss. Consequently, in confederating with them he is moved by no altruistic feelings. He goes in the direction of more money, whatever tack he takes.

The working man, on the contrary, is sentimental rather than mercenary, in his zeal for his union. He will not quit the union when an employer, whose men have struck, offers him wages above the union scale. He thinks more of his fealty to his fellow working men than of his pocket. That is why he wins so many strikes with the odds against him.

RIGHT OF ASYLUM.

Will all comrades interested in the right of asylum communicate at once with the Secretary, Right of Asylum Committee, care of *Freedom*, 127, Ossulston Street, Euston Road, London, N.W.?

VIVE LA REVOLUTION.

Seldom have we read such an inspiring tribute to the grandeur of the Russian Revolution as that written by M. Anatole France in his preface to M. Sémnoff's new book. Let us hope it will be read by the workers of every nation.

We are indebted to *Justice*, Sept. 1st, for the following translation of an extract:—

"We stand transfixed with admiration and overwhelmed with anguish at the sublime refusal of these workmen, before the invincible front they offer to the condemned régime. A multitude of people exposing themselves with a single heart to the blackest misery, to the tortures of hunger and of cold, and counting only, for its own safety and the triumph of the cause, on its inflexible will to suffer; has ever anything greater been seen in the world's history?

"The general strike, the strike of the proletariat and the 'intellectuals'—united for a few days—has conquered Tsarism. This monster of power, of pride and of wealth, goes down before workmen who can bear hunger. The strike was victorious, and the Tsar gave way. He promised a Constitution, liberty. . . . One knows the rest, how the military bureaucracy, to cancel imperial promise, organised massacres of workmen, of students, of 'intellectuals,' of Jews. In three towns, at the same time, black bands, carrying the image of the Tsar and the flags of the empire, march, armed, under the escort of the police and of agents of the public safety, against the Jewish quarters. They kill, violate, pillage and burn, for whole days and nights.

"This also one sees at Baku, Odessa, Kiev, Nikolaiev, Elisabethsad, at Ronster-sur-le-Don, Saratov, Tomsk, Toev, Ekaterinoslav, Tiflis. Then we learn that all is calm. Wretched Jews escaped from death, wept in silence, sitting on the ruins of their burnt homes, near the corpses of their butchered relatives.

"The tears of the unfortunate, the blood of the dead, cry out and we hear them. We have the religion of humanity. We know neither Jews nor Christians. We only know murderers and their victims. Dead of Kiev, Baku or Saratov, and of Odessa, Ghosts of Gomel and of Belostok, raise yourselves, show yourselves to the rich, to the happy of the earth, you mutilated corpses, return again and again, until the whole world revolts in horror!

"How long will the mad agony of Tsarism endure? Of what terrors is the monster yet capable? What régime can succeed it? Can the revolutionaries and the Russian Liberals be paid for all their labours? Can all the generous blood of 'intellectuals' and of the revolted, who in the streets perished for justice and for liberty, have been shed in vain? Whatever may be the issue of the enterprise so vast and terrible, the Russian workers have, up to the present, exercised a decisive influence on their country and the world. The Russian Revolution is a universal revolution.

"It has revealed to the workers of the entire world its means and its ends, its powers and its destinies. It menaces all despotisms, all oppressions, all exploitation of man by man. Thrones are shaken by it. In ancient Austria the Revolution rumbles. In Germany, Social Democracy powerfully organised, but up to now placid and good-natured, looks over to St. Petersburg and Moscow and begins to stir itself. Bebel has told the Chancellor and the Deputies of the Empire of it, and the old Socialist has given to the counsellor of the Kaiser this sinister warning: 'Reflect: the revolutionary uprising which is taking place in Russia has its echo in the heart of the German workman.'

"And we Frenchmen, is our political and social state such that we have no need to occupy ourselves with the great changes that are preparing in the world? Have we no black bands? Is the time of Meline and Dupuy so far distant, when the Nationalist terror reigned in Paris, and when a Dominican monk publicly exhorted the 'Generalissimo' of the French army to the massacre of Republicans?

"We do not lose sense of proportion. The affairs of our country are as light comedy to the sombre drama of Russia. It is on the banks of the Neva, the Vistula, and the Volga that is being decided the lot of Europe and humanity of the future. Strange change of nations and ideas. Our brothers of '89 have taught Europe the 'bourgeoisie' revolution, and here, in return, the Russian workers give us the lesson of social revolution.

"At this hour, when noble men, whom it is for us neither to urge on nor to hold back, labour and suffer for the deliverance of the oppressed of Russia and of the world, the French proletariat ought to declare itself solid for the Russian proletariat. If our governors, if our ruling classes, attempt at any time some movement—military, diplomatic or financial—in favour of Tsarism against the Revolution, the French workers ought to oppose it with all their might.

"Let us pledge ourselves here to help, to serve by all the means in our power the Revolution, which, far off though it be, rumbles in our ears, for there is already no distance between peoples. Let us send fraternal greetings and respectful homage to the Russia which fights for its liberty; to Finland, so firm in its hold on rights violated by a

perjured emperor; and to Poland, which knows, with a glorious mixture of terrorism and of wisdom, how to reconcile legitimate aspirations and necessary solidarity, and let us make heard this new great thought:—

"Workers of all countries unite to prepare for the coming of social justice and the peace of the world."

LITERARY NOTES.

Essays in Socialism New and Old. By E. Belfort Bax. E. Grant Richards. Price 5s.

There is undoubtedly plenty of room for volumes on Socialism written from the English point of view, or rather let us say to awaken the English mind to a conception not only of the basis but also the ideals that would support and animate a Socialist society.

It is hardly to such volumes as this by Belfort Bax that one would look to help in this direction. These *Essays* are too pedantic, too didactic, too involved—have too much to say about innumerable side-issues—to leave any clear impression on the reader's mind as to what Socialism really means. Many of the chapters, indeed, seem written for the express purpose of arousing controversy over a number of mere abstractions that end in nothing. The writer is in his element in the thick of all this, and fills his pages with such writing as the following:—

"In philosophy Pallogism takes various shapes. It starts with the conception of the primitive unity of the consciousness as purely formal. In its 'theory of knowledge' it proceeds to oppose the category to the sense impression as the only True, the universal in contradistinction to the particular, as the only Real. Its Metaphysic postulates the Absolute as the totality of the system of Categories in which the Material and Sensible are abolished. Its psychology similarly founds on the absolute absorption of feeling and will in reason."

All of which must be highly instructive to the man who wants to know how Socialism proposes to ensure well-being for himself and family!

It is only fair to say that the reader will find now and then some strong writing on some phases of social life deserving of all the condemnation it receives. We give an example, and leave it to those who care to wade through the book to find others:—

"Varnished over with hypocrisy, which finds its expression in ostentatiously favouring every ascetic movement that does not touch the root principle of profit-mongering, with its head in its day-books, and its soul in its till, the small middle-class in its various sections is the great obstacle which will have to be suppressed before we can hope to see even the inauguration of a consciously Socialist policy."

Poverty: Its Cause and Cure. A Worker's Appeal for Direct United Action. By W. Barker. L. Scholefield, Meadow Lane, Leeds. Price 1d.

This is an excellent penny pamphlet, which it is to be hoped will have a wide sale. As Comrade Barker says, "this is an appeal from one working man to another for direct united action, but it is none the less an appeal to every earnest man and woman." It is a clearly-written and well-constructed appeal, and in the exposition of "Direct Action" some capital points are made. It is well the workers should be reminded of this fact about the Chartists: "When they relied on mere petition—2,000,000 signatures were appended to the Petition of Rights and presented to Parliament—did the Government of that time consider or concede anything? No. The petition was ignominiously kicked out of the House. What is the lesson of all this? Simply this and nothing more—No reform, no liberty, [except what you are prepared to take." There are plenty of similar facts and figures given that will be helpful in educating the workers on questions that are often purposely obscured by those who wish to keep them in leading strings. We hope comrades will push the sale of this very useful little work.

The Makers of Wealth. By Geo. Pyburn. Published by the author, 1011 H Steet, Sacramento, California. Price not given.

This beautifully printed pamphlet gives a most interesting *resumé* of the reasons for regarding wealth as an absolutely social product. He who runs may read and understand this reasoning, so free is it from all doctrinaire obscurity. There is no advocacy of any special "ism," though finally the author gives the impression that he would regard Communism as the most just method of satisfying the needs of humanity. Incidentally he makes a quotation from Wagner, the great composer, which we must give if only to show the deep insight of that wonderful man into the real cause of the people's misery:—

"The mob is in no wise a normal production of human nature, but is instead the artificial product of your unnatural culture; all the crimes and horrors which you find so repulsive in the mob, are only desperate incidents of the war which real human nature is waging against its cruel oppressor—modern civilisation. . . . From possessions which have become *private property*, and which now, strangely enough, are regarded as the very foundation of good order, spring all the crimes both of myth and of history."

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

United States.

The case of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone is still agitating the workers of America. That a great struggle will be fought out over this case if the men are not released is now quite evident. There seems to be, however, as often happens, a good deal of cowardice amongst some of the "leaders," and we read in *Common Sense* (Los Angeles) that some of them tried to prevent the labour union men from using the labour union hall for a meeting of protest. However, we are glad to hear the men came off best, and administered a severe rebuke to the cowards. The tone of their appeal for their comrades rings true. Here is an example:—

"We stand determined to stick to the end with Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, and if their lives are sacrificed we are ready to sacrifice ours also in order to bring to the scaffold their murderers. Do not think this is idle talk, for the working classes have never before been so aroused, nor have the crimes of the rulers of Colorado and Idaho or of any other province been brought to the knowledge of the working class with such startling clearness. Seeing this conspiracy of the Mine Owners Association laid so bare only the most dull or vicious can fail to enter a violent protest."

France.

An instance of the abominable methods of the police has arisen over the imprisonment of Grandidier, who was "marked" for his anti-militarist propaganda. It seems he stayed a few days with a workman named Dagois, a man of weak character. This gave the police their opportunity, and after intimidating Dagois, at whose house they paid a domiciliary visit and "discovered" some explosives, they induced him to declare these had been received by him, and to implicate Grandidier. The latter was arrested: the denunciator left free. Then remorse overtook Dagois, and he recalled his words and signed his revocation. After this Grandidier was acquitted, and Dagois sentenced to six months' imprisonment. This ending did not suit the *provocateurs*, and presently Dagois again renewed his accusations. Again Grandidier was arrested, and this time sentenced to a year's imprisonment. A committee at St. Denis has been formed to try to obtain his liberation, and we hope to see another exposure of the black work of the police. In England, too, steps will have to be taken to defeat the tactics being employed against foreign comrades, of which Greenstein is the first victim.

Spain.

Every effort is being made by the authorities in Madrid to involve Ferrer (director of the "Modern School") and Nackens, the courageous editor of the Republican journal, *El Motin*, in Moral's attempt on the life of the king. These brave, earnest and enlightened men are only being singled out with some other comrades for the vengeance of the Government. All know them to be innocent, and men devoted to the educational advancement of the Spanish people. This, however, in Spain is a crime only second to bomb-throwing,—if indeed the priest does not hate it far more than the spilling of blood, which after all has never caused him any qualms of conscience. In Spain it is quite well understood that all these devilish devices will not retard by a day the coming of the revolution.

Tierra y Libertad, whose publication had been interrupted by the persecution of the Government, is now, we are happy to say, reappearing. The new address is Calle del Olivar, 50, 3^o, 4, Madrid.

Belgium.

The activity of comrades here in the matter of publications is very encouraging. With the liberation of Henri Fuss-Amoré *L'Action Direct* begins once more its excellent propaganda as the organ of the General Confederation of Workers (Belgium). Emile Chapelier has now added to his other labours the editing of *L'Emancipation*, organ of the Free Communist Group of Stockel-Bois. Too much praise cannot be given for the production of this little paper, appearing every Saturday. All who read French will appreciate its high qualities.

An Urgent Appeal.

The following sums have been received to help support a little child of Russian parents left under most sad and touching conditions. The father hearing his brother had been hanged by the Tsar's butchers, nobly left to take his place in the ranks of the revolutionists. The mother meanwhile gave birth to the child, but grief killed her, and we ask for help for the orphan.

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