

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Political Struggle.

Much as one may despise politics—and even if, as is the case with we Anarchists, one should remain entirely outside and aloof from Parliamentary methods in the social struggle—it can only give satisfaction to find a reviving spirit of democratic Radicalism, as typified in Lloyd George, at last coming to grips with the great land sharks. That the awful evils of land monopoly should have remained so long untouched in this densely populated country, can only be explained by the fact of our industrial supremacy having supplied our increasing population with the possibility of a livelihood without depending upon agriculture. But the development of other countries has at last forced the problem of the land back on us. For it must be remembered that the building of Dreadnoughts is not, as mad Blatchford would have us believe, for reasons of defence against invasion, but for the maintenance of our markets abroad, and if necessary for the acquiring of new ones. Now, however, the eyes of the people, instead of being, as our Imperialists would wish, fixed on the gold mines of South Africa, or on a vision of the Union Jack being run up in Berlin, they are looking rather inquiringly into an evil, a root evil, lying nearer their own homes. It is for this reason we welcome the beginning of a struggle which we all hope may eventually end in the final crushing of feudalism.

Exit Blatchford.

Some people are born butchers, some are bred to butchering, some have butchering thrust upon them. Evidently Blatchford was born a butcher, and would thrust butchering upon a whole nation. For whatever may be thought of his taking refuge under the yellow flag of the *Daily Mail*—and it is about as mean and cowardly a thing as an avowed Socialist could do—it must not be forgotten that his insane Jingoism is not a recent development. We all remember his attitude over the Boer War. But besides that there is another incident to be recalled, which always seemed to us to stamp him indelibly with the mark of inborn brutality. We refer to that shameful and cruel piece of brigandage we were guilty of when we invaded Tibet, and with our machine guns shot down without mercy the peaceful Tibetan shepherds armed with sticks and stones. He read of this, and justified it. And now there is another thing to be said in this connection. Is not Hyndman—and with Hyndman we include the S.D.P.—to share some responsibility in this disgrace? He has preached the same abominable Jingoism; he has backed Blatchford in all his mad ravings about invasion. Finally, he allowed him to take the chair at a meeting in support of his candidature at Burnley. As Mrs. Bridges Adams truly says: "To me it is inconceivable that the Executive [of the S.D.P.] should sanction the appearance of Mr. Blatchford on one of their platforms two days after the publication in the *Daily Mail* of the programme which advocated Tariff Reform, conscription, and military training for boys over ten," and she asks for its official repudiation. But we say that no Socialist society worthy of the name will ever work again by the side of a man who has dragged the Red Flag through the slime of the Yellow Press.

Political Barriers.

It would be quite easy to prove that so-called palliatives are a hindrance to Socialism when obtained through Parliamentary action. Without considering the awful mess and muddle that

legality is making in the Labour movement in Australia—the land of "palliatives" *par excellence*—we see here how the legal eight hours' day is giving continual trouble to the miners and their officials. The men are always threatened with a crisis that may mean a strike with all its suffering. We understood that Parliamentary action was to end strikes. But if they have to go through this struggle to make their position sure, of what use is Parliament to them? Better to have faced this ordeal in the first instance, and have this concession by the more certain means of direct action. But while the men's attention is distracted by all this palaver between officials and masters, how can they be effectively educated in the infinitely more important matter of claiming and using the mines for the benefit of a Socialist community? It is idle to say that palliatives educate them in that direction; they do not. On the contrary, when so much is made of them they come to be regarded as the end in itself. And that is how they grow to be obstacles.

"Dozens of Them."

We print the following from *Reynolds's* of January 2:—

A sad story of a human derelict was related at an inquest at Holborn, on the body of Louisa Wall, aged thirty-two, who was found in a dying condition on a doorstep in Little Earl-street. She was removed to St. Giles's Workhouse, where she died. The police-constable who found the deceased stated that he had seen the woman walking about at nights for some weeks past. She seemed to be in a very neglected state, and she had told him that she had brothers and sisters, but that she did not know where they were. The medical evidence showed that when the deceased was received into the workhouse she was suffering from exposure, and was so weak that she could hardly speak. When being taken from the receiving ward she said, "Don't take me from the fire, it's the first one I've seen for weeks." She had evidently been eating orange-peel. The woman had undoubtedly been in better circumstances. The Coroner asked the police-constable whether there were other cases of this kind in the streets in that neighbourhood—Holborn and Bloomsbury. The Constable: Oh, yes, sir, dozens. The medical officer said death was due to pneumonia, accelerated by exhaustion and self-neglect. A verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned.

If this poor creature had been a dumb animal some one would have been prosecuted for neglecting her. As she was only a human being, and there are "dozens" in a similar plight in only one corner of this wealthy city—well, one more or less doesn't matter. Ignoring the coroner and the jury, we say this woman was slowly murdered by a cruel and vicious social system, and all who are not helping to change it are equally guilty. And we can assure the British working man that something more than voting for the Budget is needed to end these crimes.

Natural Libertarianism.

The abuses of a perverted and official science in a bourgeois society, the many catastrophes resulting therefrom—the abnormal excitation of life—adulterated foods; the unnatural wants created by our "civilisation"—these abuses have given birth to a new school, social and libertarian—Naturalism and Liberty—the Simple Life, the Natural Life, against bourgeois science and artificiality.

Libertarian Naturalism means that the individual, to be really free and independent, should himself supply his own needs; and experience proves incontestably that man can, by his own efforts, support himself by limiting himself to his natural needs.

To simplify existence is to make life easy, and then we need not rely on others who do not wish voluntarily to act with us.

The mistake of scientific Anarchists consists in believing that enough conscious individuals will be found in an Anarchist society to perform (even with the progress at present attained) work that is repugnant or exhausting. Such work is now done by those whom economic conditions compel to it, but in a society where compulsion does not exist, few will be found willing to perform it. And this will at first hinder development in society. We do not, of course, suggest that authority is necessary, certainly not; but we point out that to be truly happy we should suppress "wants" that are anti-natural.

HENRI ZISLY.

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MODERN SCIENCE AND ANARCHISM.

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

IV.

COMTE'S POSITIVE PHILOSOPHY.

It is evident that when, in the "fifties" of the nineteenth century, natural sciences had attained the results mentioned in the previous chapter, it was necessary to attempt the construction of a synthetic philosophy which would embody the main results of all these sciences. Without wasting any more time on "substances," or on an "idea of the Universe," or on a "destination of life" and other symbolic expressions, with which philosophers used to entertain our fathers and grandfathers, and abandoning all *anthropomorphism*—that is, the habit of attributing *human* qualities and intentions to Nature and to physical forces—it was time to attempt the construction of a philosophy which would represent a reasoned, unified, systematic summary of the whole of our knowledge. Such a philosophy, gradually rising from the simple to the complex, would state in broad lines the fundamental principles of the life of the universe, and would thus give a key to the comprehension of the whole of Nature. By this means it would furnish us at the same time with a powerful instrument of further research, helping us to discover new connections between things (new so-called "natural laws"), and inspiring us with confidence in the correctness of our conclusions, however different they might be from the current notions.

The necessity of a synthetic philosophy was already understood in the eighteenth century by the Encyclopaedists; by Voltaire in his admirable "Dictionary of Philosophy," which still remains a monumental work; by Turgot; by Saint-Simon, the founder of one of the three Socialist schools. Now, Auguste Comte undertook, in his "Positive Philosophy," in the "forties" and "fifties" of the century, the same work, in a more scientific way, better suited to the recent progress in natural sciences; and Herbert Spencer followed, working out his "Synthetic Philosophy" after the wonderful revival of natural sciences in the middle of the nineteenth century.

* *

As regards mathematics and exact sciences in general, Comte fulfilled his task in a most admirable way. It is also recognised now that he was perfectly right in introducing the science of life (biology) and the science of human societies (sociology) in the cycle of sciences included in his "Positive Philosophy"; and it is also known what a formidable influence his Positive philosophy exercised on most men of science and thinkers in the second half of the nineteenth century.

But why, it is asked by those who otherwise fully appreciate the work of the great philosopher—why was Comte so weak when he undertook, in his second great work—the "Positive Politics"—the study of human institutions, especially the modern ones, and the study of Ethics?

How could a man, with such a vast and *positive* mind as Comte's, finally become the founder of a *religion* and of a certain *worship*, as was the case with Comte in his declining days?

Some of his followers have tried to reconcile this last step of Comte with his previous work, maintaining that the philosopher had followed the same method in both his works—the "Positive Philosophy" and the "Positive Politics." But this is not correct. And this is why two such authorised and philosophical followers of Comte as Littré and John Stuart Mill reject the "Politics" and do not consider it even as a part of Comte's philosophy. They merely see in it the result of an already weakened intelligence.

And yet, the contradiction which exists between these two works of Comte—his "Positive Philosophy" and his "Positive Politics"—is most characteristic, and it throws light upon some of the most important questions of the present day.

* *

When Comte had finished his "Cours de philosophie positive," he must certainly have noticed that he had not yet introduced into his philosophy the most essential question: the origin of moral sense in man and the influence of this sense on the life of man and of human societies. It was evidently necessary in a course of Positive philosophy to study the origin of this feeling, and to explain it by the same causes by which Comte had explained life in general. He had to show why man, without the interference of any supernatural forces, should feel the need of obeying this feeling, or at least of reckoning with it.

It is most striking that Comte was on the proper way, which was followed later on by Darwin when he tried to explain, in the "Descent of Man," the origin of moral sense in Man. Comte wrote, indeed, in his "Positive Politics," several admirable passages which show that the extension of Sociability and

Mutual Aid, and their ethical importance, had not escaped his attention.*

But to draw out of these facts the necessary, *positivist* conclusions, biological knowledge was wanting at the time he wrote, and Comte himself was wanting already in the necessary boldness. So he took *God*, the divinity of all the positive religions, which man is requested to worship and to pray to in order to remain moral, and in his stead he put *Humanity* with a capital letter. He ordered us to prostrate ourselves before this new divinity, and to address our prayers to it in order to develop our moral feelings.

Once this was done, once it was recognised as necessary that man should adore some being placed outside and above him, so as to keep the human animal in the paths of duty—the rest followed of itself. The ritual of Comte's religion was easily found in the rituals of ancient religions which came from the East.

* *

In fact, Comte was bound to come to such a conclusion, once he had not recognised that the moral sense of man, like sociability and society itself, had a *pre-human origin*; once he did not see in it a further development of animal sociability, fortified in man by the observation of Nature and by accumulated experience of the life of human societies.

Comte had not recognised that the moral sense of man is as much dependent upon his real nature as all the physical features of his organisation are; that both are an inheritance derived from an extremely long process of evolution—a process which had lasted already many scores of thousands of years.

He had noticed the feelings of sociability and mutual sympathy among the animals; but, under the influence of the great zoologist Cuvier, who was then the greatest authority, he had not admitted what Buffon and Lamarck had foreseen—the variability of species. He did not recognise the uninterrupted process of evolution from animal to man. Consequently, he could not see that the moral sense of man is nothing else but a further evolution of the mutual aid instincts evolved in animal societies long before the first man-like creatures had appeared on earth. And therefore he could not realise—as we can and must realise now—that whatever the immoral acts of isolated men may be, the moral sense of mankind will perforce instinctively live in humanity so long as the human species does not enter a period of decay; that actions contrary to a moral sense derived from this natural source must of necessity produce reaction in all others, just as mechanical action produces a reaction in the physical world. Not having admitted that much, Comte was compelled therefore to invent a new divinity, Humanity, and a new worship, in order that this worship should always retain man in the paths of moral life.

Like Saint-Simon, like Fourier, he thus paid a tribute to his Christian education. Without admitting a struggle between a Good and an Evil principle (both of equal strength), and without man turning to the representative of Good to strengthen himself against the representative of Evil—without this, Christianity cannot exist. And Comte, imbued with this Christian idea, returned to it as soon as he met with the question of morality and the means of strengthening it in man's feelings. The cult of Humanity was to be the instrument with which to remove from man the nefarious power of the Evil One.

(To be continued.)

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Universal Reformer. No. 1. Monthly, 1d. Edinburgh: N. Levy, 12 Hill Square.

Horace Greeley and the Working Class Origins of the Republican Party. By John R. Commons. 24 pp. Boston (U.S.A.): Ginn and Co., 29 Beacon Street.

* I had not noticed these passages at the time I published the earlier editions of this essay. It was a Positivist friend in Brazil who drew my attention to them, sending me at the same time the second great work of Comte; and I take this opportunity to express to him my warmest thanks. There are pages and pages, full of genius, in this work of Comte as well; and to re-read them now, with all the knowledge accumulated during one's life—at the invitation of a friend—was a profound pleasure.

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EVOLUTION OF ANARCHISM.

By W. TCHERKESOFF.

IV.—COMMUNISM.

As we have said in the first chapter, the Anarchists known in modern society, those who were fighting with bombs and arms against State oppression, by general and partial strikes against capitalism, are Anarchist Communists who have little in common with the so-called Anarchist Individualists. Only in Spain our Anarchist comrades still continue to call themselves Anarchist Collectivists, but in reality they understand by Collectivism not a bureaucratic, all-powerful State organisation as sketched in our second chapter, but a free Communism in the same sense as the Anarchists of France, Italy and Switzerland. In the minds of the majority of the people Communism means a sort of barrack life, with its regulations, compulsory work and discipline, by which all individuality will be stamped out! This picture may apply to the German Social Democratic conception of State Socialism, or to Cabet's idea of patriarchal Communism. Such is not the Anarchist conception.

On the contrary, we think that man must not be sacrificed to the institution, but that the institution must be adapted to man's well-being; not that the individuality, with all its capacities, initiative and genius, must disappear in a grey, colourless treadmill existence, but that such a mode of life must be found which guarantees the fullest development to the capacities of man, physical as well as moral and intellectual.

On the other hand, we are Communists not only by personal inclinations or fancy; it is not as dreamers that we propagate Communism. We think that the evolution of our modern complicated social life, the development of our production, exchange and consumption, forces contemporary humanity towards Communism. We observe that in our time just those national and international enterprises and institutions which are distinguished by a Communistic tendency, have reached the highest development. Not to mention co-operative, friendly, and insurance societies, with their marvellous success, let us take, for instance, the post and telegraph services. We know that everyone can send a letter for one penny from London to Croydon, or to Canada, to India, or to Australia. No difference in charge is made for distance. The postage having been reduced to a minimum, has been made accessible to everyone on an equal basis. The postal service, which fifty years ago in all States was a service paid from the Budget, in England, France and Germany together now yields a yearly net profit of over £12,500,000, or 311,000,000 francs.

Like the postal service, railways, tramways, hotels, omnibuses, steamboat service, municipal water and gas supply, high schools and universities are also organised and worked on a basis of Communism, but a Communism accessible only to a section of society with a certain income. Let us take for an example five persons from America, Australia, China, England and Norway, all going for a season to Switzerland. If they are people of a monthly income of 1,000 francs (about £40), even without knowing a word of German, French or Italian, they are sure that by paying a certain sum they can travel first class on steamer and rail, and live in a first-class hotel with all comforts. No distinction will be made between them in regard to nationality, religion or title. If the same persons have 500 francs income they will all have the same, but second-rate travelling and living; and if their income is only 250 francs they can have only third-class travel and hotels, also without any distinction.

From all money is asked. In a Communist society no money will be required, but goodwill and a voluntary contribution of labour. No distinction of classes will be made; to everybody in railways, steamers and hotels the best accommodation will be open in perfect equality.

Much more evident is the tendency to a Communistic organisation in our present capitalist society in educational and hygienic establishments. Until the end of the eighteenth century very few Communistic institutions existed in Europe, except churches, some hospitals, town halls and public buildings. But from the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially during the second half of it, we see the increase in the number of schools, museums, art galleries, parks, free libraries, and hospitals accessible to everybody. Municipalisation and nationalisation begin to be a general tendency.

But all this is certainly not yet Communism. All that has been achieved in this direction will appear miserable compared with what may be accomplished by an enlightened community, the members of which have received a scientific and artistic education as well as manual training, and from whom will be claimed only goodwill and a few hours of daily work.

The most widespread objection is that in a free community with voluntary contribution of labour, nobody will be found willing to work, because work in itself has no attraction.

We shall not dwell on the subject of attractive work so splendidly elucidated and defended by Fourier ("Le Travail Attrayant") and his school, nor on the subject of physical training and sport recommended by modern teaching and hygiene. Let us agree for a moment that work is not attractive, and yet we ask: Will the men and women, living in solidarity in an enlightened, free society, be willing to give a few hours' work daily?

We do not hesitate to say they certainly will. Even in our society, people under the influence of public opinion and prejudice are ready to give their time to Church services and religious meetings, and in Greek and Roman Catholic countries even to submit to days and weeks of partial fasting (Lent). Though in Continental countries military service is obligatory, yet half of the young men undoubtedly go voluntarily, under the influence of the prejudice of patriotism, to submit themselves to the hard labour and discipline of barrack life.

Why should we doubt that the same public spirit of solidarity in a rational society will not inspire men and women to accomplish their share in their own, their childrens' and others happiness and welfare?

Have we not even at present before us examples of daily self-sacrifice in the voluntary service of the lifeboat and fire brigade? Yet these splendid fellows are no supermen, but are the ordinary simple, humble, and even untaught amongst our population.

In reality, the belief that nobody will work unless forced is mostly held by the leisured class, amongst whom laziness is the rule. The morality of the people is something quite different. The English word "loafer," the French "fainéant," "vaurien" (worthless, sluggard), the Russian "darmoyed" (who eats without paying), indicate with what contempt the workers and peasants, even in our society, look upon him who does not work.

It is not pure coincidence that in the nineteenth century the development of natural science, especially its application to production and locomotion, is accompanied by the progress of Socialism. Modern machinery and technique have increased the productivity of man fifteen times as compared with the beginning of the nineteenth century,* even though the working day has been reduced from 14 and 16 hours to 10 and 8.

It is true that the well-being of the working class has not increased in the same proportion, but this is because all the enormous profits calculated in milliards of pounds are going into the pockets of the non-producing and exploiting class.

Every sensible man must see that if all these profits, this surplus value of many milliards, should be employed for the benefit of the producing class, not only their well-being will be infinitely greater, but also the hours of work can be reduced, not only to eight but to five and even four. Perfected machinery, modern science applied to industry and agriculture, will render work yet more productive and agreeable.

We repeat we do not propagate Communism as a dream, but as based on reality and necessity, and for the greatest benefit of everybody.

Individualism and private property can be defended only by partisans of class privilege, or by well-meaning but short-sighted persons who have not grasped the complicated and varied forms and modes of modern production, nor the innumerable needs of modern life, material as well as intellectual. How can a modern individual, without exploiting others, satisfy all the requirements of daily life if not by a free understanding with his neighbours and fellow-workers?

To speak of voluntary contracts, as the Individualists do, is a childish notion. To make these thousands and millions of contracts for the obtaining of articles of food, clothes, habitation, pleasure, instruction, travelling, sickness, etc., for every person would alone require an army of scribblers, of paper and ink makers, and a number of guardians to preserve all those documents.

There is but one issue: if the majority will not remain enslaved to a useless minority, they must realise a free Communism. As we showed before, modern science, industry and life drives humanity towards this Communism. If the governing classes should try to create an organised resistance to this natural social evolution, a great revolutionary struggle is inevitable, which, it is not difficult to foresee, will end in the triumph of the working class.

(To be continued.)

* Mulhall, in his "Dictionary of Statistics," showed for England, and Yves Guyot for France, that the productivity in 1875 was eleven times greater than in 1812.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE COMING ELECTION.

Some little political excitement has been caused through a premature General Election being forced on the country by the mediæval House of Lords rejecting the Budget! Still, no great outburst of popular indignation has been shown anywhere, and apparently the election will take place in the ordinary fashion. And in spite of the talk of "ending or mending" the House of Lords, which was so common a few years ago, it is pretty clear that the Liberal Party, even if it comes back to power, does not intend to seriously tackle either the privileged position of the Bishops, or the hereditary principle, now entrenched in the "Upper Chamber." Judging from the public speeches of the leaders, the most they intend to do is to obtain some legal guarantee that the delay caused by rejection shall be limited. Who could possibly get enthusiastic over such timidity? Even many old-time Radicals are disgusted!

In the meantime, it is amusing to hear each side calling the other names—as insincere in this as in everything else. The landlord, financial, and Tariff Reform crowd call the Liberals Socialists. To this the Liberal Pressmen strongly object, and while pointing out the unfairness of it, start calling the Peers and their friends "Anarchists"! So if they are not popularising ideas, they are at least destroying all terror in these names.

One thing is quite certain. More money than usual is being spent on this election. Both sides are utterly unscrupulous! Even the pious *Daily News*, while regretting the filth which electioneering entails, admits it must be indulged in by both parties. The *Daily Mail* has been to the fore in securing the pen of Robert Blatchford to try and create, or recreate, a German scare! It is encouraging to find how flat it has fallen. It is too soon after the Boer War. But Blatchford will never again be trusted, and we may expect a steady drift of this man toward the support of the avowed enemy of the workers. The old Robert Blatchford is dead! Would that he had died before this.

One other thing this election is doing. It is bringing into the light of day the exact proportion of the Labour Party in politics. And what a pitiable exhibition it is. Even the Liberalism of the Antipodes is robust by comparison. Working men with middle-class souls, strutting about in a middle-class institution, aping the ways and manners of their masters, without an original idea in their heads. An appendage of the Liberal Party, but paid for by the workers.

And this paying is going to be their great concern in the next Parliament. The recent decision of the Law Lords has declared it illegal to use Trade Union funds for Parliamentary purposes. No Anarchist can sympathise with this decision, since it takes away the right of Trade Unionists to use their money as they like. And while we consider it a waste of money to spend it on sending their colleagues to the House of Commons, still experience, and not law, should be the agency to put that right. However, we may expect to see a stronger fight put up on this question in the House of Commons by the tame men of the Labour Party, than they have made on any other. For the rest, they will become more respectable than ever.

As for the Parliamentary Revolutionary Social Democrats—what a farce to be sure! If the I.L.P. has got lost in the Labour Party, the S.D.P. has never yet found itself. Poor old H. M. Hyndman, still crying in the wilderness at Burnley, is pathetic! His old tirades against the Liberals—just as if he was still a youth in the Young England Party. Nothing fresh. Against the Budget proposals a cumulative tax on all incomes over £300 a year. Great Scot! The leader of the Social Democrats of

England—almost a Radical in his anxiety to injure the Liberals. And how revolutionary!

Joking apart, how sickening the whole show is, when we know that if any, or all, of these proposals put forward were put into operation to-morrow, it would leave the whole evil of the robbery of Labour untouched. Land taxes, cumulative income taxes, licensing laws, Free Trade, Tariff Reform, Trade Union law, all these, and the rest, would still leave intact the great fundamental legal power of the possessing classes to drain from Labour the major part of what it produces, and call it theirs! By legal processes the "unearned incomes" are first secured to the great social thieves—and then the social reformers suggest that the same law should collect a little of it, as a sort of commission, for having insured the thieves their plunder, I suppose! For that, and for the treacherous double purpose of building "Dreadnoughts" to strengthen the State in its infamy, and to give a trifle back to the poor devils who have been plundered and broken in the process. Thus do they mock the victims of a vicious system.

It is seeing all this quite clearly that makes it impossible for an Anarchist to take part in electioneering. He realises that no State or governmental action can seriously alter the situation. It is those who create the wealth that in the final resort must determine these questions. At present they are willing to work for a very small proportion of the total wealth they produce, and are glad of any small crumbs returned to them by the very State machinery which so successfully secures to the exploiters their unearned incomes. The great work before us is to raise the standard of expectation among the workers, to show that by Direct Action they can secure a larger proportion for themselves to-day, and that eventually, just in proportion as they determine it, they can obtain it all. Then there will be no "unearned incomes" to tax, and no taxes required. For with the disappearance of the great social thieves, the modern States will go too. Universal labour, freely associated, self-organised, performing every social function without parasites of any kind, that is the idea which impels the Anarchist forward in his propaganda and his social work.

How contemptible electioneering with all its lies and filth seems, when one only reflects! The more the workers think, the less they will vote; but the more revolutionary and active in other directions they will become. And when once they decide to take action for themselves, neither the "House of Commons" nor the "House of Lords" will be able to reject the social Budget they will present.

TO VOTE IS TO BE DUPES.

[A translation as published in *The Anarchist*, London, December, 1885, of a letter by Elisée Reclus, published as a poster by the Anarchist Propaganda Group of Paris at the time of the General Election in France in the autumn of 1885.]

Clarens (Vaud), Switzerland,
September 26, 1885.

COMPANIONS,—

You ask a man of good will who is neither voter nor candidate to give you his opinion on the exercise of the right of suffrage.

The time you give me is short, but having definite opinions on the subject of the electoral vote, what I have to say can be said in a few words.

To vote is to abdicate, to nominate one or more masters for a period short or long is to renounce one's own sovereignty. Whether he becomes absolute monarch, constitutional prince, or simple mandatory endowed with the smallest part of royalty, the candidate whom you lead to the throne or the chair will be your superior. You nominate men who will be above the laws since they undertake to make them, and their mission will be to make you obey.

To vote is to be dupes. It is to believe that men like yourselves acquire suddenly at the tinkling of a bell the power of knowing and understanding everything. Your mandatories having to legislate on everything, from lucifer matches to ships of war, from clearing off caterpillars from trees to the extermination of peoples, red or black, it must seem to you that their intelligence will enlarge by virtue of the immensity of the task. History teaches that the contrary will be the case. Power has always made its possessors foolish, parlotage has always stupefied. In ruling assemblies mediocrity fatally prevails.

To vote is to evoke treason. Doubtless the voters believe in the honesty of those to whom they accord their suffrages, and

they may have reason the first day when the candidates are in the fervour of their first love. But when his environment changes, man changes with it. To-day the candidate bows before you and perhaps too low. To-morrow he'll straighten himself up and perhaps too high. He begs your votes, he will give you orders. Can the working man who has become foreman remain what he was before he received this favour of his employer? Does not the noisy democrat learn to curve his spine when the banker consents to invite him into his office, when the servants of kings do him the honour to entertain him in ante-chambers? The atmosphere of legislative bodies is unwholesome to breathe. You send your mediocrities into a place of corruption, be not astonished if they come out corrupted.

Therefore do not abdicate. Do not entrust your destinies to men inevitably incapable, and future traitors. Do not vote! Instead of confiding your interests to others, defend them yourselves; instead of taking advocates to propose a mode of future action, ACT. Occasions will not be missing for those who want them. To throw on others the responsibility of one's conduct is to be lacking in courage.

I salute you with all my heart, Companions.

ELISEE RECLUS.

BAKUNIN ON UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

'But the municipality,' you say, 'you have no right to attack that; for, named after the revolution, by the direct election of the people themselves, it is the product of universal suffrage. As such it must be sacred to you.'

Candidly, I tell you, my friend, I do not at all share in the superstitious love of your Radical bourgeois or of your bourgeois Republicans for universal suffrage.

In another letter I will set forth the reasons which do not allow me to rejoice in it. Let it be sufficient for me to put here in principle a truth which seems to me irrefutable, and which it will not be difficult for me to prove later on as much by reasoning as by a great number of facts taken from the political life of all countries which possess at the present time democratic and Republican institutions, *to know that universal suffrage, so long as it will be exercised in a society where the people, the working masses, will be economically ruled by a minority possessing property and capital, however independent or free otherwise it may be, or rather it may appear, as to the political aspect, will never be able to produce anything but delusive elections, anti-democratic, and entirely opposed to the needs, the instinct, and the real will of the peoples.*

As to all the elections since the *coup d'état* of December which have been made directly by the people of France, have they not been directly contrary to the interests of this people; and the last vote on the imperial plebiscite, has it not given seven million "Ayes" to the Emperor? It will doubtless be said that the universal suffrage was never freely exercised under the Empire, liberty of the press, of association and meetings, necessary conditions of political liberty, having been disallowed, and the people being helpless under the influence of the corrupt action of a paid press and of a shameful administration.

Possibly; but the elections of 1848 for the Constitution and for the Presidency, and that of May, 1849, for the Legislative Assembly, were, I believe, absolutely free. They took place independent of all pressure, or even official interference, in all the conditions of absolute freedom. And, however, what have they produced? Nothing but reaction.

"One of the first acts of the Provisional Government," said Proudhon (*"Idées Révolutionnaires"*), "that for which it is most praised, is the application of universal suffrage. The very day when the decree was issued, we wrote these exact words, which might then pass as a paradox:

Universal suffrage is the counter-revolution.

One can judge after the event if we were deceived.

The elections of 1848 have taken place, with an immense majority for the priests, for the Legitimists, for the Royalists, for everything the most reactionary and retrograde that France contains. This could not be otherwise."

No, this could not be, and to-day still it cannot be otherwise, so long as the inequality of economic and social conditions of life continue to prevail in the organisation of society, so long as society continues to be divided into two classes, of which the one, the exploiting and privileged class, rejoices in all the advantages of fortune, education and leisure, and the other, comprising all the mass of the proletariat, has for its share only manual labour, wearisome and enforced, ignorance, and their necessary accompaniment, slavery, not by right but by might.

Yes, slavery; for however great may be the political rights that you allow to these millions of salaried proletariat, true convicts of hunger, you will never succeed in keeping them free from the pernicious influence, from the natural domination, of the various representatives of the privileged class, from the priest to the bourgeois Republican, the most Jacobin, the most extreme; representatives who, however divided they may appear, or may really be, among themselves as to political questions, are none the less united in a supreme and common interest—that of the exploitation of the misery, the ignorance, the political inexperience, and the good faith of the proletariat, to the profit of the economic domination of the possessing class.

How would the proletariat of the country and of the towns be able to resist the intrigues of the clerical, aristocratic, and bourgeois political parties? It has one weapon only with which to defend itself, its instinct, which almost always tends towards truth and justice, because it is itself the principal, if not the only, victim of the iniquity and of all the intrigues which hold sway in actual society; and because, oppressed by privilege, it naturally claims equality for all.

But instinct is not a sufficient weapon to safeguard the proletariat against the reactionary doings of the privileged class. Instinct left to itself, so far as it has not become a fully considered consciousness, a clearly determined thought, may be easily bewildered, frustrated, and deceived. But it is impossible to raise itself to this consciousness by itself without the help of education, of science; and science, the knowledge of things and of men, political experience, is completely wanting among the proletariat. The consequence is easy to draw: The proletariat wishes one thing; clever men, profiting by its ignorance, are going to make it do something else without it even suspecting that it is doing quite the contrary of what it wishes; and when it finally understands, it is generally too late to repair the evil which it has done, and of which naturally, necessarily, and always it is the first and principal victim.

A GENERAL SURVEY.

As time goes by, an increasing number of social commotions of some kind seem to happen each year, periods of rest are hardly known, and it would not be difficult to describe a number of events of a hopeful character tending towards freedom during the year that is just past. The first French postal strike, the anti-militarist revolt in Catalonia, the international Ferrer protest, the crushing of absolutism in Turkey and in Persia are each of them events of a magnitude that has not happened in years in the quiet past. But I do not wish to overlook that, side by side with these, infamous reaction also commits ferocious deeds on a scale hardly imagined before, and defeats of the people often follow ephemeral victories. The gallows' reign in Russia, Russia's preparations to crush Finland, the doings of her Cossacks in Persia, all this placidly condoned by the rest of the European States; the repression of the Catalonian revolt by the same soldiers in whose favour the people had stood up, the twelve hundred Montjuich prisoners, the murder of Ferrer and others, the defeat of the second French postal strike, and the failure of Syndicalists to second this movement by a general strike, etc. But these are victories of brute force, it may be said. True, but there are what might be called voluntary defeats of the people—reactionary tendencies of masses of people whom we used to consider as Socialists at least—that is, as people who had grasped in any case the elements of brotherly and humane feelings. Yet they remain almost silent when one of their best-known spokesmen, recruiting sergeant Robert Blatchford, turns Tory in a way the cynicism of which would make blush even a Maltman Barry of the preceding generation. To-day to "Socialists" everything is permitted to acquire personal well-being and power; they bid everywhere for a share in the spoils of the people, and they are let alone; no one thinks of blaming them, most people seem ready to imitate them. This voluntary renunciation of the respect won for the people by the sacrifices of numberless nameless enthusiasts of the past, is a worse defeat than bloody repression after a fair fight.

Some will consider my impressions as too gloomy; they are, of course, quite personal, and may be contradicted and refuted by others. I will try to give my reasons for them, and can only do so in FREEDOM, for on slight reflection one cannot fail to note the fact that in this whole world-wide Empire there is not a single paper in existence in which public matters can be discussed with independence except little FREEDOM; what was once the Socialist Press, in the days of William Morris's *Commonweal*, has long since become the exclusive organ of party, exactly like the capitalist Press. I will say beforehand that I feel neither disappointed nor hopeless; I have only to blame myself for having entertained too large hopes without a sound basis for them.

Primitive organisms, roughly speaking, resemble each other; higher development brings about differentiation. Early society was easily ruled by a crafty dominating class who made the people accept

uniform beliefs and customs. We are still under that spell, and habitually think of the whole of society accepting by persuasion, by example, or by force a new social system that would bring justice and freedom for all. In the past and present uniform systems seem to prevail, feudalism or capitalism, though closer examination shows many remains of earlier stages and germs of new developments to co-exist with the main system. The question that is urgent now is this: Can and will modern man ever accept again a uniform system of society? He is breaking away from uniformity on all sides at a different rate of progress; education, private life, surroundings differentiate just the best developed and gifted part of mankind; the conservative desire for undisturbed uniformity remains alive in the most backward strata of all classes of population. At this juncture Socialism is proposed, first advocated by out-and-out enthusiasts who expect everybody to see and put in practice that which appears so fair and sensible to their own minds. Propaganda begins, and for some time, tilling the virgin soil, reaping in rich harvests of generous men and rebels, the possibilities of the spread of Socialism by propaganda seem boundless. But the moment inevitably comes when all who are really disposed for Socialism are gathered in and new results become scarce. Here the existing body of Socialists divides; a minority of thorough-going Socialists will continue the old propaganda, some will discover that it took too little heed of freedom, and may examine and accept Anarchism by and by. The majority, however, will look out for so-called practical means to bring Socialism more to the level of ordinary people, they will attenuate it, make it fit in with Trade Unionism, municipal administration, Parliamentary Government, religion even. Their dominating spirits will consider themselves the providential leaders of the masses of the people, introducing Socialism from above by instalments in the form of laws and taxes, by new organs of public administration, etc. In short, they reduce Socialism to a number of authoritarian measures automatically imposed by national and local Governments or elective bodies of all sorts, like any other laws and regulations. This brings about the complete absorption of these Socialists by the existing governmental machinery which grinds the axe of capitalism, and we witness chimeric efforts to make that ancient organism created for repression and exploitation serve the purpose of equality and justice. With the greatest ease the governmental organism absorbs and assimilates ever so many Socialists who willingly fall into its clutches; Burns and Briand, Webb and Blatchford are but a mouthful for this Moloch; there is room for any number of others, and they are *all* coming, *all*, *all*—the inevitable fate and end of Parliamentary Socialism.

This has happened to all previous schools of Socialists—after a short period of enthusiasm, an interval of impatience, of a desire to be practical, and then the reckless pandering to the domineering instincts of the leaders, betrayal and extinction of the party—a few honest enthusiasts always excepted. Was there a more brilliant and devoted group than the young Saint-Simonians in the early "thirties," and how soon they disbanded, to become captains of industry, the first gigantic exploiters in France, making believe all the time to work for the good of the people? The downfall of the later Fourierists is described by G. Ferrari and Proudhon; that of the Blanquists by Vésinier and Vernerssch; later on a part of the Blanquists became Boulangists, sympathisers of military dictatorship, whilst other sections of the French Labour movement were not above the suspicion of Napoleonic relations, in the "sixties" chiefly. Marxism kept straight whilst Marx lived, but Engels, like a true Pope, granted absolution for all deviations towards "practical" anti-revolutionary politics. A barrier of conservative tradition still excludes the German Social Democrats from all accession to political power, but behind the wall which keeps them back their appetites are whetting, and once that wall is broken, when it seems profitable to those in power, there will be a terrific rush for the spoils of office. We see an example of this in Austria, where Social Democrats, since by an extension of the franchise they entered Parliament in large numbers, are the model party in docility and obedience to Government. And in Hungary just now they are cheering the hardly-veiled efforts to crush Hungarian independence in the clerical interest, because they expect to enter the new Parliament in larger numbers, and will then imitate the rôle of their Austrian colleagues. In Italy, again, E. Ferri, the quondam Revolutionist, and the other Parliamentary Socialists quarrel as to who had more Ministerial leanings. Since the French party, under Jaurès, almost shared power with the Combes Government, it is ruined in public opinion, and we all see the contempt of the Syndicalists for the Socialist politician. The evolution of Fabianism was described in last month's *FREEDOM*, that of the Labour Party is before everybody's eyes, that of Robert Blatchford a pen refuses to describe, and so on.

If these remarks could be extended, the unalterable decay of each of the hopeful Socialist movements could be shown in detail. This phenomenon is much too general to be attributed only to personal reasons, to the corruption inseparable from each increase of power and authority. Suppose a number of trees are planted in certain grounds and all die off when they have reached a certain height. One would conclude that the soil is unable to nourish them when they begin to require greater quantities of nutritive elements than when they were but small. To me, the decay of all Socialist movements, after reaching the proper limits of their expansion, can only be explained in a similar way: in my opinion, the demand for Socialism is limited, and to try to extend it beyond these limits, to generalise it, is to court failure over and over again.

To explain this, I may further say that, of course, all want to improve their position, and in this sense all would be ready to accept the boons of Socialism if showered upon them from above by benevolent Parliaments and Governments without any effort of their own. But few are those who would willingly take upon themselves the hardships of Socialism, the burden of a real struggle for it, and the hard work and personal sacrifice of the first practical efforts in real Socialism. These are too few to impose their will upon society, and the large masses whose efforts are restricted to the occasional casting of a vote at elections are equally powerless. And so nothing whatever happens, except that Governments and Parliaments occasionally profit by Socialist criticism to patch up the present system, by Labour reforms which would have been inevitable in any case, and by increased taxation which always finds justification in the eyes of Parliamentary Socialists. The latter fancy they weaken the landlords in England, the capitalists in France, the property-holding classes in Germany by enthusiastically voting land taxes here, income taxes and death duties over there; whilst all the money, whoever hands it over to the State, is paid out of the profits made by exploiting the wage-worker in the long run, and it helps but to keep up armaments and a continually-increasing bureaucracy. In short, a formidable mechanism for keeping the people down in peace or war. "Socialist" arguments have become the most cherished stock-in-trade of all Ministers of Finance; Cailloux, the French income-tax Minister, was the pet of the Collectivists from Jaurès to Guesde; "single tax" literature is spread by the English Liberals; Socialist criticism of hereditary property was suddenly recognised by official Germany; there can be no nicer people, then, in the eyes of those who have to gild the pills to make people pay for the tools of their own enslavement, than Socialists of the modern type. And Socialists will consciously or unconsciously play the capitalists' game; there is no way back for them. Fresh Socialist movements will, after a time, begin real propaganda again—only to fail again after some initial success if they do not alter their conception of things from the root.

What, then, should I propose or believe myself? I believe in Socialism for Socialists, as I believe in Anarchism for Anarchists, and in all other systems or standpoints for other people, just such as their natural disposition prompts them to adopt. It is physically impossible that all should reach the same degree of development at the same time; therefore no universal system will ever prevail. If uniformity could apparently be reached in the past when people were, as I said before, more or less equal by an equal degree of ignorance, submission, superstition, etc., it becomes, happily, less possible as we progress, slowly, but a little all the same. It is time for Socialists—for Anarchists in any case, who always precede them—to break away from the superstition that we always must do all the same thing at the same time. This superstition dates back to the immense fear which was the predominant policy of primitive people, being necessary to preserve their lives from the surrounding dangers; we notice it every day in any swarm of sparrows, who all fly away if one of them is alarmed. In our days, Anarchists and Socialists, ought to pick up moral courage to go their own way; they hold advanced ideas, so their place is in the front, whilst to-day, prompted by generous feelings also, to a large degree, they spend most of their efforts at the rear to bring up the most belated victims of the present system—a noble task, no doubt, but not their only one, and one which, if it absorbs almost all their efforts, absolutely brings their own advance to a standstill.

What happens seems to be this. Some of us spend our lives in propaganda, observing all the time that for one who is open to our ideas there are twenty who will not look at them; others fight the system by open revolt, and must become aware that for ten who will join them there are a thousand who will let them be crushed if they are not helping to hunt down the rebels. Generations of propagandists pass away, and if our numbers increase, those of our permanent opponents increase also. Is it a hopeless task then? Not in the least; only that old idea of a primitive past that *all* must accept a unique system must be given up. That idea brought about the religious wars of the past, fought to impose a unique religion, Christianity of some sort. Experience showed that such wars might ruin whole countries, but that their aim, uniformity in religion, could not be achieved; to-day all sects co-exist, and their wars are limited to various kinds of unobtrusive propaganda, and Freethinkers have to be left alone. This will and must happen to the Freethinkers of the social movements: the Anarchists and their sun will have risen when others still slumber in darkness. Also for these the daylight will break.

The idea of *all* accepting a given system is necessarily *authoritarian*, and Anarchists ought to be the first to get rid of it. Somebody may object: "But if all voluntarily accept Anarchism, what then?" When the last stragglers will accept Anarchism, I reply, the first Anarchists will have already advanced a long way further ahead; at least I hope so, for they would be shrivelled mummies, the oldest of fossils, if they had remained stationary waiting for the stragglers to come up. Hence diversity of development will always exist, and the more so as mankind leave the early gregarious state still lingering in so many.

I do not think that this will be the last superstition of which Anarchism has to be cleared, but I think it ought to be the next one. This will give us fresh and immense work to do—to try to be Anarchists ourselves, among ourselves, and to win elbowroom for us, to shape our oasis of freedom amidst the Authoritarian desert. I am

glad to note that some begin to see this and will act upon it; among others the "Socialisten Bund," founded by G. Landauer. The moment of the deepest depression of the Socialist movement will also give birth to the real remedy. Or shall we wait till governmental "Socialism" wins further victories, till Burns becomes the hanging Home Secretary, Webb the moral censor of the lives of the poor, Blatchford the instructor in Socialist militarism, Briand the sly strangler of Syndicalism, etc.; there is no mean reactionary task which these and many others will not willingly undertake. We must conclude that some people want nothing better, and go our own way. This would not mean that we should always be isolated; we are isolated as Anarchists only, and ought to recognise that this cannot be otherwise, as the number of people of each particular disposition is limited. But we remain in contact with all progressive causes—with the present defence of Labour by Trade Unionism and Direct Action Syndicalism, with educational and Freethought movements, with anti-militarism, with all movements against State interference, with every effort towards freedom in general. *Voluntary, not compulsory, Anarchism*, in one word, ought to be our aim, and we may yet live to see some of it.

N.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Russia.

The reaction is still in full swing. The persecution is especially directed against workers and peasants and the democratic press. Every governor acts independently in his province, free from interference from the central administration or from the Duma. The Russian laws, bad as they are, are not even observed by those petty tyrants, and the life and liberty of the inhabitants are entirely at their mercy. Radical papers especially are punished by heavy fines and their editors ruined economically. One paper in Yaroslavl was fined forty-five times in one year! Another in Saratoff was so relentlessly prosecuted that its editor and his wife ended by suicide. In many other places, as Kiev, Tiflis and Odessa, papers are daily fined and suspended.

But the so-called authorised and legal workers' organisations are especially singled out for persecution. According to law, the workers have the right to form unions and co-operative and friendly societies. These have accordingly been organised and have existed during the last years. Stolypin, that real Jesuit, has however given secret orders to provincial governors to suppress these societies by all means; but if a Deputy in the Duma interpellates him on the prosecution of unions, he explains that the governors are independent in those actions! Everywhere, particularly in the mining districts of South Russia, the unions are suppressed, prosecuted, or submitted to such absurd interferences as the following:—A local despot in the mining district issued an order that if a miner was seen *unwashed* in the street, he would be imprisoned and his union prosecuted!

On December 21 a violent explosion took place in a lodging where Karpoff, the Chief of the Secret Police of St. Petersburg, used to meet his intimate agent Voskressensky. There they prepared bombs, when, apparently by accident, Karpoff met with his well-deserved fate and was blown up. The news that Voskressensky has been tried by court-martial and executed is absolutely false; up till now he has not been handed over to any tribunal, and it is doubtful if he will be executed, as he is counted among the most useful *agents-provocateur* and skilled in the preparation of bombs for bogus conspiracies and plots.

Argentina.

As is known from the papers, in November a bomb was thrown in Buenos Ayres against the chief of police Falcon and his secretary Lartigue. The young man who had committed the act tried to shoot himself, but inflicted only a slight wound. This news did not come as a surprise to those who had followed for some months the events in the Argentine Republic. In May the workers' unions of the capital had declared a general strike in protest against some municipal taxes. During one of the demonstrations, Falcon with his police surrounded and opened a murderous fire upon the workers. This massacre was repeated at the public funeral of the victims. But these are only some facts from a systematic persecution which Falcon carried on against the Labour organisations and their press. Public opinion claimed his dismissal, but the Government of the Republic refused to let its valued servant go. The inevitable then happened. A young man took upon himself the task of freeing his fellow-citizens from this tyrant. Though this was an individual act of vengeance, the Government at once declared the country in a state of siege, and wholesale searches and arrests were made. In the middle of December already over 500 persons were said to be in prison, accused of being Anarchists, and still the arrests continue undiminished. People disappear and no one knows what has become of them. Conditions are becoming intolerable and nobody is able to say exactly what is being done by the Government, as the press is strictly prohibited from mentioning anything. *La Action Socialiste* and the *Confederacion Obrera Regional Argentina* succeeded, however, in publishing very interesting numbers relating the events after the explosion. The offices of *La Protesta* were invaded by the police, the papers *La Vanguardia* and the *Ultima Hora* stopped, libraries, modern schools and printing

offices sacked and the furniture, books, and printing machines burned and destroyed.

Of the prisoners little is known, but sinister rumours are current. Many Anarchists, Socialists and Syndicalists have already been deported on a Government ship to Terra del Fuego. Thousands of arrests are yet expected to take place, but we doubt if the fury of the Government will do aught else but awaken the hatred of the working class. Socialist and Anarchist propaganda by press and meetings has been so long at work in Argentine that even these cruel persecutions will not succeed in crushing the spirit of liberty and the organisation of the workers.

Finland.

One of the most revolting political crimes is at present being committed by the Russian Government against the gallant but defenceless little Finnish nation. During the whole of last century Finland enjoyed its autonomy and Constitution in conformity with the annexation treaty. Despotic and reactionary as were the Russian Emperors Alexander I., Nicholas I., and Alexander III., they did not dare to violate the oath which they had taken to observe the treaty rights; and Finland, with its poor, rocky soil, but comparative freedom, realised a great intellectual as well as economic progress. With truth it could put itself side by side with enlightened Norway and Switzerland.

But Nicholas II., whose lack of all moral notions, whose pettiness and vindictiveness of character have been so clearly shown by the last four years' wholesale arrests, deportations and executions, and the destruction by fire and sword of whole provinces, decided that he need not be bound by his solemn oath. A small and free nation so near to St. Petersburg was too much for him! From the very beginning of his reign he attacked Finnish autonomy, and spies, gendarmes, and a Governor-General as Bobrikoff were sent to crush Finland; but the uprising of the Russian people put an end to his designs. Now, encouraged by the triumph of militarism and the spy system, but especially by the support of Liberal England in the person of Sir Edward Grey, Nicholas has returned to his plan. Again Finland is invaded by spies and Cossacks; its Parliament, with its women Deputies, is closed; the Senate filled with Russians, submissive creatures of the Tsar; the Finnish finances put under the control of the Council of Ministers, notorious for their embezzling and dishonesty.

What is most revolting is that public opinion in Europe not only shows no indignation, but even seems to acquiesce in the latest of the Russian Government's crimes.

France.

A new revolutionary Syndicalist review, *La Vie Ouvrière* (The Workers' Life), is being published twice monthly in Paris. We recommend it to those of our readers who know French. This review must not be mistaken for *L'Action Ouvrière* issued by the reformist Syndicalists, which is infinitely inferior to the revolutionary publication. The latter costs only 3 frs. for three months; address, Pierre Monatte, 42 Rue Dauphinet, Paris.

A LETTER TO YOUNG FOLK.

MY DEAR YOUNG COMRADES,—

Some months ago I asked in my report whether we could have a column in FREEDOM. I waited ever so patiently for a reply, "Yes" or "No." I have received neither. It almost made me believe that big folk are so taken up with big affairs that they forget that we also want a column of our own. I felt as if I were crying in a wilderness of disinterested people. All at once methought, "If one wants anything done and one can possibly do it oneself—*do it!*" So I am to try to get a hearing. I wonder if Comrade Keell thought, "If Dee wanted a column so badly, he would set about doing it himself!" We often get sick of people telling us that we ought to do this and we ought to do that. It has been drilled into my ears so often that I feel it my duty to apologise to Comrade Keell.

Young folk very often indulge in these irritating orders, but if our elder comrades do it, we cannot expect a good result, can we? How often have I heard at a group meeting that a secretary ought to do this and that. If you want anything done, my young comrades, do it yourself if you possibly can. I often think that some of our comrades, elder ones too, want a shepherd, another Jesus Christ, to lead them. I would rather have you shout from the housetops, "Unhand me! I will be dependent no more!" An old comrade once said to me, "You must imagine that the movement cannot exist without you!" "Swelled head!" you will say. Not necessarily so. Every man and woman who claims to be an Anarchist Communist is a movement in him or herself. I do not care a brass button for the individual who cries and whines that there is no party, no group, no school where they can work; and because there is none, they do nothing. But, my young comrades, try to live above that; remember you are the movement—if you move; that propaganda cannot be done without you, and you alone.

I have read many "Children's Columns," "Corners" and "Letters," both in Socialistic and religious papers, and those in Socialistic papers, in particular, give one the impression that young folk have no ideas, that they cannot think about subjects big folks can think about. You

are to be told fairy tales *all* the time, you must sit in the corner and keep your "pinny" clean, and read about what happened to the bad little boy and the good things that the good little boy received. Well, fairy tales are all very well in their way, but young minds come to an age when they want satisfying with other subjects than those. My fears and hopes of the people were puzzling my brain when quite as young as you are, and I have no reason to believe that similar thoughts do not disturb the brains of my young comrades.

The religious and patriotic papers make it their bounden duty to write in plain English their particular creed and doctrine, and it is our bounden duty—shall I say?—to tell you to read, observe, and think for yourselves. Think for yourselves, aye! think and express yourselves in your own simple way. What does it matter if people laugh you to scorn? "Think on, act on, say on, fear not."

I do not wish to trespass on the small space we have in FREEDOM, but before drawing my letter to a close I should be glad if my young or old comrades would make suggestions. Letters from my young comrades would certainly be welcomed by your comrade,

J. H. DEE.

15 Boswell Street, Liverpool.

PROPAGANDA NOTES.

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

LIVERPOOL INTERNATIONAL MODERN SCHOOL.

I omitted to mention in last month's issue that our debts have been settled, and we have a balance of £4 in hand. Christmas festivities and bad weather have resulted in poor attendances this month, but taking these things into consideration, we have had a fair number at our meetings.

On November 28 we had our old friend Tom Beaven to address the children. Tom chose for his subject "Optimist and Pessimist." To be optimistic in face of all the misery and suffering around us, to think that there is a way out of slumdom and slavery, we must needs have the heart of a lion. The International Modern School by its very existence tells us that we are optimistic. What is a pessimist? One who loses all hope, who has a tendency to dwell on the dark side of affairs, who thinks that if we struggle, nothing will come of it but vanity. To be optimistic, one lives; to be pessimistic, one vegetates. Tom's address was well received by the children. We had a splendid afternoon.

The following week Mat Kavanagh addressed the school. On this particular afternoon we had a rather long programme of singers, reciters, and musicians. In fact, it was a concert for the benefit of a "Whitewayer" who came to visit us. We had a crowded "house" and the children acquitted themselves remarkably. Mat had only a few minutes to take them for a "sail" in his ship called "Communism." However, on December 12 he spoke again, and took for his subject "Free Socialists and State Socialists," and pointed out the difference by simple illustrations such as lifeboat institutions, hospitals, etc., in comparison to official institutions. It is government by officials that State Socialists are asking for. Mat pointed out that voting and praying were useless. Which of the girls would start praying for their fireirons to be done. None. It is useless. To vote is similar to prayer. It humbles and degrades. We want *men and women*.

December 19, the weather was bad, and very few children faced the elements. We, who were there, sat around the fire and talked of current events. I told them of Ferrer's work and its continuation. Comrade Portet hopes that the affairs of Ferrer's legacy will soon be settled. The Spanish Government, by holding the property of Ferrer's legatee, is committing a breach of their own laws. In other words, they are robbers according to the law of Spain. The publishing department of Ferrer's work in Spain will, in all probability, stand over for some considerable time, owing to the unsettled state of the country, but the Modern Schools of Spain are likely to be re-opened before long. Portet hopes to push forward the idea of an International League of Modern Schools with more energy than ever, and, by taking advantage of his knowledge of English and England, he will be able to spread the idea in a larger field than before. The responsibility of the Modern Schools is in able and energetic hands, and we can only wish our comrade success in his new sphere.

J. H. DEE.

HUDDERSFIELD.

The movement here is making itself felt. Meetings have been held, and the Labour Party shown up as the time-servers and humbugs they always have been. Our efforts may appear small, but I think they are effective. As Comrade Pollock is the principal advocate for Direct Action, our propaganda is not likely to suffer.

H. VARLEY

LEEDS.

On Sunday, January 2, Comrade Ballard spoke in the Town Hall Square for two hours. In spite of a weak voice, he held a very large crowd for some time, but the starting of other meetings drew some away. Our comrade having made a start, will probably keep the ball rolling.

To Correspondents.

S. D. (Eastbourne).—Read the articles on Russia in last year's FREEDOM.
A. PRATELLE and A. H. HOLT.—Crowded out. Will appear next month.

ALDRED FUND.

The following sums have been received since our last issue. Further donations are solicited, which will be acknowledged in these columns:—W. Robinson 4s., Comp. 6d.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(December 8—January 6.)

FREEDOM Guarantee Fund.—R. Clarke 6d, N. £2 6s, A Sympathiser 10s, J. Hellum 4s.
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