

Freedom

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NOTES.

Reductio ad absurdum.

When a Socialist becomes a politician, he seems as a rule to become just as hidebound and narrow-minded as the ordinary bourgeois of that type. The following crassly stupid pronouncement is taken from the *Labour Leader* (November 20): "The alternative to Parliamentary action is war and anarchy, with the more than probable sequence of autocracy and militarism. There is no hope of Socialism by that road." This is rather cool considering that the rank-and-file of the Labour Party are just beginning to discover the absolute hopelessness of any Socialism being ground out of the Parliamentary machine. The statement, however, is a lie, and the writer knows it, since the question of Direct Action has been referred to in that journal before now. Besides, on the same page he contradicts himself. Referring to the martyrdom of the antimilitarists, he says: "The refusal of these soldier-heroes—we use the term advisedly—to slaughter their fellow workers at the bidding of a corrupt militarism [He should say *Parliament*, with a *Socialist Party* in it!] calls for whole-hearted admiration." Quite so. But the antimilitarists are doing more to advance Socialism than all the Labour Parties in the world. Will he have the impudence to call their splendid propaganda "Parliamentary action"? We have only to add that the antimilitarists have been denounced by the *Parliamentary Socialists* in the French Chamber to show what a muddle of lies and contradictions this political bigot has got himself into.

The Proof of the Pudding.

Whilst referring to this subject of Parliamentary action, it may be well to show how the Anarchist objections are borne out by the terribly lame defence of the Labour Party made by J. R. Macdonald (*Labour Leader*, November 20). Let us admit that these men have gone to Parliament, not to make a revolution, but to obtain measures palliating the effects of capitalism. In that case, what hope do the starving workers get from a statement like the following:—

"We must not forget that the Government has definitely pledged itself to bring in a Bill [on unemployment] next year. We would have preferred it this year, and we said so; but, after all, we are 31, and the membership of the House of Commons is 670. So we have to make the best of it, accept the Government's pledge, and see that it is kept. Our policy, therefore, is to assist other legislation this year so as to clear the decks for next. Nothing can be more futile, either in industry or in legislation, than to go jumping about from one job to another, leaving all partly finished. The Government is bound to deal with certain things, one of which is licensing. If it does not do it this year, it will do it next, and we do not want any big question to come in next year and interfere with the time and opportunities which we shall require for discussing, amending, and amplifying the Government's proposals. We have, therefore, to clear away all accumulations as hard as we can, so that 1909 will find our time free for a great session of social legislation."

So, you see, if the unemployed can only starve through 1908, they will be thought of in 1909—if the Labour Party can "clear away all the accumulations" by then. The Government, however, with the assistance of the House of Lords, will see that the "accumulations" remain. Alas! poor "Parliamentary action." Failure, failure everywhere!

The Cant of a Renegade.

Much of late has been said of the renegade who sold himself to the Liberal Party that he might strut and fret his hour upon the stage of the Local Government Board. The disgust this spectacle has produced in honest minds is certainly not lessened by the fact that all has been done in an eminently respectable English fashion. The moral ex-mechanic is never tired of preaching the virtuous life to the workers. But there is more

than one kind of treachery. Political life supplies all varieties. There is, for example, the man who is traitor to his class; and there is the man who is traitor to his reputation and his conscience. Such an one is John Morley, now for his pains pilloried in the House of Lords. From this point of vantage he is showing us what pure intellectuality can do in the realms of political power. The starving, plague-stricken Indian people are realising what a forlorn hope is the struggle for liberty under any Government. Would it comfort the taxed and exploited millions of long-suffering India, we wonder, to read the sweet words of the renegade Lord as quoted by the *Daily News*? Listen:—

"There is poetry and beauty in common lives around us, if we look at them with an imaginative and sympathetic eye."

"Imaginative and sympathetic"! In the name of plague and famine, when will this cant cease? And it is so old—as old as tyranny itself.

Direct Action better than Law.

The following was reported in a recent issue of the *Daily Telegraph*:—

"Atrocious cruelty has been proved against the managers of a cinematograph show who arrange thrilling scenes, to be afterwards unfolded before a harrowed audience. The spectacle chosen in this case was the fall of a runaway horse drawing a carriage over a precipice. The scene was actually performed while a photographer took it. The managers first started proceedings at a small Brittany village, Graix. They had hauled an unfortunate horse up to a cliff and were lashing it into running away when the peasants, revolted at the sight, turned upon the whole party and hounded them out of the village. Unluckily, they did not capture the hapless horse, and the cinematograph fiends took the animal off with them and resumed their inhuman operations a few miles away along the coast, at Ploemeur. There, unfortunately, they were undisturbed. The horse, beaten into a state of wild terror, dashed away up the cliff of Couregan and over the edge. The wretched animal fell, dragging the carriage with it, down a height of a hundred feet on to rocks, and by a mercy was instantly killed. The vehicle was smashed to splinters. A man with a cinematograph camera stood calmly by and took the whole scene. When the horrible performance was over gendarmes, a trifle late, turned up. The result was a prosecution at Lorient, which was delayed for months, the cinematograph managers having gone to Africa in search of more thrilling sights in the Morocco campaign. The Lorient police magistrate did his best to punish the perpetrators of the cruelty, but the utmost he could do was but little. Letting off the photographer as having played no part in the horrible scene, as he merely took the pictures, he censured the cinematograph managers in the severest terms, and inflicted a fine of 12s."

The direct action of the peasants, which was unconscious Anarchism, stopped the crime; the law, as usual, was too late. The "punishment" will never prevent its repetition. Who would not sooner live in an Anarchist Commune than under a capitalist Government?

WILLIAM MacQUEEN.

We deeply regret to learn of the death of William MacQueen, which took place on Monday, November 9, at the early age of 33, after a long illness. He was a very active propagandist in the early "nineties." Later on he went to the States, and in New York started an Anarchist paper called *Liberty*—an error of judgment so far as the title was concerned, as Tucker's paper had been in existence some time. The story of his arrest and trial for "inciting to riot" at Paterson is recent history. At first he came to England when sentenced, his bail being escheated. Eventually, however, he returned to serve his term of imprisonment, but was released last year. Consumption had meanwhile attacked him, and in broken health he came back to wife and children only to face a lingering death. To these we are sure the sympathy of all comrades will go out, for they cannot have suffered much less than he himself.

DIRECT ACTION versus LEGISLATION.

By J. BLAIR SMITH.

I.

To-day, just after the close of the nineteenth century, which was so prolific in discoveries and inventions fraught with the highest possibilities for the physical, moral, and intellectual development of mankind, when one looks around, or merely studies his daily newspaper, one finds references to crying evils which the great bulk of one's fellow citizens have been cognisant of for a number of years back. Notwithstanding our immense advance in the world of mechanics, notwithstanding the fact that the productive power of the individual has been increased a thousandfold, newspaper after newspaper, day after day, records the bitter facts of everyday life, and their constant recurrence has robbed them of all pathetic interest. And these facts are bitter indeed. After a century of phenomenal progress in scientific knowledge, which enables mankind to exploit Nature in a manner never before dreamt of, we are still face to face with evils greater than any previous civilisation has known. In any newspaper, on any day of the year, one may read of crimes so appalling, of privations so terrible, of degradation and misery so horrible, that it almost becomes a matter of doubt whether we are living in Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century or in some barbarous island ere the dawn of civilisation.

The reports in our newspapers seem so awful, as they graphically outline some shameless depravity, some heartless cruelty, that were it not for our own experience of life, we should deem them incredible. Robbery, murder, suicide, deaths from starvation, from overwork, deserted children, evictions—these, and many more equally sad and pitiable, are the daily stock-in-trade of every newspaper in the country; and (the unconscious sarcasm of it all!) we may also read in the same newspaper the speech of some eminent statesman describing the moral grandeur of the twentieth century and the greatness and wealth of Britain; or of some eloquent divine who makes an impassioned appeal to our pockets on behalf of "the poor heathen of some far-off land living in sin and misery."

The moral grandeur of the twentieth century had no existence, and it is palpable to most of us who are in any way conversant with the evils around us (and who among us is not?), that the people who are "living in sin and misery" are at home—a fact which is patent to everyone except "eminent statesmen" and "eloquent divines." The evils which surround us are so manifest, so numerous, and so great, that unless some determined effort is made towards their abolition, they will abolish us, just as in the past less gigantic evils have swept away the civilisations preceding ours. These evils have gone on increasing and multiplying, producing new evils, notwithstanding the fact that very many of them have their opponents, men who are pledged to work for their extinction. Each evil has its special set of opponents, with special plans and methods for its abolition. Certain groups of individuals have combined together to cope with some particular evil which seems greater in their eyes than all others; other groups, who differ from these, are attempting to cope with various other evils. All alike are calling upon Parliament to interfere in this or that particular case, to abolish this or that law, to introduce this or that Bill for the supposed betterment of the community. Yet while all these factions exist, all more or less noisy, the great bulk of the people remain apathetic, have become callous and indifferent, partly by the constant sight of these evils, the constant repetition of the cries, and partly because the fairly comfortable, well-fed portion of the public do not, and apparently cannot, realise the enormity and the awfulness of the evils which have come along with civilisation and the twentieth century. It is difficult for the man in the West End, surrounded by every comfort, enjoying every pleasure, intellectual, artistic, emotional, to realise the sodden misery and depravity which often exist in the East End. It is almost impossible for the lady reared amid every luxury to realise the vicious, degraded lives of the women in the slums. For those people who have never had an unsatisfied want in their lives, it may be impossible to fathom the motives, the circumstances and reasons which drive men to drink and crime, and women to shame. But we, who are workers, we know these circumstances and conditions, we feel them exerting all their baleful influence upon us every day of our lives—why, why are we so apathetic, so oblivious of the misery which continually surrounds us, and often is a part of us?

What is the reason for this apathy? Perhaps one cause of it lies in the fact that during last century, and especially in the latter half of it, there was a steadily increasing feeling that it was no part of the individual's duty to remove, or attempt to remove, the evils which exist. Agitate for their removal he may, but to attempt spontaneously, with the help of his fellows, to directly remedy a grievance, this he may not do, without first consulting the State. Any attempt in that direction, we were told again and again, was foredoomed to failure, even if it were not criminal to indulge in such an attempt. Parliament, we were told, would look after our interests and the best interests of the people generally, would regulate our lives better than we knew how, and was therefore the proper body whom we ought to approach with our grievances and the plans for their remedying; and of course every one knows the remarkable rate of speed the Parliamentary machine travels at.

The reign of paternal governmentism was ushered in and a

consequent indifferentism in the people, coupled with their childlike trust that in some way or other the Government would provide, and no doubt succeed in managing things for the best for everybody, and if it did not—well, it could not be helped; nobody was to blame, and things will always go as they have gone in the past. "*Laissez faire*," said the people, "the Government rules; we must obey. They know what we desire; let us trust them." Sometimes they overthrew a Government, but as they always replaced it by another almost identical so far as administration goes, it made little difference, and the trust and confidence of the people was merely transferred to different individuals, who worked the same machine in the self-same way as their predecessors.

Thus we may account for the seeming apathy which exists to-day to three or four causes. The taking away from the individual his direct interest in life and in his surroundings, and as a necessary consequence the blunting to a large extent of his moral sense; the teaching that he must never rely on himself, but must depend upon a small party of men who are elected to do everything, whether they are acquainted with the matter in hand or not, destroys to a large extent his perception of right and wrong. To be guided and to depend for guidance upon people who know absolutely nothing of his daily life, his struggles and privations—for it may be safely assumed that 90 per cent. of the House of Commons are woefully ignorant of the various details which make up the worker's life, and which are so blatantly and learnedly discussed there—is to show a lack of individuality, which, if not almost criminal, is at least very pathetic. It is certainly unworthy of the descendants of the men who gained the civil and religious liberty we possess to-day, not by blindly and slavishly following rulers and politicians, but by asserting their own individuality and their own principles, no matter whether the Government considered these principles legal or illegal.

This absence of self-reliance which paternalism insists upon may be considered as one of the main obstacles to all genuine progress. There is, of course, as well, the party system of government, which not only deprives men of self-reliance, but largely of reason also. Men shout for this or that particular measure, not because as thoughtful individuals they believe it will be beneficial to the great mass of their fellows and bring increased happiness and well-being to the community, but because it has been recommended by some great party leader, or inscribed on the programme of some particular party. I do not deny that some of the measures may have been beneficial, but I do deny that the great bulk of the people would have voted or shouted for them had they been advanced by some obscure man instead of being supported by the prestige of some great party leader. The reason of the people is thus obscured; it becomes more than ever necessary to think with the multitude, and no man dare stand alone, for to-day, to slightly revise an old axiom, "originality breeds contempt," as those who attempt to initiate innovations will soon find to their cost.

The principle which party government tacitly asserts, that the majority must be right, is decidedly immoral, for right and wrong never were, and never can be, determined by the mere counting of noses. A principle must stand or fall by itself, and whether its adherents be few or many, ethically it is still the same. The party system of government denies this, and we find this illustrated for us in the fact that in 1880 Mr. Gladstone sent men to prison for advocating a principle which he himself advocated in 1885. All the difference that existed was a difference in the numbers which supported that principle in 1880 and 1885; and a great portion of the public, at least of his party, completely approved of his actions at both these periods. They had abnegated their own reason completely; sacrificed it to the fetch of party worship.

When we take these things into consideration, as well as the proverbial slowness of Parliament, is it any wonder that men who started life with generous impulses and noble aspirations, imbued with enthusiasm in the people's cause, become apathetic and either drop out of the fight through sheer weariness of the never-ending "law's delays," or becoming cynical and indifferent, resolve to make the best for themselves, and let their more unfortunate fellows go where they may? And this is comparatively easy. All that is necessary is to go to the assistance of the strongest, and immediately he will bask in the sunshine of popularity (for the multitude can only think in numbers), live in wealth and luxury, die universally lamented, have the honour of a public funeral, and public monuments set up to perpetuate his memory. To abide by his own inmost convictions, to hold high his ideal unsoiled and unspotted, would earn for him a life of contumely and abuse, terminating probably either in the workhouse or in prison. He had few if any adherents, consequently he must be wrong. This is the manner in which government has taught the people to reason, if they reason at all. As a general rule, it is more a matter of emotions than intelligence, and no one knows this better than your politician. Our system condemns an honest man to remain unheard, or converts him into a rogue and a hypocrite. In either case it is sad and pitiable, and even if that were all, quite sufficient to condemn the Parliamentary system and its baneful influence upon the people. It is not all. In short, let us again enumerate the disadvantages of appealing to Parliament to do what finally we must do for ourselves either with or without the permission of Parliament.

The loss of self-reliance; the partial deprivation of reason; the blunting of the moral sense; lack of individuality and initiative; apathy and indifference. When we consider all these results of Parliamentary action upon the individual, and the people generally, as well as the fact that so little is achieved, and that little of comparatively

small value, when we think of the terrible evils abounding in our midst, is it not time as well as advisable to consider whether there may not be other methods which will enable us to abolish these evils, and gain that which we all desire more speedily; and which will, at the same time, develop and strengthen the individuality and self-reliance of the people. As the superstition of Parliament is more or less based upon the superstition of law, it would be well to say a few words on law before criticising Parliament more fully, especially in contradistinction to the direct action of the people themselves.

II.

When people speak of the law, they appear to be under the impression that it is something outside of themselves; something above them, higher than them; something they themselves can neither make nor unmake, but which, rightly or wrongly, they must blindly obey. They imagine that it is a force irresistible, from which there is no appeal; that it dictates, whether just or unjust, still must be obeyed. Few there are who consider whether they are just or unjust; the great majority of the people sincerely believe an action is right or wrong—moral or immoral—just as it happens to be set down in the statute book. Now this is a most immoral attitude to assume. Nothing should be taken for granted; we ought to bring our own intelligence and reason to bear upon any particular question or action, and settle for ourselves, irrespective of the opinions of other men—even if set down in the dusty tomes which crowd the libraries of the Houses of Parliament—its morality or immorality; that is, whether or not it is for the well-being of the individual and the race. That, after all, is the only standard whereby all actions can be tested; and that alone is moral which leads to the increased happiness and well being of the individual, and as a necessary consequence the race.

Until we grasp this fundamental truth, happiness for the great bulk of mankind will be impossible, and the great evils which afflict us to-day will be perpetuated in a greater or lesser degree. This poverty and mediocrity of thought, this silently accepting the opinions of others ready-made for us in the newspapers, as our clothes are in the store; this deference, almost reverential, to the opinion of the majority, is largely responsible for the callousness and indifference of to-day. The supineness and complacency of the people amid all the hardships of to-day are as terribly sad as the degradation and destitution which prevail, and owe their existence to the superstition of law. This supineness and complacency will always exist until we as a people get rid of the superstition of law, a bogey erected by ourselves to worship and adore. We are told that savages in Africa erect their idols, and having endowed them with irresistible and all-conquering power and all-embracing knowledge, fall down and worship them. We pride ourselves upon our progress and civilisation, yet in what respect do we differ from these savages? They are held in awe, not because the idol really possesses any of these attributes with which they have endowed it, and which only exist in their own minds, but simply because they believe so. The European, who has no such superstition, may knock it down, break it in pieces, and recognise it for what it is worth, a piece of wood or stone which owes its power to the undeveloped reason and savage imagination which bow down before it. We, of course, do not bow down to idols of wood or stone, but we endow with superhuman wisdom and power the opinions set down in the statute book of mere men after all, as if the expression of opinion in the statute book gave it the wisdom and force which were denied to the expression of opinion in the street. As in the case of the savages, so will it be in our own—the law is strong so long as we believe it to be so; when we cease to believe so, it will fall to pieces like the idol of the savages.

To get rid of this superstition of law, it is but necessary to examine it in all its aspects—to trace its origin and development; to study its results in operation. The necessity for law arose from the institution of slavery and in the evolution from communal property to private property; in the development from the simple family customs of the clans to the establishment of the State. Previous to the institution of slavery, in the frequent internecine wars which were waged between tribes in the early days of man's development, cannibalism was the invariable practice of every clan, and the victors in a battle generally ate the vanquished. But man discovered, after a long interval, of course, that it was more profitable to set his prisoners of war to till the soil and engage in various rude industries than to kill and eat them, and thus slavery was established. The strongest and most powerful fighter in those days generally captured the most slaves, and as the common sense of the clan was decidedly against the slave having little or nothing to do, he was granted so much more land to give employment to all his slaves. The institution of inheritance arising about the same time, wealth, and of course power, were gradually concentrated into a few hands. The necessity for safeguarding this wealth as well as safeguarding the position of one man (the most powerful warrior generally) as head of the clan or state against any possible attack from those who were less fortunate, and from the slaves either captured or born on the domains of the lord, led to the institution of law. The Church, stepping in, received large grants of land from this warrior, and bestowed in return a religious sanction to the enactments of the king or lord. The bond of union finally established between Church and State—that is, stripped of all fine words, rapacious priests on the one hand and the robber barons on the other—the people steeped in ignorance and superstition, blindly obeying their priests, it was easy to

establish the connecting link between heavenly and earthly law, and the penalties for disobeying either, both here and in the world to come, were such that only the boldest and most indomitable spirits had even the courage to criticise the law. From this arose the divine right of kings and the infallibility of priests, and the great bulk of the human race, with few exceptions, here and there, now and then, grovelled in abject slavery before their divinely-inspired masters and pastors. It took the human race centuries to awaken from this sleep of ignorance and superstition, and the divine right of kings and the infallibility of priests were shattered for ever. But ideas often change their names while their essence remains the same. Mankind is always prone, like the Israelites of old, to return to its old idolatrous worship, while at the same time it deludes itself into believing it is something else by inventing a new label for it.

The divinity which formerly hedged a king has now been transferred to law and to Parliament. The aim of both institutions is the same, however—to safeguard the interests of a small minority against any possible attack from the unfortunate majority. The result is the same as in the Middle Ages—wealth, luxury, power, culture, the enjoyment of literature and art, and the study of the sciences for the few; and poverty, misery, and degradation for the many.

We find, therefore, in studying the origin and development of law, that it owes its existence to robbery and murder. It is a familiar axiom that "the sword must keep what the sword has gained." We find this well exemplified in the history of our country. It required more than the sword to keep the plunder robbed from the people; the gallows and cannon, the stake and scaffold were impressed into the service of the law to "keep what the sword had gained." Crimes too atrocious to mention have been committed by the State in the name of law and order, and with the full approval and blessing of the Church. Who has not heard of the massacres of St. Bartholomew and Glencoe? Yet from those days, and long before them, down to the execution of Wilson and the Radical martyrs of Scotland, the Peterloo massacre, the shooting of miners at Featherstone, of peasants at Mitchelstown, what a horrible record of crimes is unfolded to us, perpetrated by this law which is supposed to exist to suppress crime! What nameless sickening barbarities were inflicted upon those who were unfortunate enough to come within its cruel grasp! What devilish engines of torture, constructed with almost fiendish ingenuity to rend asunder the limbs of the unhappy victim or tear his flesh into piecemeal! These were the means and methods for maintaining "order" in society. Of course, we no longer use these instruments of torture; but the law did not freely consign these relics of savagery to the museums. The force of public opinion, an enlightened public conscience, these, and these alone, compelled the sweeping away of a system which comprised such diabolical methods of punishment. Torture must always be more or less incorporated with law. Witness the revolting details of our prison system published from time to time, and the demands made by many judges in England to revert to flogging as a punishment for crime. Thus even our judges are brutalised and degraded by their calling; their minds warped and twisted, the spring of human sympathy dried up by studying too much law and too little humanity. Crimes! You talk of the crimes of the individual! The crimes committed by individuals are as a drop of water in the ocean compared to the crimes perpetrated by the law.

(To be continued.)

BOOK NOTES.

Anarchy v. Socialism. By Wm. C. Owen. 5 cents. New York: "Mother Earth" Publishing Association, 210 E. 13th Street.

This pamphlet is in every way excellent. Clearly written, well reasoned, it can be read without difficulty or confusion in grasping the position claimed by Anarchism in social evolution. We have only one fault to find, and that is with the title. "Socialism" is a term that, in our view, embraces all theories which aim at a reconstruction of society with the socialisation of wealth as a basis. It is the Social Democrats who have tried to narrow this conception down to the miserable idea of mere political palliatives. "Anarchy v. Social Democracy," it seems to us, would have been a more fitting title. It is a pamphlet we are sure will have a wide utility.

Shear My Sheep. By Dennis Hird. 1s. net. London: A. C. Fifield, 44 Fleet Street, E.C.

This is an excellently written satire on England's greatness. Any one might be induced to read this, and whilst enjoying it suddenly discover his eyes had been opened by a scathing exposure of the robbery and fraud of capitalism and landlordism. The book is full of a sardonic humour. One of the neatest epigrams is this: "Civilisation is a fiddler and the poor are the fiddles."

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED.

Schopenhauer in the Air. Twelve Stories by Sadakichi Hartmann. 25 cents. Rochester, N.Y.: Stylus Publishing Co., 241 Granite Building.

La Chair a Canon. Par Manuel Devaldès. 15c. Paris: Edition de "Génération Consciente," 27 Rue de la Dueé.

Moyens d'Eviter les Grandes Familles. By Drs. J. Rutgers and F. Masciaux. Tenth edition. 30c. Same publishers.

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THE INHERENT LIMITS OF PARLIAMENT.

If the practical efforts of young movements such as Direct Action and the General Strike sometimes fail, this is inevitable in the beginning of movements, when experience has to be won in a bitter all-round struggle. The advocates of Parliamentaryism, in particular, are the last who should use this as an argument, considering the fact that their own Parliamentaryism is tottering from bad to worse. No one will say that the representative system is a young, experimental movement; its friends glory in its age and wisdom. Here, then, there is no hopeful development before us, but only the decay of a timeworn organism which, if we look more closely at it, has never had any real vitality, and is therefore for ever incapable of serious improvement and progress.

The origin of Parliamentary institutions explains this. The primitive direct action of the people in their local meetings had long since been crushed by their lords, and above them all royal power had risen, a strong and cruel Government. When Parliaments came into existence, this apparent progress was marred by two vital defects: first, the Governmental organism, based on royal power, remained in possession of all executive power, and has remained so until to-day; second, Parliament represented the interests of the wealthy classes from the beginning, and to protect these interests against the people an alliance between Parliament and Government was necessary, and this prevented the struggle for the extension of Parliamentary power ever gaining its ends and getting real control over the Government. Being accomplices united against the people, they cannot seriously be expected to fight each other, which means that with Parliamentaryism the continuation of ancient absolutism is really intimately connected.

This is contradicted neither by the history of the Commonwealth nor by that of the French Revolution and the United States of America. We see on the surface the fiercest struggles for Parliamentary rights, it is true; but in reality the revolutionary parties only hastened to come into safe possession of Government for a time and so prevent real, popular, social revolutions. Inevitably the Governmental organism absorbed the best of them, routine or reaction followed, and compromises, which we still see to-day, ended the once promising struggle.

We see that in almost every practical matter Parliament abdicates into the hands of Government, which enjoys the possession of real power for a much longer period than Parliament plays with the semblance of it. We see, further, to what extent the intentions of Parliaments can be thwarted by different forms of the veto—the refusal to sanction the decisions of Parliaments—granted to Kings, Presidents, etc. And we all know that wonderful device to reduce Parliamentaryism to an absurdity—a device which, if somebody first proposed it to-day, would be considered a joke—namely, to set up one Parliament against another in the same country, the Upper Chamber against the Lower, the House of Lords against the House of Commons, as in this country.

Do not say that this is considered an abnormity now by general consent, and will be abolished. No one thinks of this; on the contrary, if the House of Lords did not exist, it would have to be invented—this is the real feeling of those in power. They are not disposed to part with their wealth and power at the demand of the people as expressed by their votes at elections. But they willingly grant facilities for oratorical display, and that is the function of the Lower Chambers with their Socialist and Labour parties. They are quite safe, for they know beforehand

that the House of Lords, the French Senate, etc., will take the sting out of the so-called popular measures which from time to time, playing to the gallery, they permit to be passed in the Lower House. At this the usual cry against the House of Lords is raised; we heard it when Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was rejected in the "nineties," we heard it two years ago, we hear it just now; it is one of the old familiar street cries, and nothing ever comes of it.

If Parliamentaryism could ever have been reformed, it should have been done when it was young and believing itself full of life. In our days all efforts are concentrated on defending the wealth and power of the rich classes, and Parliaments, like the press, the pulpit, patriotic agitation, etc., are mere tools at the service of those who organise that defence. Parliamentary Socialism and Labourism, unfortunately, play into their hands; the efforts of progressive womanhood are also misled in this direction; but real, hard facts, the facts of life, are stronger than all these currents. In practical questions the incompetence of Parliament becomes more visible every day. Quite apart from those who consciously believe in direct action, people in general see that conflicting opinions and interests cannot be artificially regulated and united from above; thus on the education question Parliament is at its wits' ends, on the unemployed question likewise. Possibly the failure of so many recent attempts at Parliamentary regulation will lead to a more general recognition of the futility of Parliamentaryism, this inefficient system hopelessly linked with the most reactionary past, absolute governmental power, and opposed to all human instincts of freedom and autonomy.

FAILURE OF COMPULSORY ARBITRATION.

The following resolutions were passed by the Victorian Socialist Party at their annual conference held at Sydney in July, and are reprinted from the *Melbourne Socialist*, July 31:—

That this Conference declares against Wages Boards, Arbitration Courts, etc.

1. That this Conference affirms its pronounced and mature conviction that Compulsory Arbitration, as manifested in slightly differing enactments in the Australian States and New Zealand, has not proved advantageous to the Working Class, but has weakened Trade Unionism in spirit and achievement, and therefore the acceptance or endorsement of any form of compulsory arbitration will prove detrimental to the industrial welfare and class emancipation of the workers.

2. That this Conference unreservedly condemns the Industrial Disputes Act as dangerous to the Working Class of N. S. W., and calls upon both the organised and unorganised workers to vigorously protest against the measure by refusing to register thereunder; further urging them, regardless of consequences, to defy Mr. Wade's capitalistic Cabinet in its coercive attempt to foist upon the workers a measure unjust and tyrannical in its provisions, and reactionary and intolerable in principle.

"Experience teaches," says the old motto; but evidently this does not apply to those who supported compulsory arbitration at the Trade Union Congress. Although only just returned from Australia, where he must have learnt of the bitter feeling on this matter, Ben Tillett had the impudence to move a resolution in favour of a system which those workers who have tried it unhesitatingly condemn. Fortunately, his resolution was again defeated. The following article on New Zealand's experience of compulsory arbitration should completely silence those Labour "leaders" (!) who evidently think that the advocacy of it is a sure passport to a Government job. The cutting is from the same paper as above:—

It is a good thing that a young country like New Zealand, with various economic and other advantages, should have resorted to such a measure as the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Now, after fourteen years' experience of it, with various amendments, it is admitted by many who were formerly favourable to the Act that it is an utter failure.

Within the last six months there have been four considerable strikes, several smaller ones, and another of large proportions threatening. The Blackball miners was the dispute that gave the Act the first serious drubbing, when the Government sent the Sheriff to seize the goods and chattels of the miners, and put these up to auction to recover the fines imposed on the men. This arrested more attention than probably anything else in connection with the administration of the Act, and thousands of workmen who had hitherto been passively acquiescent now became actively hostile.

Then followed the Auckland tram strike, initiated in effective fashion, and terminating with the appointment of a special Board to deal with their grievance. This did not damage the Act as much as the Blackball miners had done, but it caused many to breathe freely

when in two days' strike they forced the position more than they could by two months of appealing and deputising.

Next came the Wellington bakers. These had joined in the celebrations of the eight-hour day year after year, which celebrations have been held for half a century; but the bakers of the Capital City had never themselves obtained the 48 hour week. They had tried for years to do so. They came under the Arbitration Act, and tried on every occasion when a new Award was given to get the 48-hour week. They hoped two months ago, on the expiry of the old award, to get their case dealt with by the Conciliation Board; but the employers refused, and the Award of the Court was (for a five-mile radius, with the Wellington Post Office as a centre) a 51-hour working week, and wages for foremen, £3 3s. per week; second hands, £2 13s.; and table hand, £2 8s. per week.

Rents in Wellington are higher than anywhere else in the Southern Hemisphere, 24s. a week in the city for a house of five rooms, and all commodities exceptionally high.

Now the miners of Otago, in the South Island, are declaring they will strike if they fail to obtain redress; and they are paving the way for federated action.

The Russian Crisis.

II.

As we said in the first article, the second part of the popular claims, "the land for the peasants," imposed itself imperiously on the Government. On the solution of this question depends not only the prosperity of the nation, but the very existence of the Empire.

The European Press has often spoken of the poverty of the peasants who form 80 per cent. of the whole Russian population, but in Europe one cannot have a real idea of the misery, the state of beggary of the people everywhere in Russia, except perhaps Poland and Georgia. Militarism and bureaucracy, including the nobility and the clergy, have completely exhausted all the nationalities of the Empire. Officialdom and bureaucracy generally are a curse resting on the peoples of our times, but in no country is the number of those parasites—from the Czar and his family to the meanest spy—so great as in Russia. The nobility being nearly all in military or civil service, live on the Budget; the same with the clergy, which does the service of spying and keeping the villagers in ignorance.

The Budget of the State, which amounts to 2,400,000,000 roubles (more than £240,000,000), is paid in reality by the people who are ruined, the peasants. The Senatorial Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the agricultural decay in nineteen central provinces with a population of thirty-five millions of real Russians, stated that the average annual budget of a peasant family of five persons is £16. Of this sum £4 is counted for household goods and expenses for agricultural works. If we divide the annual State Budget by the number of inhabitants, we see that each peasant family pays £4 to the State. So £8 a year remains for the whole family, which means less than £2 yearly for each person for food and dress, or about 1½d. a day.

With 80 per cent. of the population in such a state of penury, the mass of the people is starving and in rags. Famine has become periodical, and every year a population of fifteen to twenty million in various parts of the Empire has to be saved from starving to death by the Government or by private Russian, and even international, charity. A conservative author, M. Bekhlaev, an authority on peasant life, says:—

"The state of absolute misery kills every desire to save and better the condition of living, even if this were possible. The common sense of the peasants tells them to repair only the buildings, because these, whether bad or good, cannot be sold by the authorities for payment of arrears of taxes. Consequently, the peasants do not try even to gain money for any other purpose; and if they earn some, they are quite reasonable to prefer spending it at once to paying the taxes."

On the foundation of ruin and misery created by the fiscal system of Czardom, which at the same time rigorously puts down every attempt by the enlightened classes to bring elementary instruction to the peasants, rises a state of social, intellectual, and hygienic life such as in Europe was known only in the dark periods of the Middle Ages.

The mortality is frightful. If in London 13 or 14 die in every 1,000, in Russia it is 40 in the 1,000. In Norway the mortality of children is 79 per 1,000, in Italy 172; in Russia in the central provinces it is 217, in some others 310, and in the provinces of Novgorod, Perm, and Viatka, 440 per 1,000!

Concerning the intellectual state of the people, it is sufficient to say that in 1904 fourteen million children of school age were

without any instruction, and at the present time only 28 per 100 Russians are able to sign their names.

The responsibility for this sacrifice to the gods of wretchedness and misery rests entirely and exclusively with the cursed personalities of Alexander III. and his son Nicholas II. The responsibility rests with them because at the time of the liberation of the serfs in 1861 the annual State Budget was only 460,000,000 roubles (£46,000,000). But since 1882, when Alexander III. placed Russia in a state of siege and handed the country over to oppression by military brutes, and submitted elementary and secondary schools to supervision by police and clergy, which continues to the present day, the Government of the Czar has increased the annual expenditure to 2,400,000,000 roubles a year. And this fabulous sum is paid exclusively by the ruined peasantry, as we Socialists understand quite well that all that is paid by officials and industrial financiers has been obtained from the work of the producers.

Ruined and kept in a state of primitive ignorance by the Czar, his military, his millions of gendarmes and police, together with the most ignorant, cruel, and rapacious clergy of the world, the peasant suffers yet from lack of arable land and of the necessary cattle.

In this vast and thinly populated Empire, Czardom has created a real land famine for millions of peasants. The rent which the peasants pay to the nobles and monasteries is often 15, 20, and even 25 roubles per acre, whilst the purchase price of the land is 40, 50, and seldom 60 roubles. So that each year the peasants pay a quarter, sometimes nearly a half, of the value of the land. It is easy to understand that from the abolition of serfdom till our day the rallying cry of the peasantry has been "Land and liberty!" the motto adopted by the Russian Socialists and revolutionists, the motto with which the liberation movement has developed during the last ten years.

We indicated before that the Czar wanted to attribute all the glory of the solution of the agrarian question to himself. The Government has organised "an agricultural bank for the peasants," which, buying the land of the great landowners, sells it in allotments to the peasants, with a system of payment which the Government thinks is very easy. But we have seen that the rural population cannot even pay the taxes, and it is evident that no amelioration is possible if the annual burden is again increased. Even if every family possessed 10 to 20 acres and had all the necessary cattle and tools, it would be always obliged to give to the State 45 to 60 per cent. of the produce of its work.

The peasants understood quite well that this project of the Government would not ameliorate their economic conditions. At the same time the Government took measures to abolish the old national system of communal land ownership, giving every facility to peasants who were willing to leave their commune and take land in private ownership. Thus the only form of equality which existed in Russian life would be destroyed, and the creation of a rural proletariat so desired by landowners, and unhappily also by Marxists, would be the immediate result. In the conception of the peasants these measures not only failed to better their position, but even imperilled their present poor existence. Everywhere in Russia agrarian disorders were the answer to the Czar's manifesto, and two years of executions and deportations have been unable to break this spirit of revolt, which, on the contrary, is increasing and spreading.

W. TCHERKESOFF.

(To be continued.)

What a Nice Mixture!

The following extracts are worth reproducing:—

"If I was in the States I should, as a Socialist, vote for Bryan, and I should do my best to get all others to do the same." This was an expression used by Pete Curran, the English Socialist, as a deliberate summing up of a conversation on the existing political situation in the United States.—(Letter of the American Federation of Labor Delegates to the British Trade Union Congress, to Samuel Gompers, President Am. Fed. of Labor, Sept. 24, *American Federationist*, October, 1908.)

"Yet.....in spite of the efforts of Sam Gompers, the Labour leader, to betray the Labour vote to Bryan....."

—(*Clarion*, Nov. 13.)

"We should proceed to convince those who are hostile that social progress and permanent prosperity are only possible when there is harmonious co-operation between labor and capital, and that that co-operation is only possible upon a basis of justice to those who toil."—(W. J. Bryan, letter to Samuel Gompers, Nov. 10, *Coast Seamen's Journal*, Nov. 25.)

Any comment would spoil the effect.

ALBERT LIBERTAD.

Death, more cruel and stupid than ever, struck down comrade Albert Libertad, of Paris, the propagandist orator and one of the founders of *L'Anarchie*, the weekly paper started in 1905, and the *Causeries populaires* (1902), those local popular meetings which form a new kind of propaganda worthy of more general use. After climbing up nearly the full height of Montmartre, one is faced, in the Rue de la Barre 22, by a two-roomed shop, door and windows in summer wide open to the street, which forms a quiet corner here. Even without entering one sees one room full of young compositors at their printing-cases, and next to them, near the open door, some young women doing needlework or preparing food, with a baby or two thrown in in the middle near the table where all the office work is done, literature briskly sent out, etc. The back walls contain the stock of pamphlets, and a collection of advanced books forming a lending library.

In the evening the room is cleared a little and forms are put up; the "popular discussions" begin—informal discussions, attended by people from the neighbourhood and comrades, just the way to come in real contact with average people who feel shy of meetings, have no trust in orators, but may gradually be thawed by ordinary, unpretentious conversation. They get the books they want to take home; they soon see that these young Anarchists, not hindered by conventionalities and thoroughly disinterested, can help them in many little ways; they see them hard at work and yet free at the same time, arranging matters their own way and always merry. Such a milieu Libertad greatly helped to create, and I feel sure that his friends will keep together and continue the work.

For to me this example seems of no small importance. A Communist colony is mostly situated in a remote, isolated district; and an attempt to produce almost everything on the spot is hard work, tiring, often disappointing, and bringing too many cares for keeping the unbounded spirit of propaganda still alive in the off-hours. The transition, moreover, from ordinary to Communist life is too sudden to appeal to greater numbers of surrounding people.

A *Syndicat*, again, unites men of the same trade, but living all over the city; if trade interest keeps them together, the absence of common local interest leaves them strangers in many respects. Public meetings and lectures are never frequented by large masses of people, whom in many cases a certain shyness, the consciousness of their ignorance, the unwillingness of grown-up people to be "educated," the distrust of ambitious orators and politicians, etc., keep away; whilst ordinary common-sense discussion may open their minds and clear away their prejudices.

Here, I think, the means adopted by Libertad and his friends show the right way to reach new strata of people. If more generalised, it would mean that everywhere, in the popular quarters, groups of Anarchists would start such small, informal, co-operative workshops, the real basis of effective local propaganda. Many could emancipate themselves, if not from a very frugal life, at least from the brutality of their slave-drivers, if with half-a-dozen comrades they would only co-operate steadily and practically at some trade where this is possible without a great outlay of capital; others could help in directing their custom to them. Where there is a will there is a way—this is a proverb that is always worth repeating. Show the people in this way that it is possible not to let oneself be crushed by the capitalist system, but to make a stand against it. Only in such a way can be created the great number of really independent propagandists that will help to make a popular and efficient movement in place of spasmodic and ephemeral agitation. For these reasons, these *self-supporting propagandist groups in the midst of the people* seemed worthy of fuller description.

Libertad—whose real name was Joseph Albert, born at Bordeaux in 1875—with Anna Mahé, were the soul of the paper *L'Anarchie*. This is not so much a popular organ to hammer away with unceasing patience in the same place—useful and necessary work, no doubt, but not the exclusive task of all Anarchist papers. It is an organ where each article tries to contribute something new and original to the continuous evolution of Anarchist ideas. Libertad and his friends did so much popular propagandist work that they instinctively found the means to avoid monotony by abstaining from producing popular literature the rest of the day, by trying to sharpen their minds by thinking further on the lines of Anarchist evolution. This seems to me an excellent way to recreate the mind of routine propaganda and to advance further at the same time; diversity of efforts is often more efficient than the much-praised unity. Not all these efforts are of equal value, but there is certainly no Anarchist paper in which, during the last three years, Anarchism has obtained so many new sidelights and is shown so much to be a living idea in full evolution. E. Armand, whom another variety of stupid fatality keeps away now, helped on this elaboration of new ideas; only lately the group *L'Anarchie* published his remarkable book, "Qu'est ce qu'un Anarchiste?" (What is an Anarchist?) A new feature of the paper was a weekly review of the other French Anarchist papers, signed "Le Liseur," probably Libertad's work. This was not a repetition of commonplace summaries and compliments, but reckless, pithy criticism, adding many hints in the right direction.

This criticism stops at nothing—neither at ideas nor at men; and this made *L'Anarchie* unwelcome to many, some of whom cannot bear the light of criticism, whilst others wish the appearance of solidarity

kept up by all means. Libertad had no sympathy nor mercy nor patience with either of them, which caused him to be considered as "anti-syndicalist," "individualist," and very troublesome in general. In reality, his mind was open to all possibilities of propaganda, all nuances of our ideas, their perpetual evolution and improvement. He detested exclusivism—the Syndicalist proclaiming Syndicalism "self-sufficient," the Communist despising the slightest trace of Individualism, etc. He would also think and say: If we criticise and reject the political leaders, why should we silently submit to the Syndicalist leaders, simply because at present they seem to work in our interest? By this uncompromising attitude he became the bugbear of many, but certainly helped to awaken independent thinking in as many others.

His third field of action was numerous meetings. He could move only on crutches, but his thundering voice filled large halls, and many were his lecturing tours, extending as far as Geneva before he was expelled from Switzerland. Once he was put on trial for advocating incendiarism, but he developed to the jury with great common sense the hygienic character of setting fire to slum dwellings, destroying thus the horrible, squalid surroundings which stifle people's energy, and which no patching up will ever mend. He was acquitted.

He and his friends also attended most other public meetings and insisted on getting a fair hearing. If this was refused, they would stop at nothing, and this gave them a terribly bad reputation with all chairmen who pooh-pooh unwelcome discussion; still, they had to give way, and Anarchism conquered the platform.

From all this it will be concluded that Libertad was not very tender to his enemies, nor were they to him. To friends he was courteous and genial; it was a pleasure to discuss Anarchism with him. His untimely death—though an old propagandist, he was still young—will, I hope, not disperse the hopeful young movement which he had so much contributed to create around him and his group on Montmartre.

N.

DAISY LORD AND OTHERS.

[This letter was sent to the "Clarion" and rejected.]

I have read most of the letters both in the *Clarion* and the *Woman Worker* on the case of Daisy Lord, and whilst I am pleased so much effort is being put forward on this girl's behalf, I should dearly like to see, after the release, and arising out of this agitation, something of a permanent character begun whereby such and similar cases might be dealt with. We must make life easier for mothers who are not wives. Some means must be taken to educate society to recognise every woman's right to become a mother if she wishes, even if she never becomes a wife.

There has been a hue-and-cry for punishment for the man; but why? We seem hopelessly mixed up. Daisy Lord has had sentence passed upon her, not for bearing an illegitimate child, but for killing it. Even the cruel law does not punish a woman for bearing an illegitimate child. It is left for Christians and so-called advanced people—in fine, a civilised society—to do that.

Some correspondents have asked why the man was not mentioned at the trial. Apart from the illegality of the proceeding, who is to say that the man, whatever position he may have taken up in regard to the girl, could have prevented her action—allowing, of course, that it was impossible for him to marry her? Then, again, he may have been so placed that he could do very little besides acknowledge paternity of the child, and this may have but tended to make things harder for the girl. Even had he come forward at the trial, what good could he have done? How could he have saved her?

It is not only the law, but society at large, men and women of every grade, who make life so intolerable, so impossible, for all our Daisy Lords. None but the strongest and bravest women are able to come through the ordeal of bearing and keeping an illegitimate child.

It is you, oh Pharisees, who punish a girl so that in her great dread and fear of the pain you will inflict upon her, she kills her baby. She is mad with terror, not of the law, but of you—you!

And you men and women who have talked so much, who have shouted so wildly over Daisy Lord, what have you done and said when one in your midst, some woman you knew, has, without asking legal permission, dared to fulfil her destiny, to claim her right to become a mother? You men and women who call yourselves "advanced" (?), who are supposed to understand? You have crept into quiet corners and whispered, slandered, and played smilingly with innuendo; and when you have met this woman, you have treated her coldly, you have shown a sensitive soul that you disapproved, that you considered her an "undesirable."

And who are you to disapprove or judge? Do you know all the truth? And having known, have you acted accordingly? You have not born, or caused to be born, an illegitimate child, forsooth, and so you are a perfect being! But wait; may not this woman with her baby be a far stronger, far nobler character than any one of you?

Learn to think cleanly, frankly, and rationally of the relationship between men and women, and we'll have no more Daisy Lords for judges to pass sentence upon.

You may cry out as loud as you please against the law, but you and you alone are responsible. You men and women who comprise this rotten society of ours are really the cause of the death of Daisy Lord's tiny baby. Oh! for a gifted pen to tell you all you have done in this respect. How many women have you driven to the river-bed?

How many to the poisonous drug? Aye, and to the streets? How many helpless babies have been left in railway carriages, at foundling hospitals, and on hoped-for hospitable doorsteps? How many tiny bodies lie in their graves? And all because you in your ugly, smug, pious respectability made it impossible for either mother or child to live a decent, peaceful, happy life. How many times do you say "Bastard!" if not to a man or woman, but of them, when their backs are turned?

Surely now you see the result of your wretched conduct, centred as it is in this one pathetic case of Daisy Lord—surely, I say, you are horror-stricken? Surely you will do something to prevent such a thing happening again? If not, then all you are saying and doing now is nothing but a hypocritical sham. Picture Daisy Lord lying where so many have lain for the same reason, suffering the same horrible torture of mind and body; then realise that it is you who have done this thing, you who are responsible, you who have caused this thing to happen a thousand times. If it had been the law Daisy Lord feared, she would not have murdered her child. It was you—you—you!

Do you shrink? And will you on the next occasion of such a case coming under your notice leave off your pious, "unco guid" behaviour, or will you adopt "pity" and "charity" as your watchwords whilst you patronise? If so, you have not learned your lesson. Neither cold disapproval, cruel punishment, nor insulting pity or charity are the right of every mother, be she wife or not, but the liberty to do as she pleases with her own body, the liberty to bear a child if she chooses, and above all, the liberty to choose the father of her child without either consulting or informing the community. You have no right to interfere in these matters; they affect only the two people concerned. You have freedom to mind your own business.

You women who are crying for freedom, will you grant the liberty of ONE among you to live her own life in her own way, without being the first to cast the stone of slander or lift an eye of scorn?

I think not.

Daisy Lord said that she was an illegitimate herself, and that she did not desire her child to suffer as she had done, and so killed it! How ye are accused

I hope that out of this agitation will come some permanent good. Could not a society be formed to educate public opinion by literature, lectures, etc., so that society shall not punish a woman by ostracism and by making it impossible for her to earn her livelihood, simply because she is a mother? And meantime (if such a society should be formed), whilst we await the civilisation of society, we could help to provide money and work for any woman who needs it, either before or after her child was born, always working for the ultimate when a woman would be able to support both herself and her child in a society which does not scorn any mother.

Hoping to see something permanent done,

I am, yours for Freedom,
BESSIE WARD.

Kitson's Trial at Leeds.

Maybe it is an error to cut off more cake than one can eat, it is also a folly to endeavour to look at one's own ears, and one cannot hold oneself up by the heels. No one will better understand what I mean than Kitson.

For many reasons it will be well to say little on the whole matter. From the Anarchist standpoint, Kitson's case was a failure; from the politician's, it was a success. Kitson beat the prosecuting counsel all hands up; in fact, there was only one man in it, and that was not the advocate for the Crown.

Mrs. Baines, the Suffragette, when asked, Did she call the authorities tyrants? said Yes, and refused to be bound over. Although not agreeing with the Suffragettes' object, votes for women, in more senses than one I am happy to call Mrs. Baines "comrade." Where are our Mrs. Baineses in the English Anarchist movement?

To return, Kitson was the personification of diplomacy, and for him I have neither blame nor praise. My only regret is in having wasted two long days sitting in the Court, anticipating that at least Kitson would make use of the opportunity to emphasise and drive home the points he had previously stated and advocated to the unemployed at the open-air meetings. I hope Kitson will not look on this as an attack, but simply as a candid expression of opinion, and as moderate as the circumstances demand.

Finally, I will say to myself and to all comrades, do not make any statements to the unemployed or at meetings other than what you would gladly repeat in a Court; or do not act in such a manner that later you have to deny your act. Talk is cheap, and foolish talk or action brings ridicule on our cause and makes a laughing-stock of our propaganda. Let us say, with Lowell:—

We will speak out, we will be heard,
Though all earth's systems crack;
We will not bate a single word,
Nor take a letter back.
Let liars fear, let cowards shrink,
Let traitors turn away;
Whatever we have dared to think
That dare we also say.

And—having said it, if it be true, let us see that we stand by it.

The jury found both the prisoners guilty. Kitson agreed to be bound over, and was released; Mrs. Baines refused to be bound over, and was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment.

C. H. KEAN.

Government is the great blackmailer....No good ever came from the law. All reforms have been the offspring of Revolution.—Buckle.

PROPAGANDA NOTES.

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

NORWICH.

On October 25 we had another visit from Comrade Turner, this time under the auspices of the Labour Church; and with the assistance of the Anarchist comrades, two very successful meetings were held.

In the afternoon his subject was "Trade Unionism and its Tendencies." He had already dealt with this on his previous visit, but this time it was much more complete, owing to its being delivered indoors. He traced the growth of Trade Unionism during the last century, its struggles, and also the spirit which inspired its members, and which gained for them important concessions from their masters, in spite of the fact that they had not the large funds at their disposal which present-day Trade Unions boast of. But they had something more important—they had more real solidarity, more initiative, which is the soul of any movement, but which has been to a large extent destroyed by their Parliamentary action. Unfortunately, there was not much time for questions at this meeting.

In the evening Turner's subject was "Socialism, Historical and Economic." His knowledge of the movement in this country, gained by personal experience, stood him in good stead, and together with his lucid style of speaking, made this lecture very interesting. After dealing with the earlier phases of the movement, which the majority present were ignorant of, he led up to the theory of the concentration of wealth, which he showed to be a fallacy and not in accord with present-day facts. A small section of Marxians in the audience were rather upset at this (as we all are at first when any of our pet theories are found to be wrong), and there were signs of their disagreement. Turner concluded his address by asking what they had to show in this or any other country for the money and energy that had been spent on politics. What had been gained in Germany and France, where the political Socialists were strongest? In each of these countries, when any economic benefit had been obtained it had been by Labour revolts in the shape of strikes. In this country, through looking to Parliament, the Unions had lost benefits which had previously been gained when they were active, and their initiative and fighting spirit had been taken from them. At the finish of his address there were many questions, which were well answered by our comrade.

There was some soreness felt again by a few of the local Labour leaders over Turner's visit. This time they feared he might injure their chances in the elections which were so close; and there were some grounds for this, seeing that we have been told by several that although Turner had not altogether destroyed their faith in the ballot-box, he had considerably shaken it. This is good in itself, for until the people awake to the fact that they have got to rely on themselves and their own organisations, and not on leaders, we shall be no nearer our goal.

Whenever Turner comes to Norwich he will always be sure of a good meeting. This, I think, augurs well for the future, if the local group will only be up and doing. Our thanks are due to the Labour Church for the assistance they have given us, and we appreciate the broad-minded spirit that has permitted it.

A. B.

WALTHAMSTOW.

The long-anticipated debate on "Anarchist Communism versus Social Democracy," between John Turner and Fred Sturge, took place at the William Morris Socialist Club on Sunday, November 29.

F. Sturge in his opening remarks defined Social Democracy as a system of society based upon the democratic ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Under such a system he maintained that private property would be abolished. Distinctly stating that it would mean majority rule, he pointed out that there would be perfect freedom for the minority. Passing to the question of government, he explained that government would be the directing authority, meaning that the authorities would have no power except to express the desires of the people. At this juncture he defined the "State" as "the whole of the people," and said that under such a system the result would be "each for all, and all for each," or from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. Not being satisfied with his past misdeeds, Sturge attempted to prove that organisation implied authority, quoting Croisset from the Report of the last International Congress.

John Turner began by pointing out that the debate was "Anarchist Communism versus Social Democracy," not "Anarchism versus Socialism," as advertised and given out by the chairman. Clearly stating the meaning of Anarchism, he twitted his opponent with his indulgence in generalities, Communistic and Social Democratic. Holding the Democrat's contradictions before the audience, he showed conclusively the futility of Parliamentary action. Not content with remaining on his opponent's ground, he commenced to disabuse the idea, promulgated by Marx and Social Democrats generally, that the capitalist class is continually decreasing; figures quoted from Tcherkesoff's work amply proved his point. Having got his opponent on crutches, he commenced breaking up those feeble supports. Here ends the first chapter.

Sturge, in replying to Turner anent the despotism of Governments, affirmed that a Social Democratic Government would be different from other Governments inasmuch as it would represent the people. Then he pointed out that they would capture Parliament to destroy it. After destroying Parliament, he stated that he was not afraid of the majority. Again, referring to number of capitalists, he questioned the figures. Shareholders could be counted many times, as they held shares in many companies.

In reply, Turner clearly exposed the question of individual shareholders being counted many times by pointing out that the figures were based on income tax returns. So quickly did Turner show the fallacies of his opponent that he found ample time to explain the principles of Anarchist Communism, which is generally extremely difficult in debate.

I feel sure that seed was sown that night which is bound to bear good fruit in the future. Would that such meetings occurred more frequently.

W. D. PONDER.

LONDON.

The movement at Canning Town has a fresh lease of life, meetings at Beckton Road on Sundays being well attended both morning and evening.

This revival puts me in mind of the strong group we had here fourteen years ago, when our old comrades Frank Kitz, Presburg, Sam Mainwaring, Jack Turner, Tochetti, Nicoll, W. Banham, and Tom Cantwell in turn used to speak at Beckton Road.

During the past month real good work has been done, the decision of the Judges against Parliamentary levies by Trade Unions having given our comrades a fine opportunity to drive home the lesson of Direct Action. It was pointed out that the funds levied were absolutely wasted, as they were simply spent in nourishing a new species of parasites. Comrade Knight, a new recruit from the S.D.P., has proved a good propagandist, and has been well supported by comrades Carter, Monk, Richardson, Ray, and Goulding. The comrades intend to keep the meetings going through the winter, and fresh speakers will be heartily welcomed at Beckton Road any Sunday at 11.30 and 6.30.

Crowded meetings in memory of the Chicago Martyrs were held at the Workers' Friend Club, Jubilee Street, E., on November 11, and at the International Working Men's Club, 83 Charlotte Street, on November 12. The speakers at the first meeting were W. Wess, W. D. Ponder, J. Turner, W. Tcherkesov, T. del Marmol, and R. Rocker. The Anarchist Sunday School Choir sang "The Chicago Martyrs" during the evening. At the second meeting, the speakers were E. J. B. Allen, Malatesta, Rocker, and Ossip. Fuller reports are crowded out.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

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