

Freedom

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1907 AND THE PRESENT OUTLOOK.

The year 1907, rich in congresses, acquainted us with very many details of the recent history of the Anarchist, Socialist and Labour movements which I had but very limited opportunities to examine; still, I shall try to gather from what I know the main points of the present situation and tendencies of all these movements, to see what is being done, and what is, in my opinion, left to do.

We notice first *the utter failure of political Socialism*. The Socialist vote grows quicker than do Socialist ideas; hence all the millions of Socialist and Labour votes carry no real strength with them, and political power turns out to be something finer organised and more complicated to yield at the mere pressure of the ballot. The bourgeois vote has at its back the determination of all voters to have a Government, of whatever party it may be, that will defend Capitalism against Socialism; whilst the Labour vote has as yet at its back but a few real Socialists and infinite numbers of half-hearted persons to whom Socialism is worth casting a vote for every few years, but to whom it is not worth any other serious effort in everyday life. Hence Governments either ignore the Socialist vote, as they do in Germany, where Social Democrats have the strongest voting power of all parties; or they use these Socialist and Labour Members as inoffensive parts of their Radical majorities, and pay them with Governmental benevolence of various kinds, and some of their chiefs with seats in the Cabinet—witness Millerand, Briand, Viviani, and the Right Honourable John Burns. To remain absolutely powerless with millions of votes at their back, or to be permitted to desert their ideas, to become the accomplices of the most brutal bourgeois Governments—these are the only issues of political Socialism, the conquest of political power, which theorists once established as the first step towards Socialism. The oldest and the youngest Parliaments are alike in this, as Russia showed, where Duma after Duma was dissolved because voting power is infinitely different from fighting power. One may as well believe in repelling a bandit's attack with a voting paper in preference to a pistol as in checking capitalism, enjoying possession of all wealth and power, by the paper weapon of Parliamentary censure. Political Socialism is, however, inevitable, as ambitious politicians will always seek advancement in this way, coming to the top by means of the Labour vote and then reaping the profits for themselves; but as this is being done always more cynically and in a business way, larger numbers *may* be expected to see through this game by and by; and in any case, Socialist governmentalism is being discredited by its own action under our eyes, which lesson may save us yet from having to pass through the experiment of a State Socialist society.

Another fallacy which modern developments tend to expose is that of a *centralised State*, so dear to orthodox Socialists. Their own electioneering ambition puts them on the right way in this case by discovering the spheres of municipal and local action. It is true they have also given us the useful object-lesson that Governments or authoritarian administrative bodies can be equally wrong, be their sphere of power the largest or the smallest. Still, local life has been revived to some extent even at the hands of these friends of centralisation, and it will never go to rest again; on the contrary, the State, which interferes with it in so many ways, will have to go. Things in this domain go our way, but Anarchists would not waste time in helping a little in place of letting things drift. By this I mean the support of all that may make local life independent of the State, but also a check on all newly arising localised governmentalism.

It is unmistakable that all classes of workers have become conscious of the obvious fact that the life of society ceases if they stop from work. The idea of *economic action*, of the *General Strike*, is ripe everywhere; the face of the earth might be

changed by it in a moment if the producers only wished it; all wealth becomes a heap of decaying materials if nobody will work on them; all power vanishes if there is nobody to obey it. It is evident that this cannot be achieved at one stroke; hence the immediate success of general strike movements is of small importance—thousands of efforts must be made to achieve a great thing. The school for such efforts is the Syndicalist movement; working experiments are made in the labour of daily life; *sabotage* is one of them, efforts to create greater solidarity by various means is another one. Governmental crimes are met by rapid general strikes with far greater alacrity than in the old roundabout way of casting a vote for an opponent of the Government at an election some years hence, and then waiting patiently for further developments. Socialist politicians and old-fashioned Trade Unionists feel hopelessly left behind by these new forces.

And yet optimism would be a grave mistake even in this case. It is a large and wonderful step—from the worthless voting paper to the firm expression of the workers' will by the cessation of work; but a more important step remains to be taken—from the merely negative, inert cessation of work to *real revolutionary effort*. This step, *e.g.*, the Russian workers in October, 1905, did not take; so everything went wrong there from that moment, and the splendid advance of revolution in Russia was checked at the same time. The bandit who holds you up will laugh at the voting paper—he will be terrorised for a moment if you hold his hands fast—but if you let go your hold again, he will then attack you with greater fury than before and overthrow you. A general strike is always good as an exercise, but it will be effective only if some day revolutionary effort will be combined with it to an infinitely larger extent than up till now.

It seems to me that all other parts of Syndicalist work can well take care of themselves; routine work and occasions for strike movements are much more favourable when arising out of sudden events than when carefully prepared beforehand. We may compare here the Italian strikes of solidarity, which break out with lightning rapidity, to the relative failure of the French Eight Hour movement, prepared long ago to begin on the First of May, 1906, a mistake that has since been recognised. What I call "revolutionary effort" can only be prepared in *one* way—by the increase in number and efficiency of revolutionists. Revolutionists cannot be created; propaganda can only awaken the latent energies which slumber in a few; in others they are asleep to such an extent as never to be aroused; in others, again, they will only be aroused on the spur of great events. If men of these qualities can during a general strike overcome the initial difficulties, they may set the ball rolling; otherwise the capitalist system will never be really affected even by general strikes. As no one can know whether such action will be forthcoming some day, or whether the number of determined men will always remain too small comparatively, it is impossible to consider the general strike as the one and only way that leads from this system to a better state of things. This alone ought to teach us not to spend all our energy on Syndicalism, and that those who are inclined to do so should not spend it on the elementary and routine part of it, but on its most advanced side, among those who explore the unexplored tracts between Syndicalist and revolutionary action. Here all possible help is wanted, and no one can give it but Anarchists, and among them only those of really revolutionary disposition.

The *Antimilitarist* movements are extremely sympathetic, only they are yet in their beginnings, and have an enormous work before them. From the school to the Press, national hatred is diffused through an elaborate network everywhere. Again, authority brutalises the best-meaning young people who have to become soldiers, and an hour of practical work makes absolute beasts of soldiers and officers—witness the horrors in China, Morocco, etc. Antimilitarist seems not yet decided everywhere on one great point: whether to consider the soldier as a brute

or as a victim, whether to combat him or to try to win him over. Here also the real effect of the propaganda will be felt once, at a sudden moment when the military apparatus, undermined by ceaseless efforts, will collapse. In the meantime so much remains to be done here that the smallest effort is welcome.

Theories, dogmas, are no longer patiently endured; too many people examine them, and their weak points are found out. This happened to *Marxism* when, at last, it was more closely looked at from every point. We may foresee that no other system will ever win even that amount of recognition which *Marxism* once had—and this, again, is a step in our direction. Only we must not ourselves be burdened with theories and overlook to some extent the difference between hypotheses and principles. I allude to the economic doctrines of *Anarchism*, of which none shall ever be considered as obligatory or generally applicable. It may be that after experience one economic system may be in more general use than all others; but before this we all long for a period of unlimited free action, to win that experience of which we all must be said now to be deficient. The gates that open into *Anarchism* should be widened, not narrowed; in fact, to one who is really *Anarchist* there are no gates at all—he wants and welcomes free experience in all, and does not make a faith of anything beforehand save the necessity of freedom and fair play all round, which is possible only under *Anarchy*—which, in fact, is nothing but *Anarchism* itself.

In this connection all sorts of *specialised movements* are a good sign. People no longer wait until a great change puts everything straight; they begin smaller and larger experimental creations here and now, separated as far as possible from the State and the present economic system; they create oases, neutral territories, laboratories for future experience—all of which may be superseded by later developments, but is the best that can be done to-day. Moreover it strengthens the right tendency, that each one should work on lines which his own inclination maps out for him.

On the whole, then, we noticed a number of very sympathetic tendencies; but we must not forget one point: our enemies have to a larger degree than ever before corrupted public opinion on their behalf by playing on greed and prejudice of all kinds. Race-hatred was resuscitated, Protection also. Protection extended to Labour opens problems on which many average Labour people—Americans, Australians before all—are not sound. Anything that can possibly debase the working classes in the way of the Press, literature, sport, etc., is equally thrown across their way. All this work of counter-revolution is practised to perfection under the eyes of the English people, who, when reading of the exploits of the Black Gangs of the Russian Czar, are little aware, as a rule, that the same Black Gangs are operating against themselves, only under a more cunning disguise.

From all this I conclude that whilst some schemes like the Social Democratic State are already eliminated, future developments in general remain as mysterious as ever. For no one can possibly guess the strength of latent revolutionary energy that will be brought to the surface by coming events. Will it be sufficient to lead to a clean sweeping away of the whole present system, or will by-and-by a greater separation of progressive from reactionary forces arise than exists already, and the next stage be that the progressive forces obtain full elbowroom at the side of the reactionary forces—just as *Freethought* is existing to-day side by side with the densest religious obtusity? *Free-thought* would have preferred to demolish religion altogether, but had to be content with the success of attracting some of the best and obtaining neutrality from the rest—on its guard always against a treacherous enemy, of course. Will a similar state of things—exemption from the political State and economic independence on a co-operative basis—be the next stage of *Anarchism* also? Or will it remain in its present state of action by propaganda only? Or will it be able, by bridging over the gulf which still separates *Syndicalist* from revolutionary action, to establish a new basis—collective property—on which it could be practised on a larger scale?

I conclude by questions; I cannot do otherwise. Hopes are not absent, but the task before us is greater than ever. N.

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MUTUAL AID.

[This interesting and appreciative article on Kropotkin's book, by John Wrau, appeared in the *Woolwich Pioneer* of November 22 last. The book has just been reprinted.]

No great truth can be told without danger. The greater the truth, the greater the falsehood that can be drawn from its corruption or misapprehension. On this tree most of the teachers of humanity have been crucified. It is very hard, if not impossible, to escape the dilemma; for it seems beyond the power of the wisest to state a truth so that it shall never be misunderstood. Hence the ancient mysteries, and the hidden wisdoms that were preserved amongst special initiates and refused to the common cry; and hence, also, there have in all ages been men to uphold the necessity of Authority. To cast a profound truth into the midst of men is to do a thing not without danger. And the answer to this is that the danger cannot be avoided. Even the most jealously kept mystery becomes corrupted; and every seat of Authority in the end is found to be asserting a lie. But if you will allow a truth to fight its own battle and work out its own salvation, it will persist with an indestructible vitality. It will overcome, little by little, all the falsehoods that were begot of it, until it is at last seen to be what it really is. There are two parts to every revelation. One is the fact revealed; the other is the temper of mind, the mental atmosphere, with which we severally perceive that fact; the associations we impose upon it and the context we interpret it by. The interpreter is half the law. No two men see the same tree.

This is beautifully illustrated by the peculiar heresy called neo-Darwinism, which may be described as Darwinism seen through blood-red spectacles. It is usually expressed in such phrases as that "man has been made what he is by competition"; and, by careful selection of spectacles, we may presently evolve a splendid vision of Nature red in tooth and claw, and all things busily engaged in battle, murder, and sudden death. It is comforting, because it clearly justifies us in regarding slums as an ordinance of Nature, and unemployment as a regrettable necessity, and our own private income as the reward of our own evolutionary virtues. It is the philosophy of the fat kine. The lean kine do not see it quite so readily. They have more of the shrewd scepticism which says "Let us test it."

Because the truths that Darwin gave to the world, and made men think of, are great truths, they are the more dangerous when wrenched out of their true proportion and taken away from their right conspectus. The principal part of every intelligent person's task is to see the whole of truth; and, pending the possibility of that, as much of it as possible. We do not think wisely when we have done no more than taken each detail and perceived each separate axiom. One truth taken alone may amount in practice to a falsehood. All truths taken separately might be no more than so many lies. We think wisely when we at last see each detail in place and perspective; each axiom contributing its share to the whole, modified and corrected by other truths. For this reason Kropotkin's "Mutual Aid" is a book of very great use and importance, because it serves to balance and correct the impressions we are liable to draw from too hasty a study of the earlier writers on evolution.

The theory of organic evolution, the development of species, and the survival of the fittest are not only true doctrines, but (as all true doctrines are) moral ones; that is to say, they not only justify themselves as outwardly true, but, when understood, also as what we mean by inwardly right. If the existence of the universe is not one process of the development of life and consciousness, and its out-growing in ever clearer and intenser force, and the modification of forms to embody this life force,—then it is not clear how we can ever reach any satisfying view of the universe at all. The instinct we possess that things *do* justify themselves is as much a fact as a stone wall or half a brick. The whole origin of science lay in the irresistible instinct men had that natural phenomena had reasonable laws, and obeyed them. To stop half-way and observe suddenly that such new facts as we had discovered were undoubtedly quite irrational, and contrary to our sense of sanity, would be a remarkable proceeding; it would cut at the root of science altogether, for science is nothing if not a tacit assertion that Nature has laws comprehensible to our minds. Yet although the "survival of the fittest" is perfectly just and sane, and appeals to one as being an obvious process of evolving higher types of life,—it is capable of very evil distortion when we break away with the crude principle that "man was made what he is by

competition." From Darwinism to neo-Darwinism is rather a wide step; it needs some loose agility to make it.

The principle that man has been made what he is by competition is not even true, if we take it as a sufficient statement of the case. It is about as true as to say that trees live by rain. They do; but they don't. Competition has had its share in the making of mankind; but so has mutual aid. But not only is the principle that man has been made what he is by competition a half-truth in the broad sense; by identifying two different significances of the word "competition," it is wrested to mean economic competition, and in this narrow sense it is infinitely false. The progress of mankind does not depend upon the wise leaving the foolish to their ignorance, and the strong leaving the weak to starve. Nero fiddled while Rome was burning; the Romans danced when Nero went. It is a wide step, indeed, from Darwinism to neo-Darwinism.

Kropotkin's book is written to a thesis; it is an attempt (and a most successful one) to prove the importance of mutual aid as a factor in evolution. It begins with the practice of mutual aid and social co-operation amongst animals; it goes on to describe the universality of the same principle amongst savages; it draws the line of demonstration through the whole scale, from one end of evolution to the other,—through the practices and institutions of primitive and barbarous men, the social organisation of the mediæval cities, to the present day. The wealth of learning needed to perform such an intellectual feat as this is astonishing; and the simplicity and lucidity with which that knowledge is handled is no less notable. John Fiske, in his little book, "Human Destiny," and Henry Drummond in "The Ascent of Man," both made very suggestive and stimulating efforts to encompass something of the same kind; but "Mutual Aid," both in the extent of its knowledge and the tremendous ease of its procession, immeasurably transcends them. In them there are, indeed, some points not to be passed over without loss; but the virtue of "Mutual Aid" lies in the width of its grasp and the multitude of its illustration.

We are beginning to shape a history of civilisation; and that history is taking a form not anticipated by older writers. The more we establish facts and arrange them in their order, the more there emerges from them a huge progression—a drama organised and articulated, moving through its stages with purpose and significance. The theory of Evolution is an implicit denial of the supposition that things and facts are disconnected, incomprehensible, and of such a nature that they put our mental instincts to confusion. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest, when rightly understood, is the most perfectly optimistic doctrine that science could deduce; the one most assuredly justifying our hopes and desires, and making reasonable what would otherwise seem totally unreasonable and appalling. Men might live without it and yet preserve an invincible faith that we are not to be put permanently to confusion; men have done so for ages. But it is a *tour de force* none the less—an effort of moral athleticism. To demonstrate that the process answers to the instinct within us is to bring to us a new support—a fresh and powerful conviction. None, by proving that a thing has been, can produce that thing in us. We have to interpret such phrases as "the survival of the fittest" in terms of our own natures; for, like all fundamental truths, it is a truism, a paradox, and a trap. When, therefore, we shape our history of civilisation, we have also to shape our conception of what "fitness" is, and what faculties, powers of body and mind are distinguishable as proving themselves by practice. Whoever interprets the law, interprets himself. Whoever speaks, describes himself. Whoever draws or paints or plays, defines his own nature. Hence no man will see in evolution what is not in his own nature. Still, to demonstrate the universality of mutual aid, and to show it as a constant factor raising men, and persisting as a typical attribute of the progressive man, is to define "fitness" one degree further, and to limit the scope of competition, or to trace its operation into more minute and delicate stages. We are grit of the grindstone. We are more than perceivers of evolution. We, our hands, our eyes, our minds, our impulses, our instincts—these were developed, and are the fathers of what shall come. Who, then, will prove by evolution that cruelty and wrath are the true gospel?

What Class Kings?

On a day when Herbert Spencer was driving along the high road from Brighton to London, his companion innocently remarked: "I suppose it was along this road that George the Fourth used to drive in a high barouche." "I take no interest in the criminal classes," growled the great man.—(*Punch*, Oct. 9, 1907.)

JOHN TURNER IN LIVERPOOL.

The Liverpool comrades were delighted with Comrade John Turner's visit on Sunday, December 1. His two lectures gave pleasure not only to comrades, but to two splendid audiences. For months we had been doing propaganda work wherever possible, and Comrade Turner's visit was especially timely as it gave the Liverpool progressives an opportunity of hearing Anarchism expounded by a man who at least has gained publicity by the splendid work he has done for Trade Unionism in this country. To give a detailed account of his lectures would take too long. In the afternoon, lecturing on "The Tendencies of Trade Unionism," he sketched its rise and progress, the trials of the early founders, and their subsequent triumphs. One of his great points was that so long as the organised workers concentrated their whole attention on the economic plane they invariably achieved valuable concessions; not only that, but the very fact of their being organised had an educational effect on the general public. He then dealt with the coming into being of the General Federation of Trade Unions, and the intrusion of Labour politics into the Trade Union movement. There, said he, speaking of the General Federation, you have an institution capable of giving to the workers all they desire, even to the expropriation of the means of livelihood from the capitalist and landlord classes; but to-day it stands like a derelict, helpless, because it is in the hands of politicians, who, obsessed by middle-class political electioneering, obscured the potential power for direct action this body holds.

In France, the Confederation of Labour, a similar but differently organised institution, has become the terror of the exploiting classes because it is free from political cant and goes straight for the cause of the workers' misery. But here in England the General Federation is the despair of the zealous workers, and will be until our Trade Unions wake themselves from their political sleep and take the cue from their French comrades. Turner pointed out how other countries had played the game of Labour politics with ill success, and here the same result will inevitably follow, for politics are not the workers' weapons. Society is based on the economic slavery of the workers, and the proportion of the electorate interested in upholding that condition is greater than the number who desire to sweep it away; but there is nothing to prevent the slaves from organising and refusing to participate in their slavery. If, as the history of Trade Unionism proves, we have been able to secure partial reforms without political action, surely we ought to be able to secure the whole of what we have a right to with exactly the same weapon.

In the evening the lecture on "The Aims of Anarchism" was extremely good. Comrade Turner first cleared away the misconceptions which the term "Anarchism" had given rise to, and then defined it as a social theory which condemned the domination of man by man as unjust and unsound in whatever form it exists. In his attack on Government, he ironically pointed out that from infancy to the grave we are subjected to evils which the Government exists to protect us from, and for such services we have to pay enormous sums of money. Governments are the executive committees of countries, backed by the Army, Navy, and police to enforce laws. Statute laws are the will and power of the predominant section registered on parchment. Governments are called into existence to maintain the *status quo*, as for instance in France in the days of the Revolution, when the agrarian movement resulted in the peasants burning the houses of the tyrants and parcelling out the land for themselves. The "States General" passed a law declaring that the land captured and parcelled out should belong to the peasants, but land not parcelled out must revert to former owners.

The Statist, whether Socialist, Liberal, or Tory, is prepared to accept and be governed by man-made laws; but the Anarchist accepts none but Nature's laws, and insists that society will never be rightly organised until it is based on liberty, equality, and fraternity, which Governments are necessarily opposed to. We are kept in our servile condition by the stupidity of people who don't want to get out. We have the starving unemployed and children in the midst of plenty, and we starve most when things are most abundant. The workers will yet have to face the important fact which Anarchists have always advocated, that complete emancipation can only be achieved by fighting and breaking the economic fetters. This is the only way acknowledged by the sincere reformer, and the sure precursor of social equality.

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NOTES.

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY.

Experience is beginning to show clearly enough how the railway men were sold over the so-called "settlement," which was really no more than the ordinary capitalistic spider's web to entangle the men and victimise them individually. This process has already commenced, and two men, Pulford and Rimmer, have been dismissed for their activity. Some people, Bell amongst others, are pretending to be greatly shocked at this; but the culpable parties who sold the men need wonder at nothing the companies may do, since the settlement put the men under their heels. The danger of the strike—the only thing they feared—was averted; now comes the dodge of circumlocution and victimisation, which will deceive and dishearten the men with the endless bickerings over trifles, during which time the great Bell will advertise his importance, and the companies, with their good friend Lloyd George, will laugh in their sleeves. Heartless bloodsuckers, these companies! Wretched tools, these "leaders" and wiseacres! Poor blind victims, the workers!

TO STRIKE OR NOT TO STRIKE.

F. H. Rose in the *Clarion* of January 3 returns to his favourite theme of the failure of strikes. The defeat of the poor Hemsworth strikers, who have suffered untold martyrdom in the cause of Labour, is a disgrace, not to the strikers nor the advocates of the strike movement, but to the "leaders"—the Labour politicians of this country. If those fifty men who are humbugging the workers in the House of Commons had thrown themselves heart and soul into the economic struggle, not only the chances of the Hemsworth strikers succeeding would have been probable, but the whole position of the Trade Union movement in this country would have been changed. What do the capitalists care for your fifty "representatives" safely under lock and key in the House? For not one of these heroes means to risk his precious seat—or salary. And they are poor dumb dogs in the midst of all the red-tape of "procedure" and the prospective glory of "office." We hate to quote a politician, but for once Lloyd George spoke the truth when he described them as follows:—

The Labour Party were not Socialists. In the House of Commons they assisted the Liberal Party to carry practical measures, and even the Socialists, though some of them might make very wild speeches outside, in the House of Commons were thoroughly tame. He had never heard them propose a resolution in favour of upsetting society; he had never heard a revolutionary statement emerging from them. They were there amending the Trade Disputes Bill or tinkering some other Bills, and doing odd jobs of that kind in the Liberal workshops; in fact, earning their living in an honest way in the great Parliamentary factory. That was all right.

Yes, that's all right for the capitalist. And that's why strikes in England are tabooed by the leaders, and so often end in failure.

SUCCESSFUL STRIKES.

It would be only fair if Mr. Rose would give the readers of the *Clarion* some results of strikes elsewhere than in England. It is a remarkable fact that in France, where political action is almost entirely ignored by the Syndicates, Viviani in his report for 1906 has to acknowledge a tremendous increase in the activity of the strike movement, with successes that average nearly 70 per cent. These are figures given by the enemy—Viviani. Again, from Washington comes the report of the American Commission of Labour, and here further evidence is forthcoming to show that strikes are by no means so disastrous as Mr. Rose loves to proclaim. Taking a period of twenty-five

years—1881 to 1905—there have been 36,757 strikes, involving an army of 7,444,279. Organised Labour was wholly successful in 49.48 per cent. of these strikes; partially successful in 15.87 cases; failed entirely in 34.65. So that here also in 65 per cent. of the strikes something has been gained. But it will be said, What about the loss and suffering involved in all this? Well, that must be credited to the capitalist system, not to the strikes. Take, again, the position in Australia, where the Labour Party was all for political action and legality. Read Tom Mann's estimate of the results, which we print below. Political action has given them a stone: they will have to revert to strikes to win their bread, as the French workers have also shown us. Let Mr. Rose deal with this.

PEACE—AND THE PIECES.

In a society like ours it is right and proper that the Nobel prize awarded to those who "work for peace" should go to Kipling. In an age when a "Peace Conference" discusses nothing but the best means of killing and mutilating; when "civilisation" spells murder, lust, and hideous vice; when all the "Great Powers" are such great hypocrites and greedy vampires that they support a Leopold, an Abdul, a Nicholas—in such an age as this Kipling should surely have his laurels. So this harbinger of (capitalistic) peace comes by his own to the tune of £7,500. Well, the pieces be with you, sweet songster of the barrack-room, immortal poet of blood and carnage, of fire and the sword! In the slime and corruption of a decaying system your name will disappear for ever. But no one can rob you of your pay, pay, pay.

THE STANDARD OF THE HORSE AND THE ASS.

Mr. Justice Higgins, as President of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, has given his decision as to what is a "fair and reasonable wage," and having regard for the absolute dominance of the Capitalist Class, and remembering that the industrial and social system is run in the interest of that class, Justice Higgins' decision is as good as could be expected.

But what does it all amount to? Is any new principle applied? None whatever. It is just the application of the well-worn principle of the "living wage." It goes not one iota farther than horse stable accommodation for the animal. The London coster, who uses a donkey for draught purposes, applies the same principle for the upkeep of his "moke" as the employers are called upon to comply with now in Australia in payment for the necessary human labour required to make their profits.

All the fine phrases and philosophic reasoning of Justice Higgins do not in the slightest degree remove the Australian workers from their position as wage slaves. And this is the most recent and perhaps the most sympathetic legal decision ever given. The more reason why we should face the situation squarely and ask where we stand.

The reply to that is, that by this decision the Australian worker is legally classified as a human animal whose services must be available for the master-class when desired by that class, and when so desired, his remuneration shall be that amount calculated to barely provide a sufficiency of necessities for the maintenance of an ordinary-sized family whilst the job lasts. No provision is made or proposed whereby the man and his family shall subsist during the spells of enforced idleness and sickness.

This in clarion tones declares that the Australian workers are exploited of all they produce, less the bare subsistence wage.

Every discussion that takes place in the Federal Parliament on the New Protection, and in the State Parliament on the Factories Act, makes it increasingly clear that the entire body of officialdom, egged on by the master-class, are determined to manoeuvre with Wages Boards, Appeal Courts, and the like until they successfully get the workers tied up by the leg, and by their nefarious legislative trickery to bulldoze and render helpless the workers as a class.

The workers desire freedom, and the Plutocracy, like the Egyptian Pharaoh, refuse to let them go. The children of Israel had severe taskmasters, they rebelled against them, and Moses led them as a strike leader. It was an industrial, social, and racial revolt, and rather than be longer enslaved they put down their tools; that is, they struck work, and declared they would take pot luck and go to a less civilised country and be their own masters.

The workers here, to-day, are not their own masters. They

are in bondage to the hypocritical crowd of so-called Christian employers. Every day the workers are robbed far worse than the Israelites were by the Egyptians of old.

In a country where prices are high, a wage of 6s. a day is looked upon by many as a good wage for a labourer. Justice Higgins has given his decision as 7s., and, allowing for broken time, think what a standard that means for the maintenance of a family!

In the Factories Act, now under discussion, it is provided that Wages Boards' determination may be suspended if a dispute is probable. A most shamefaced provision for the master-class to cut down wages and employ scab labour. Verily, it is enough to sicken a dog and make one squirm when legislation is referred to.

The outrageous robbery that has been going on the last three months since the new tariff proposals were made is just of the kind the money crowd, the capitalist exploiters, revel in! Rush up the price, the workers must pay it! Add 25 per cent., no matter that the tariff is not and may never be a fact; use the occasion to fleece the wretched workers still more! Such dirty scheming would choke an alligator, and this is the outcome of legislative wisdom!

Workers, you have absolutely no hope of redress till you understand and endorse SOCIALISM. There is no hope for you in patchwork legislation. Slaves you are and slaves you'll be till you dare to declare in favour of complete freedom.

When the workers loudly and courageously insist upon the great social changes, then the capitalists, to save their skins, will readily enough propose palliatives. Now, because the workers claim only a "fair wage," which being interpreted means they claim only one-third of the results of their labour, the fat man, who gets two-thirds, is busy trying to get the other also.

Five pounds a week, at least, is the value of the workman in this State, and two pounds only is all he is allowed to get; and Unionism as we know it, and politics as we experience them, flutter about year after year as to whether a man shall have 39s. 6d. or 40s. 6d. a week. As Socialists, we want the lot and mean to have it. As Socialists, we are deadly opposed to the continued domination of the exploiting class. We are preparing, with the rest of the Socialists of the world, to drive the capitalist out of the position he has usurped.

Fool about with trifling puerilities who will, as to whether a man can live on a given number of pence per week. The whole of the wealth produced must go to those who produce it, that's honesty. The capitalist system is based on rascality. The capitalist system is based on exploitation. And the churches, parsons, priests, pastors and deacons are capitalistic chloroformers, destroyers of the workers' virility, teeth extractors on behalf of the capitalists to render the workers impotent. But it's no use, the charm has gone, the spell is broken, and the Labour Samson is coming to his strength!

Young men, dare to live! Young women, say your souls are your own! Dare to demand that which is yours! Refuse to be dominated as you have been in the past. Share in preaching the glorious gospel of Divine Discontent! Insist upon a full, a real, a true life, freed from the wretched humdrum conventionalities imposed upon you by a dominant master class. Join the Socialist Party. Dare to enrol in fraternal membership, take a pleasure in letting it be known that you are a Socialist, that you recognise the Class War, that you believe in International Solidarity, and that you are working for the full economic emancipation of both sexes! No slave-drivers, no patronisers, no chloroformers, but a free and enlightened people, capable wealth producers, and capable of enjoying it when it is produced.—TOM MANN, *Melbourne Socialist*, Nov. 16, 1907.

BOOK NOTES.

The Truth about the Lords. By Joseph Clayton. 1s. net. London: A. C. Fifield.

Mr. Clayton has an easy task in proving the monstrous stupidity of a hereditary Chamber: we wish he would continue, and demonstrate, as he might easily do, the futility of a "representative" Chamber. We should then have a complete *exposé* of the whole Parliamentary system. The present volume is well done as far as it goes, and will make a useful book of reference.

Les Hommes du Jour. 10c. Paris: Henri Fabre, 3 Rue des Grands-Augustins.

This publication has this special interest, that in giving biographical sketches of the various persons, a very good idea of the revolutionary and political elements, now in deadly struggle in France, can be obtained. So far, two have appeared, the first dealing with Clemenceau, the second with Gustave Hervé. Both are uniquely illustrated, and the study of each man well done. A series of twelve, 1s. 8d. post-free.

The Basis of Trade Unionism.

By EMILE POUGET.

Member of the French General Confederation of Labour.

(Continuation.)

AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO LIVE.

BASIS OF SOCIAL HARMONY.

Having demonstrated that, from a historical point of view, the Trade Union movement of the 20th century is the normal consequence of the working-class efforts of the 19th century, we must now examine the value of this movement from a philosophical and a social point of view. To begin with, let us set down the premisses in a few lines. *Man is a sociable animal.* He cannot, and has never been able to, live isolated in the world. It is impossible to conceive the life of men who do not form a social group. However rudimentary were primitive human agglomerations, men always gathered together in associations. It is not true, as Jean Jacques Rousseau, theorist of democratic servitude, taught,—that before they formed societies men lived in a "state of nature," and were only able to emerge from it when they relinquished some of their natural rights by means of a "social contract."

This idle nonsense, now out of date, was much in vogue at the end of the 18th century. It inspired the revolutionary middle class in 1789-93, and it continues to be the basis of law and of institutions that hamper us.

However erroneous Jean Jacques Rousseau's sophisms may be, they have the advantage of giving a philosophical varnish to the principle of Authority, and of being the theoretic expression of middle-class interests. For this reason the middle class made them its own. It drew them up in the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" as well as in articles of the "Code" of laws, so as to set up for itself a complete compendium of exploitation and domination.

Neither is it true, as proclaimed by Darwinists, that society is but a battlefield where the *struggle for existence* alone regulates the action of human beings. This theory, as monstrous as it is erroneous, gives a hypocritical and scientific varnish to the worst forms of exploitation. By these means the middle class construe that the exploiter is the *strong being* produced by natural selection, whereas the exploited is a *weak being*, the victim of an invincible necessity (also natural); and that the weak is compelled to vegetate or disappear according as the strong derives profit from one or other of these solutions.

Such a theory could only take root by an arbitrary and erroneous interpretation of Darwin's ideas. If it were true, it could anyhow only apply to different species. For war among one species is an accidental monstrosity; among different species, living in association, it is also unnatural, for *harmony* is an unquestionable necessity.

The human animal needs harmony. If in far distant ages he had not been in solidarity with his fellow-men, he would never have emerged from the animal stage. Good fellowship among men is not only essential to *progress*, but to *life*.

The agreement in order to live, far from causing a diminution of individuality in man, is a means of accruing and multiplying his power of well-being. The examination of the real conditions of *life* that obtain in human species ends in the negation of theories circulated by the dominant classes, theories that only aim at facilitating and justifying exploitation of the masses.

Indeed, although both doctrines—the democratism of J. J. Rousseau of the 18th century and the middle-class Darwinism of the 19th—have theoretical distinctions, they come to the same conclusions: they proclaim the spirit of renunciation, and teach that "the liberty of each is limited by the liberty of others." By means of these doctrines, the spirit of sacrifice that went out of fashion and was discredited in its religious aspect has again arisen and become a social principle. These doctrines teach that as soon as man agrees to live in society, he of necessity renounces some of his natural rights. This renunciation he makes on the altar of Authority and Property, and in exchange he acquires the hope of enjoying the rights that have survived his sacrifice.

Modern nations led away by metaphysics, now wearing a scientific, now a democratic mask, have bent their backs and sacrificed their rights; for these doctrines have been so dinned into them that to-day even citizens who pride themselves on being intellectually emancipated accept as an unquestionable axiom that the *liberty of each is limited by the liberty of others*.

This lying formula will not bear examination; it means nothing more nor less than a constant and perpetual antagonism between human beings. If it had any truth in it, progress would have been impossible, for life would have been a continual struggle of enraged wild beasts. As the human animal could only have satisfied his wants by injuring his fellow-men, it would have meant never-ending struggles, wars, and unlimited ferocity.

But in spite of all criminal theories that represent society as a battlefield, and men as beings only able to exist if they injure one another, tear one another to pieces, and devour one another, we have progressed, and the idea of solidarity has flourished because the instinct of social harmony is more powerful than the theories of the struggle for existence.

This deduction may be objected to by some, who say that the State

has been an agent of progress, and that its intervention has been moralising and pacifying. This allegation completes the sophisms quoted above. The "order" created by the State has but consisted in repressing and oppressing the masses in order that a privileged minority might profit, the masses being made malleable by the belief they have been impregnated with, consisting in the admission that the renunciation of part of their "natural rights" is necessary when they agree to a "social contract."

We must oppose the middle-class definition of liberty that sanctions slavery and misery by a contrary formula which is the real expression of social truth springing from the fundamental principle of "harmony in order to struggle,"—that is, *the liberty of each grows when in touch with the liberty of others.*

The unquestionable evidence of this definition explains the progressive development of human societies. The power of *harmony in order to live* has a dynamic force superior to the forces of division, repression, and suppression exercised by parasite minorities. That is why societies have progressed. That is why they have not solely consisted of butchery, ruins, and mourning.

It is to our advantage to become impregnated with this notion of liberty in order to be proof against the inoculation of middle-class sophisms, so as to be able to understand what the word "society" means. It means that the chief propelling power of humanity is *harmony, association.*

Let us also understand that SOCIETY is the agglomeration of individuals that constitute it, and that it has no individual life of its own apart from them; consequently there can be no question of aiming at social happiness other than individual happiness of the human beings composing society.

UNION FOR PRODUCTION.

THE SOCIAL EMBRYO.

Civic and Democratic Derivatives.

Harmony and concord in the battle of life being recognised as the social pivot, it follows that society's method of aggregation will consist of groups; and in order that individual growth may not be stunted and that it should ever continue developing, it is necessary for the group to be in complete accord with economic functions.

For human beings these functions have two irreducible actions—(1) *Consumption*; (2) *Production*. We are born consumers, and we become producers. Such is the normal process.

THE CONSUMER.

As consumer, a human being should follow his own bent, and in fulfilling this function only think of his needs, the satisfaction of which will perforce be limited by possibilities. Consumption is the measure of social development: the greater it is for each, the higher is the level of well-being. Present society in nowise works on these lines. Far from being free, the individual is subject to prohibitions and obstacles that can only be removed by means of money. Now, as the money is seized by the governing class, this class, thanks to the privileges it enjoys, consumes according to its will and pleasure; on the other hand, the worker who has made natural products consumable, and who besides this has benefited the capitalist from whom he receives wages, is placed in a position in which it is impossible for him to consume according to his needs.

Such an iniquity is intolerable. It is monstrous that individuals, save children, invalids, and old people, should be able to consume without producing. It is also monstrous that the real producers should be deprived of the possibility of consuming.

Consumption takes precedence of production, for we consume long before we are capable of producing. Yet in social organisation it is necessary to invert these terms and make production the starting point.

THE PRODUCER.

The producer is the basis of everything. He fulfils the essential organic function that preserves society from extinction. He is the initial cell of economic life, and it is his union and good understanding with other producers who work with the same object in view—that is to say, at the same industry, the same trade, with similar efforts—that reveal the bonds of solidarity which, like a net, stretches over human collectivity.

This enforced and logical harmony among producers causes UNION FOR PRODUCTION, which is the keystone of society. No other form of agglomeration is so necessary. All others are of a secondary nature. It alone appears to be the social nucleus, the centre of economic activity. But for the productive group to perform its function normally, it must raise the individual, and it must never tend to diminish his autonomy under any pretext whatever.

Most assuredly, the proving of the primordial part played by the producer in society, and the group of which he has the right to be an integral part, is relatively new. The identity of interests and communion of aspirations among producers, co-ordinated according to their needs, their professional activities and their tendencies, have not always been as tangible as now. The understanding of social phenomena was impeded by ignorance, even without taking into account that economic development had not then acquired the acuteness of our times. Another cause impeding comprehension sprung from the survival of the preponderating part formerly played by family groups. At a given

moment, when humanity was mostly composed of hunting and pastoral tribes, the family fulfilled the function of social nucleus, a phenomenon explained by the fact that in those far-off ages production, both industrial and agricultural, hardly went beyond the family circle, so that this agglomeration being sufficient for rudimentary needs, barter had not yet begun to modify existing conditions.

To-day these conditions have been subjected to such a transformation that it is impossible to consider the family as an organic nucleus. It would indeed be equivalent to legitimating all forms of slavery, for all slavery follows as a consequence of an authority that the head of the family arrogates, by virtue of his strength and ancestry.

Besides, nobody dreams of such retrogression. In quite another direction did the middle class at the dawn of its revolution in 1789 try to guide the tendencies of the people towards sociability. The middle class, needing men who would work, who would be flexible, malleable, and deprived of all power of resistance, destroyed the bonds of true solidarity, the corporation, under pretext of uprooting trade privileges formerly looked upon with favour by the ancient régime. Then, to fill the empty space left in the popular conscience, and to hinder the idea of association with an economic basis, which it dreaded, reappearing, the middle class manoeuvred to substitute in the place of true bonds of solidarity resulting from identical interests fictitious and deceptive bonds of citizenship and democracy.

Religion, which till then had served the powerful of the earth to checkmate and restrain the tendency towards amelioration that impelled the people, was relegated to the background. Not that the middle class disdained the brutalising power of this "curb," but it considered religion out of date and as having done its work. The middle class professed Voltairianism, and although it attacked priests, it suggested to the working classes superstitions quite as abasing as Christianity. SOVEREIGNTY OF THE PEOPLE! HOME AND COUNTRY! became the fashionable idols.

THE PATRIOTIC CURB.

In a civic direction the middle class exalted patriotic sentimentality. The ideological lines that unite men born by chance between variable frontiers surrounding a certain territory were extolled as sacred. They earnestly taught that the most glorious day in the life of a patriot is the one on which he has the pleasure of being butchered for his country.

With such nonsense did they deceive the people and hinder them reflecting on the philosophic value of the moral virus they were being inoculated with. Thanks to the sound of trumpet and drum, warlike songs and jingo bluster, they were trained to defend what they had not got: their inheritance. Patriotism can only be explained by the fact that all patriots without distinction own a part of social property, and nothing is more absurd than a *patriot without a patrimony*. Notwithstanding the absurdity, proletarians have reached the point at which they do not possess a clod of the national soil; it follows that there is absolutely no reason for their patriotism, which is but a disease.

Under the old system the military career was a profession like any other, only more barbarous; and the Army, in which the patriotic big drum was not beaten, was a medley of mercenaries "marching" for pay. After the Revolution the middle class devised a *blood-tax*, *Conscription* for the people, a natural deduction from the hypothesis that in future the Fatherland was to be "everybody's property"; but it has continued to be "the property of a few," and those "few" have, thanks to the new system, solved the problem of causing their privileges to be protected by others, by those despoiled of their inheritance.

Here, indeed, appears a formidable contradiction. The bonds of nationality, of which militarism is a tangible form, and which we are told tends to the defence of common interests, has a diametrically contrary result: it checks working-class aspirations.

It is not the ideological frontier that separates nations into English, French, Germans, etc., that the Army watches over, but principally *the frontier of riches* in order to keep the poor penned up in poverty.

THE DEMOCRATIC CURB.

The middle class has shown itself as crafty in a democratic direction. Having conquered political power and secured for itself economic domination, it took care not to destroy the mechanism that had been of use to the aristocracy. It confined itself to replastering the State frontage sufficiently to change its aspect, and to get it accepted as a new agency by the people.

Now in society there is nothing real save economic functions fully sufficient for individuals and useful to groups. Consequently all exterior crystallisation and all political superfluity are parasitic and oppressive excrescences, and therefore noxious.

But of this the people had no consciousness, and so it was easy to dupe them.

The middle class, with the intention of impeding the blossoming of economic sovereignty germinating in the liberty of association they had just stifled, taught the people to turn to the mirage of political sovereignty, the powerless manifestations of which could not disturb capitalist exploitation. The fraud succeeded so well that the belief in political equality—that great hoax—has done good service in keeping down the masses during the last century.

It seems to me there needs but little sagacity to understand that the capitalist and the proletarian, the landowner and the have-nothing, are not equals. Equality is not a fact because both rich and poor are in possession of a voting ticket.

And yet the fraud goes on. It goes on to such a pitch that even

to-day there are, among well-meaning people, those who still have confidence in these idle fancies.

They are victims of a superficial logic: they sum up the influence of the popular masses and compare it to the numerical weakness of the governing minority, and reckon that the education of the masses suffices in order that they may triumph by means of the normal action of majorities.

They do not see that democratic grouping, with universal suffrage as a basis, is not a homogeneous or lasting agglomeration, and that it is impossible to regulate it with a view to persistent action.

This group brings together temporarily citizens whose interests are not identical, such as employers and employed; and when it unites them, it only confers upon them the right to decide about abstractions or illusions.

(To be concluded in our next issue.)

THE MAGIC OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

The existence of Political Economy as a science apart is threatened by the growth of the more synthetic Sociology, for our standards of value are changing too quickly for the political economist. Instead of the wealth of nations, we are coming to consider the well-being of individuals. But that is no reason why we should not delight in the attempts of the political economist to define the natural laws of our present economic system. It is with the same pleasure that we read of the Copernican theory of the universe with its ingenious eccentricities and epicycles. The difficulty hitherto has been that political economists have economised in anything but paper and ink. Now that we have *Political Economy in a Nutshell* (by F. U. Laycock, Swan Sonnenschein and Co., a very neat nutshell of barely 200 pages, large type), we can do so with ease. For Mr. Laycock has a curt, pleasant way of putting his circles before us. At the same time we are tempted to remind him that the law of gravitation, or Solidarity, was discovered after the time of Copernicus, and rather upset his theories.

Mr. Laycock begins by dividing the whole science into four departments: Exchange, Land, Labour, and Capital. His definition of the last three is excellent, and the distinction drawn between Land and Capital as clear as could be. But the question of exchange being the focussing point of his subject, he passes at once to the magic circle of Supply and Demand; or magic circles, we should say, for they are really two, revolving in opposite directions. The first he expresses in the following laws:—

- Increased demand raises prices;
- Higher prices induce supply;
- Increased supply lowers prices;
- Lower prices induce demand.

The second and complementary circle is naturally formed by the laws of opposite motion:—

- Reduced demand lowers prices;
- Lower prices reduce supply;
- Reduced supply raises prices;
- Higher prices reduce demand.

He then proceeds to show how the free action of these opposite motions would produce stability of supply and demand, any unnatural interference, such as Government taxes on production, importation, or exportation having a contrary and disastrous effect. The meddling of Governments, he maintains, has been the cause of most of those irregularities which, among other curses, bring us those of poverty and unemployment. The hand of authority should be kept clear of these magic circles. And not only the hand of State authority. The effect of Trade Unions is politico-economically the same as that of Protection. It is true that Mr. Laycock's conception of a Trade Union is rather antiquated. To him it is—as to some English Trade Unionists, alas!—a select, selfish gathering of workers who have abandoned all individual thought and action to the leadership of their officials. But even that cannot excuse him for neglecting at this point his unusually acute powers of analysis. His dealing with the phenomena of exchange—and nothing could be more complicated than the problems of banking, currency, and international exchange—is brilliantly clear. How, then, can he fail to see that the combination of the producers is a natural phenomenon of production? He treats labour as a commodity quite logically up to this point. For every other commodity he necessarily allows accumulation and the freedom of withdrawal from the market when the demand is so small that prices have fallen unprofitably low. One would suppose that the same freedom might be allowed to labour, but “he who misses the chance of selling his goods still has them for sale at some price, but the labour held back . . . is not saleable when the time has gone by.” Now, why on earth this differentiation? The writer is himself loud in his denunciation of such. Does he not recognise that goods withdrawn from consumption and labour withdrawn from production are parallel phenomena so far as political economy is concerned? The actual value of the goods is as much wasted until they are freed for consumption, as the actual value of labour is wasted until it is freed for production. Would he deny that a reduced supply of labour (a strike) is a natural consequence of the low prices offered for labour?

His conclusions are briefly that the Single Tax would be all the reform necessary to bring about a more stable condition of society. That the function of Government should be limited to the Single Tax

is his strongest conviction. “Government is a burden at best, even so far as it is necessary; to enlarge its sphere and cost . . . increases the burden of those whose labour in various grades of employment is essential . . . and invariably retards true progress.” “Government has done or assisted everything which in the preceding pages has been pointed out as bad. Many see, or claim to see, the beneficent operations of what has been done by their particular party, and especially what their particular party proposes to do, but denounce in unmeasured terms what has been done by the opposite section, and what is likely to be done by that section. They do not realise that economically the results of their overmuch doing are the same in both cases—evil and that continually.”

Mr. Laycock is evidently not yet seriously interested in the modern developments of political economy, or he would have differentiated between the old-fashioned Trade Unionist—with his faith in the authority of his Union superiors and the State, his insistence on the protection of labour, and his demand for the State to meddle in this, that, and the other—and the modern Trade Unionist, who believes that the only strength of his Union is the aggregate of the individual initiative of its members, who scorns any protection of labour as much as Mr. Laycock reviles it, and who, in fact, is carrying the principle of *laissez faire* far beyond the desire or understanding of those who invented the term. To this modern phase of Trade Unionism we should like to direct Mr. Laycock's attention before he says his last word on political economy. Then we shall look with interest for the parallels he will be able to draw between the old “protectionist” Trade Unionism and the Protectionists, and between the new free Trade Unionism and the Free Trade and Free Labour he advocates. Meanwhile Free Labour is a dangerous weapon in an inexperienced hand. Mr. Laycock has mastered political economy in the study and presented it to us most invitingly. We recommend him to look among the workers, where the true principles of *laissez faire, laissez passer*, are being developed with the same enthusiasm for Freedom that inspires his most interesting little book.

K. W.

PROPAGANDA NOTES.

[Reports of the Movement are specially invited, and should be sent in not later than the 25th of each month.]

The International Anarchist Federation of the English Provinces.

On Sunday, December 15 last, the Federation held their second Conference in the Cabinet Makers' Hall, 135A Islington, Liverpool. Forty comrades were present. The agenda being a large one, the necessity for getting to work quickly was felt by all.

Comrade Bertha Isenberg was unanimously selected as president, and in giving an address of welcome to the comrades, said it gave her great pleasure to greet them to this the second Conference of the Federation, as the proofs of a work laid in its results. The Federation had proved the necessity of its existence, for since its inception on October 12 it had spread from Manchester to the majority of the principal provinces, awakening both an interest and a keen desire on the part of the comrades to enter the fray for freedom with more vigour than they had previously felt; for many who, owing to their isolation, had more or less lost touch with the movement, are now proving by their eager inquiries that the feeling of solidarity is still strong within them. The proletariat are fast coming to the conclusion that politics are useless as a means towards procuring their economic freedom. Everything is tending to the acceptance of our principles. It behoves us, then, to be prepared and ready to take our place in the industrial army, alive to all that is, alive to all that has been, for it is thus we will be enabled to steer clear of all that may tend to wreck us at the crucial moment. We have in the past talked of organisation; to-day we are making a bona-fide attempt to put it into practice. Let it be ever thus, that we may go on with direct action instead of words, words, words; and in once more heartily welcoming them to the Conference, she hoped that it would be the precursor of that greater, that sublimer conference of a people free.

In declaring the conference open, the president asked the comrades to give their opinions as briefly as possible, and hoped the groups would act on the resolutions passed at this conference, for unless there is perfect harmony these conferences would be useless.

The Secretary then read the correspondence, after which he stated that since the last conference five more groups had joined—the Liverpool Direct Action Group, Newcastle-on-Tyne Freedom Group, Cardiff Equality Group, Glasgow Anarchist Communist Group, and the Southport Group, only recently formed. Then they had the kindly wishes and promises of support from isolated comrades in other towns, each voicing their determination to try and form groups. The secretary of the Swansea Debating Society wrote that he was doing his best to form a group among its members, and that he has already the nucleus of one. Comrade Levinsky (Birmingham) asked advice as to the best methods of fixing up a group there. Our lady comrade who writes under the title of “Red Rose” in *FREEDOM*, and is at present resident in Sunderland, wrote that she has heard there are some comrades there, whom she intends looking up with the idea of forming a group.

The first point on the agenda was from the Leeds Group, who asked that the conference discuss the question of printing and issuing

for free distribution small pamphlets and leaflets in English and in Yiddish.

Comrade Greenberg (Leeds) said that the Leeds Group having joined the Federation, it followed that their printing plant was now as much belonging to the Federation as to them, and asked that the conference should discuss the best means of its being used for propaganda purposes. Their group suggested that with a little monetary assistance it would be possible to print large quantities of literature for free distribution.

Comrade Kavanagh (Liverpool) proposed that the offer of the Leeds comrades to print free literature be accepted, and that the cost of the same be covered by the whole Federation. Leeds in the past, he said, had proved her ability to do what at that time FREEDOM was incapable of doing—namely, reprint a lot of pamphlets then out of print; and the spirit of solidarity shown by the desire of the Leeds comrades to do good educative work should be helped in every possible way by the Federation.

Comrade Saidel (Manchester) asked the conference to consider the advisability of printing pamphlets at a minimum price in preference to free literature.

After further discussion, the question was put and agreed to.

Comrade Franks proposed that the Federation issue a monthly report in English and Yiddish, giving detailed accounts of the work done by each group.

Comrade Epstein said—We should not take upon ourselves too much work, as each group had their local work to attend to; and all these reports could be made through FREEDOM and the *Workers' Friend*.

Comrade Saidel—I think the papers have enough to do without printing lengthy reports from the Federation. I can understand them printing short reports from each group, but to give full reports from each Federation and from the social movement everywhere, and then find space for their editorials, their translations, and Anarchist articles would need a paper out of all proportion.

The President pointed out that instead of a monthly report interfering with the sale of Anarchist literature, the tendency would be rather to increase their sales.

Comrade Epstein proposed that a delegate be sent to the conference of the Yiddish-Speaking Federation, but advised the selection of an impartial one as a means towards getting an impartial report. Sending a delegate would mean that instead of some comrades stating hearsay for truths, we would have facts to deal with.

Comrade Kavanagh—I always think that the essential principle of Anarchism is organisation. I therefore support the proposition to send a delegate to the conference.

This was agreed to, and Comrade Fox (Southport) was selected.

Comrade Saidel pointed out the great necessity there existed for getting the comrades together, which he thought would be best done by lectures, as this would waken up a lot of comrades who for all practical purposes were asleep. He supposed this was solely due to the general lack of activity throughout the Anarchist movement in the past, and he claimed that constantly addressing the same audience affected the speakers, hence there would be two good results, as a change of speakers would interest the audiences and also improve the speakers.

Comrade Smith proposed that this idea be accepted, and as a means of covering the cost that a central fund be formed.

The President, whilst agreeing with the proposition, did not agree with the idea of a central fund, as such had always tended towards harm; but she thought it would be possible to raise the money necessary by voluntary contributions.

The proposition was then passed.

It was decided to make a strong appeal to all groups to prepare public meetings, and if a group cannot cover the whole of the expenses, the Federation bear the same. It was also decided that the selection of towns and lectures be left to the General Secretary.

It was agreed that all other points on the agenda should be left over to the next conference, to be held in Leeds, February 1 and 2.

In the evening there was a large public meeting in commemoration of the Decembrists.

All comrades are requested to note that they should at once send in what they can afford towards the publication of free literature and the monthly report, stating how much is intended for each, which will be acknowledged in weekly and monthly reports.

A. DESPRES.

NEWCASTLE.

We are steadily plodding, making the Newcastle Group permanent, with the aim to become a fighting factor in the near future. Although the group last summer was just about wrecked, yet the remaining ones held together with some tenacity and purpose, for we have now made a few members, young men at that, who are giving promise of doing good propaganda. They have advanced from the ranks of Social Democracy, viz., State Socialism. One, Comrade C. R. Crawford, who happens to be a good speaker, but who has been suffering from a serious illness, hopes to be able to do some open-air work this year. This winter we are quietly meeting together, writing, discussing, and studying the principles of Anarchism.

Newcastle-on-Tyne is suffering, like all other congested centres, from an overdose of unemployed. I mean the workless are suffering. We have them marching the city with conspicuous banners, interviewing Councillors, etc., for work; but now leading citizens have

started a fund, their names attached to cheques for various amounts. The poor devils out of work may get a "bob" a week for two or three weeks—that may be all; but what more can our "city fathers" do? They have done their duty to the "inefficient"! They have just appointed a new town clerk at a salary of £1,200, to rise as time passes!

An unemployed demonstration took place here on Tuesday night, December 24, in the big market. Several speakers addressed the crowd, after which the unemployed paraded the streets. Our group also took part in it, distributing leaflets, such as "Our Great Empire," etc.

R. S.

"VOICE OF LABOUR" RAFFLE.

Should the winner fail to claim the oil painting on or before January 22nd, the picture will become the property of the Voice of Labour group, who will dispose of it for the benefit of the propaganda.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(December 5—January 8.)

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