

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Taxi-cab Strike.

If 1913 is to continue as it has commenced, there will be a few remarkable developments in the Labour world this year. New Year's Day opened with the taxi-cab strike, which has been threatening for some time. The cause of the dispute—the extra cost of petrol—brings to the front a point from which we can glean a very important moral, viz., that the monopolists always charge the workers with the extra cost of raw material. If it costs more to build, to carry, to produce anything, someone has to pay the profit-mongers. Who can pay but the workers, however the fact may be disguised? So it seemed quite natural to the Owners' Association that the drivers should pay the extra 5d. on petrol. The strike will probably compromise this matter, and the men will win something temporarily, which is always a good reason for a strike. But troubles of this kind will always keep repeating themselves, until at the end of a long series of struggles the exploiters will be finally overthrown. The important thing for us all to remember is that strikes, *even when unsuccessful*, are always steps towards this ultimate solution. It may be said, in fact, that strikes are the forcing-beds of revolutions; and the spirit that is behind them all is the spirit that will win in the long run.

Woman as a Wage-Slave.

Everyone who understands the economic struggle knows how much woman could have gained if the same amount of effort had been used against her exploiters as has been wasted in striving for the vote. Especially would German women-workers benefit by strong Trade Union organisation, if one may trust the account given by Miss Mitford in the *Daily Chronicle* (December 27). She tells how vast numbers of German women are now employed in industrial production, many of them displacing men. "Most," she tells us, "have a desperate struggle to make both ends meet, and very few can afford adequate meals, even the public kitchens and cheap restaurants being beyond their means." And again, "Official descriptions of the various industries, the wages paid for the manufacture of each article, and the diseases to which the workers are liable, as a result of the long hours and insanitary conditions of the homes, make very painful reading." We have italicised the above for the benefit of the Eugenists, if they will only open their eyes. But what a tragedy is this! The Germans come to England and are dismayed at the horrors of Cradley Heath; an English woman goes to Germany and tells us of the artificial flower makers earning 5d. per day! Is it not time the international solidarity of Labour made one great effort to end these horrors, which are undermining the physique of all nations?

Contradictions.

It is rather noticeable as an example of opposite forces always at work in society that while amongst a certain section there is an insidious and abominable attempt to resuscitate increased brutality in the punishment of crime, a wave of intelligence and humanity in the treatment and education of children is giving hopeful signs of better things for the future. Thus we see on the one hand that—except for our gaols and "reformatories"—the reign of the Squeerses and the Murdstones is coming to an end; while on the other, McKenna, an official criminal, is infecting society with the barbarous spirit of a Jeffreys. Yet it has been

frequently said that even if it were possible to do without the "cat" in the prison, you could never do without the cane in the school. The birching of boys was such a fine old English custom that it was, and by our magistrates still is, regarded more as a healthy sport that had a good effect. Now head-masters write against corporal punishment, and point out that order is best maintained by *interesting* the pupils. The whole theory of education is being revolutionised, and the *liberty of the child in seeking its own knowledge* is being more and more considered. When the treatment of *passional* crimes is taken out of the hands of the McKenna school of Barbarics, with its flogging gaolers and its hangman, society will be still further purified and enlightened, and crimes of violence will diminish.

Closed Eyes.

Apropos of the latest society fad, the "cure" by silence, G. K. Chesterton very aptly reminds us that this particular form of "cure," which consists in closing one's eyes and saying nothing, is precisely the attitude adopted by the goody-goody hypocrites towards the diseases of the body-social resulting from a capitalist system. Like the holy friar in the Ingoldsby legend, who "cast his eyelids down" when the peccadilloes in his own household came under his notice, so the saintly humbugs who have denounced the White Slave traffic close their eyes to the real cause of all the trouble. In fact, their hypocritical legislation is only meant to cover up the root evil, which, if exposed, might involve some of their own dear friends. The same with the other set who are clamouring for the right to sterilise the poor and unfortunate who don't reach the Eugenist standard (save the mark!) of right and wrong. See how these perfect beings, these god-like specimens of the privileged class, with their simpering female followers—see how demurely the eyelids close when the evil *conditions* of the present system are brought to their notice. Then they are blind, and only regain their vision when you talk of castration and the lethal chamber! Poor unfortunate people who fall under the ban of these bigots. And what can one say of these "saviours of society"? Only this: How small a thing is man when he thinks himself great!

A Chinese Strike.

The fall of the Manchus has meant the awakening of the Chinese people. Their astonishing revolution, which installed the Republic, is speedily developing economic conditions which will be a lesson to the Western world. For the first time in the history of China, says a *News and Leader* correspondent, she has Trade Unionism, a strike, repression of blacklegs, and picketing. And everything was carried through with such firmness and directness of attack that in two days the masters gave way. After centuries of an oppression which has become historical for its unmitigated cruelty and its imperviousness to the least suspicion of progress, the Chinese people have broken their chains; and now they have before them a most tremendous task to raise themselves from the direst poverty and to defend themselves from European exploitation, with which they will undoubtedly be assailed. They have commenced in real earnest, and we for our part send congratulations and hearty greetings to the Chinese workers on their first industrial victory.

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WILL SLAVERY TRIUMPH?

The decay and breakup of modern Capitalism—coincident with the struggle of humanity to escape the intolerable evils which that economic system produces—bring us face to face with serious problems which involve the time-long choice between slavery or freedom.

It has ever been the desire and interest of men who have fettered the limbs and lives of their fellows to preserve their power and domination when a change of conditions becomes inevitable. On the other hand, the minds and bodies of men bred and trained in the habits of subservience cannot readily assimilate ideals of free action and the possibilities of free development. Their minds respond more easily to schemes which harmonise with the narrowed conceptions of their days of bondage. This fact makes the plausible professions of tyrants and exploiters tenable when they pretend to devise measures calculated to ameliorate the hardship and suffering of "the lower classes." The rise of a new type of master (usually an additional burden upon the backs of the people) is thus also made possible. They, too, are careful to propound remedies (?) which will effect the minimum of disturbance within the existent state of things. The advance of education and the general growth of knowledge and information have compelled the dominant classes (as well as those who wish to join them or to usurp them) to make a great show of reason in support of their promises and schemes. Thus, with the aid of the press, the platform, the pulpit, and the school, the slave mind is fed with talk of practical gradual reform. And in all that is done the shadow is liberally distributed, while the substance is carefully withheld; and every concession is made the excuse for more stringent restrictions. Added to this, the fears of the poor are stimulated by fearful tales of the power and cruelty of their masters in the event of a general revolt. In the case of free men such dangers could only inspire them with greater resolution to destroy their enemies. But the slave mind has felt the pain of punishment, and has been cowed. Hence the apparent absurdity of "cataclysmal" revolution to many minds!

But a gradual peaceful transformation of society is not the way of history, nor the actual probabilities of to-day. As a matter of fact, the position is very ominous at the present time. The great moral revolt against landlordism and capitalism throughout the world has brought it to the verge of the greatest revolution in history. The classes in power—utterly unable to amend the system in accordance with the demands of justice—are fully alive to the danger. They can do little to stem the tide of discontent and the universal desire to overturn the present system of society, except to attempt, by crafty persecution and by the cruellest violence, to suppress the active spirits in the crusade of revolt. Unhappily, another force has arisen in the midst of that crusade, which may, if unresisted, come to the aid of the classes in possession of wealth and power, and not merely provide them with petty "palliatives"—that is the least of their evil work—but by plausible theories and slavish conceptions cramp the awakening minds of the peoples and deprive them of that great moral force which is indispensable in the struggle for emancipation.

Thus, just at the present moment, when the fruits of generations of struggle and sacrifice may be reaped, the movement is largely deprived of its virility, and even of its purpose, by the teachings of the advocates of State regulation of everybody and everything. If the great proletarian movement throughout the world has any meaning at all, it is a struggle for freedom. In that it is historically correct. Next to the struggle for bare existence, the story of man's development is the story of freedom, or battles for it. Not for complete freedom all the time, it is true, but for freedom. Now freedom is denounced as an illusion. "It is not possible," though the very people who declare this often in the same breath also assert that it can exist within *their own* scheme of restriction and State regulation—though in nobody else's conception of future social conditions. They often have the audacity to maintain that freedom is necessarily only made possible by legislation. This in defiance of the fact that freedom in every age and in every clime has been the great law-breaker and law-destroyer. Their minds cannot escape the influence of the slave legislation of the nineteenth century. The Factory Acts and the Elementary Education Acts are to them the final embodiment of economic and social wisdom, and are the products of the only possible methods of political and social progress. Even many thousands of Socialist workers have been led to believe that the very instrument of oppression which in every period has been used against their class is the magic wand of deliverance. Their sorrowful experience should (and yet will, we think) teach them better. They cannot yet see that the pretences of freedom which have been made in times past by the apologists for the present system were not only untrue and fraudulent, but were *only* pretences.

The free labourer cannot exist in the present state of society, because the worker does not possess the opportunity to work upon the land—without taxation or robbery—or to freely and fairly render equivalent useful service to others for the products which he may receive from them. Neither does he, nor can he, provide himself with a sufficient reserve to enable him to discuss terms of remuneration with the owner or possessor of the means of production upon a basis of equality. He is, and must be, the victim, and become enslaved every time.

But because this is the case in a system of exploitation, it is absurd to contend that a society of free workers cannot exist. Indeed,

that, by the light of unsophisticated simple reasoning, which merely seeks the truth, is the logical alternative. But for many years the mind obsessed by the State fetish has proclaimed the impossibility of freedom because of the hollowness of the pretence that freedom of work and contract exists in capitalist conditions. This is a fatal blow at the cause of labour and of the poor. If they are not animated with the desire for freedom, they will remain the most abject slaves, and their cause will fail because it must become more and more unintelligent and opposed to the development of the race. A people enslaved is a people depraved.

Are not the working classes in the most servile position, unable even, in the majority of cases, to fearlessly express their thought and opinions upon social, economic, religious, or political questions when that thought or opinion is antagonistic to that of their masters? While the Socialist and Labour M.P.'s are being treated with every sign of respect and esteem in the House of Commons, many of their most earnest and active supporters in the working class are being harried or boycotted on account of their views by the servants of their capitalistic foes in Parliament. With working men and women of avowedly Anarchistic or other revolutionary views, the state of things is even worse. The reply to this is an argument which would fully justify Tsardom or any other social, religious, or political tyranny which has ever existed.

There was a time when freedom of thought was generally feared and suppressed. To-day in the world of theory and reasoning its possibility and advantage is unquestioned. And yet it is perfectly well known that the mind of man is not unbounded either in matters of knowledge or even imagination. Few people would now contend that the stock of ideas and the general intellectual structure of a man are not the products of heredity and environment, or that the human mind has reached a stage of development when there exists no bounds to its activities. But who would, therefore, maintain that political, social, religious, and scientific bodies, self-appointed or democratically elected, were necessary to impose mental laws upon us all? The meaning and advantage of freedom is, therefore, clearly evident; and if laws had been or have been passed to restrain the excesses of such "authorities," it should still surely be obvious that the utmost freedom is necessary for all, and especially the most untutored minds, if they are to reach higher planes of intellectual life. The same thing applies exactly to social and economic problems. Slavery is no remedy, not even when it is imposed and managed by the new saviours of humanity who are going to arrange it all so "gradually" and so "peacefully."

The dangers of the Servile State are growing. By its power and influence the great movement for social and economic emancipation may be thwarted, and the poverty and degradation of the majority of mankind be perpetuated for several generations yet to come. The great need of the present time is a vast educational movement. Organisation and direct action of the right sort must follow general enlightenment. The invention, skill, and knowledge of mankind made possible and efficient by association and co-operation aid the realisation of freedom, and in no way retard or destroy it.

Freedom, the hope of the heroes, the poets, and the martyrs of the race, the bane of politicians and rulers, is to-day, as ever, the only practical road to human happiness. For a time its necessity and advantage may be overlooked, but then is the time of darkness and sadness, and the frustration of the hopes of men and women who look forward to the better day. But there is no need to despair, for the taste of the "dead sea fruit" of Parliamentary reform is nauseous, and millions who to-day have their hopes turned in that direction must surely realise that they must seek freedom and win it by their own efforts.

G.

THE CALL.

Forward! Whilst the ling'ring night is frowning
O'er the heights we yet must scale,
Break down chains tradition long has sanctioned,
Lest we too should pause and fail.
O pilgrims of the New Crusade!
Lest Authority triumphant mock us,
Clad in laws age has outworn,
Lest our eyes grown sightless seeking, seeking,
Miss the glory of the dawn.
O comrades of the New Crusade!
Long and steep the pathway upward leading,
Onward still whate'er befall,
Till the patient heart at length responding,
Beats at Freedom's mighty call.
O fighters in the New Crusade!
Shall the dawn of Liberty elude us?
Hurry, comrades, on the way.
For united, fearless, onward sweeping,
From yon heights we'll see the day.
O women of the New Crusade!

M. H.

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THE LIFE OF AUGUST BEBEL.*

(Conclusion)

To apply the preceding facts to German Social Democracy when it originated, they explain the ten years' split, or rather the twofold origin of the party (from the early "sixties" up till 1874). Lassalle, it must be remembered here, was a Socialist of many years' standing at that time, whilst Bebel, barely past twenty, was a regular thrift-and-saving Liberal, an Anti-Socialist.

Lassalle wanted to detach the working class from the Anti-Socialist Liberals, the only seemingly progressive people in the field at that time. He founded a General Workers' Union, bent on wresting universal suffrage from the Government to begin with. His energy was partly absorbed in a struggle for these Radical working men, whom he did not win over; at the same time he gained real strength from masses of workers in the western factory districts, who accepted his Socialist teachings with the fervour almost of a religious creed. His unexpected death prevented him from making good his mistake; perhaps, however, his disappearance made it easier for the social wing of the Liberal workers to approach Socialism. This is the way Bebel went and led his growing party by-and-by. To maintain, by the way, that Lassalle had any monarchical leanings, because he fought the half-hearted Liberals of those years, who were then as bitterly and hopelessly Anti-Socialist as they are still, is an absolute mistake; he was a Republican all his life; that he was an authoritarian, everybody admits.

Bebel, at Leipzig, in Liberal and Federalist surroundings, succeeding in very early years in becoming his own master (a master turner), soon came to the front in Radical working men's clubs; and, in order to combat Lassalle's views, studied his writings, and became a convert to Socialism, whilst remaining a bitter enemy of the methods of propaganda and organisation of Lassalle and his successors.

There was no question of Marx and Engels then; Marx maintained icy silence in face of Lassalle's stirring agitation; he hated him bitterly, but could not throw any obstacle in his way just then. Liebknecht, however, came to Berlin and troubled the waters as far as he could. In those years the phrase was coined that the Marxists were as "false as the gallows tree" (*falsch wie galgenholz*). After his expulsion from Prussia, Liebknecht went to Leipzig, where he certainly stimulated Bebel on his road to Socialism, but also probably embittered the struggle with the Lassalleans—a Marxist feud, which never ends—as far as he could. From that time dates his close co-operation with Bebel, who never quarrelled with him in public, but seems always to have been rather sceptical as to his practical capacities.

Bebel must always have felt "a born leader of men." It mattered little to him that he had become a Socialist himself; he wanted all others to become Socialists, even if he had to adopt very slow tactics and to refrain for years from proclaiming himself a Socialist. He was the leading spirit of a federation of working men's societies, which he and his friends tried to advance from self-help Liberalism to Socialism. The Chemnitz programme of 1866 is an important and typical step on this way. When it embodies the demands of political Radicalism, this does not mean that Social Democracy was a merely Radical party at that time; in fact, Social Democracy did not exist then, and this programme was only a stepping-stone towards it, adopted by delegates who had been Anti-Socialist but a short time before. This inner work of permeating the Radical societies with Socialism went further on, until in 1868 (Nuremberg Congress) the delegates of the majority of these societies adhered to the essential points of the principles of the International Working Men's Association, whilst the Anti-Socialist minority left.

In 1869 a number of prominent Lassalleans joined Bebel's group, and at the Eisenach Congress (August, 1869) both sections founded the Social Democratic Working Men's Party, which fully adhered to the International. This led to relations with Karl Marx, secretary for Germany of the International. He and Engels were not slow in giving continuous advice, which, however, as letters produced at the Leipzig trial (1872) or printed in the Sorge correspondence (1906) show, was not always followed even by Liebknecht, to their great annoyance. They succeeded, however, in poisoning Bebel and the others' minds against Bakunin and Anarchism; and Bebel, who had no opportunity of examining these questions for himself, was, and remains, guilty of gross want of care in accepting these statements from people whose opinions, when his own policy was concerned, he carefully examined and criticised.

During these years the Lassalleans recruited large masses of adherents direct from the ranks of the workers, without the intermediary step of Radicalism. It was only natural that Trade Unionism chiefly originated in this milieu. From enmity to Marx they gave fair play to Bakunin in their papers, to a limited extent; but, of course, they remained authoritarian to the backbone.

Only in 1875, when the Lassallean leader, Von Schweitzer, had retired, and Bebel and Liebknecht had been undergoing two years' imprisonment in a Saxon fortress, were the Eisenach and Lassallean parties united (Gotha Congress). Marx's furious criticism of the proposed new programme was published in the "nineties"; Engels's similar letter of March 18-28, 1875, is now published by Bebel (German edition, II., pp. 318-324); Bebel himself was furious; but all had to

bow before the general desire to see this ten years' quarrel at last ended. From this Congress dates the present Social Democratic Party.

Even this cursory sketch may show that greater efforts had been made to extend the limits of the party than to intensify and specialise the propaganda. There was little theory-mongering during those years—scholastic Marxism did not exist—but there was bitter exclusivism and a war of calumny, of police aspersions, between the two rival factions. How can it be expected that people brought up in this school should even know what fairness means, and extend it to movements and ideas outside their own ranks? It is comical, however, if Social Democrats of other countries, instead of avoiding these bad habits, which local circumstances explain to some degree, believe them to be essential virtues of Social Democrats, and imitate them!

When German Social Democrats are charged with first concentrating their efforts on the central Parliament, whilst neglecting the conquest of local power (the various State Diets), this reproach seems to me unfounded. Starting out of nothing, and meeting with bourgeois hatred and Governmental hostility from the very beginning (whilst in other countries the beginnings of Socialist movements met sometimes with half-calculated, half-contemptuous toleration), their small forces would have been frittered away in hopeless local struggles; whilst, appearing from the first moment in the central Parliament, they were thus before the whole country once and for all. They were long since aware of the necessity of local efforts, and strive to make them.

Bebel's generation is mostly superseded now by Bernstein's generation, people who were tired of the Marx worship, which, in reality, only began after Marx's death, fostered by Engels, who thus ingeniously advanced himself to the front rank. But the immense numerical extension of the party and the corresponding Trade Unionist movement tends to eliminate real, thinking Socialists from the huge administrative machinery of the party, which gets into the hands of mere business people, technically fitted to do this kind of work. I believe that this process will by and by set free, if I may say so, the intelligences of many thinking Social Democrats, who will no longer be absorbed by the mechanical work of extending the party, by fanaticism and devotion, as in the early days, or in a purely business way, as to-day. Then the spell will be broken, and real, live Socialism may arise also in this country.

Bebel himself sometimes aspires to intellectual freedom, and took it when he wrote "Woman and Socialism" (1879), shocking many of his orthodox friends; but in others he crushes it relentlessly whenever its suits the interests of his party, which, by a process comprehensible after fifty years' intimate connection, are to him identical with his personal standpoint, which, again—and this explains his long rule—he always adapts to circumstances: he will be revolutionary till the very moment before action, when he will find a way to climb down and be "practical." By one who is able to sift materials and to counteract too-highly-coloured statements by other information, some insight into the real ways of Bebel and his friends may be gained from the "Memoiren einer Sozialistin," by Lily Braun (Munich, 1909, 1911), a book dealing with the feminine Socialist movement in particular.

There is a great historic literature springing up now, which ought to be consulted side by side with Bebel's memoirs. Publications of new Lassalle materials abound; Bernstein wrote over twelve hundred large pages on the local history of Socialism in Berlin (a corresponding work on Socialism in London is still missing); a similar work on Hamburg, etc., is in existence; and quite a number of books tell the history of large Trade Unions since their foundation. Bebel's present publication ends with 1878; it is to be continued.

Whether Anarchists are interested in all this or not, these things exist; and millions of workers are just as much absorbed by and imprisoned in this sphere of thought as they were before within a religious creed. We are yet so near to the beginning of all this, that the period of fanaticism has not been outlived; but, I believe, the ice is breaking.

N.

Publications Received.

- The Martyrdom of Berkman.* By F. Thaumazo. 10c. Brooklyn, N.Y.: 1307 Putnam Avenue.
Free Political Institutions: Their Nature, Essence, and Maintenance. Cloth, 1s. net. London: C. W. Daniel, 3 Amen Corner, E.C.
Why I am a Revolutionist. By Rosa Markus. 10c. San Francisco, Cal.: Progressive Educational League.
Has Religion been a Promoter or Retarder of Civilisation? By Rosa Markus. 10c. San Francisco, Cal.: Same Publishers.
What's Up with the Movement? By Wilfrid H. Harrison. 1d. Johannesburg: Modern Press, 135 Fox Street.
Declaraciones. J. Etievant. 10c. Barcelona: *Salud y Fuerza*, Provenza 177, principal, 1a.
Os Bastidores das Guerras. Pedro Krapótkine. 3 centavos. Lisbon: *A Sementeira*, Rua da Barroca, 94, 2º.

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1912.

An eventful year has just closed with its three hundred and sixty-six pages that will be worked out into chapters and volumes when its most significant history comes to be written. So full of happenings has it been, all of which have interest for the revolutionist, the reformer, the sociologist, that it is impossible to do more than refer here to some of the most prominent events that more particularly concern the Anarchist and his work in the libertarian movement.

The year 1911 had foreshadowed some remarkable awakenings of the great masses of workers, but many had imagined that the great transport strike was some momentary madness that had seized upon the workers, impelling them to throw leadership, official guidance, and even law and order to the four winds. How narrow and stupid this view was the still greater and more remarkable coal strike in the beginning of 1912 soon proved. With this amazing development of the solidarity of Labour the monopolists and exploiters could at last see that a *period*, with vast revolutionary possibilities, was at last dawning upon mankind.

So deeply convinced of this were the more far-seeing politicians in the Government that they realised the wisdom of trying to "reason" with the "leaders," and of ignoring the call for shooting and massacre that some of the moulting reactionaries indulged in. Little enough was gained by the strike from the point of view of a real betterment of the miners' conditions; but the moral of it, considered as an example of bed-rock solidarity and of the real economic power of the producers as against the exploiters, was of incalculable value. The spectacle of more than a million of men, with all the suffering a strike involves for the women and children as well as themselves, standing shoulder to shoulder for six weeks, and paralysing the whole industrial fabric of the country, was a thing that never entered into the philosophy of those who rule, or of those who had so complacently mapped out the plan of social evolution from their own preconceived notions of the way things must go.

Hardly had the last echo of this great event died away before the trouble at the Docks involved another hundred thousand workers in a terribly long continued struggle, entirely the result of the masters' victimisation and backsliding. Here again we had overwhelming evidence of the immense growth of that feeling of solidarity which will one day, in the not far distant future, conquer the real "enemies of society." Officialism again helped to mar the real effect of the strike, and the barbarous rapacity of the shipping combine, aided by the Port of London Authority, inflicted untold suffering on the dockers and their families. But the power of organised Labour to hold up the trade of London was clearly established, and this is the important lesson the workers have to learn.

As the year opened, so it closed. For the strike of the North-Eastern Railway men, though small in extent, was magnificent in spirit. The victimisation of Driver Knox—for that is what the whole business really amounted to—was the signal for an outburst that not even the most sanguine friend of Labour could have anticipated. It ended in a moral defeat not only for the North-Eastern Company, but also for the judiciary, who are always hand and glove with the masters. All these events loom

large in the history of a year which has been remarkable in many other ways for the making of history.

Little space is left for referring to the prosecution of the *Syndicalist*, the imprisonment of Guy Bowman, Tom Mann, the brothers Buck, Crowsley, and others. What can be said with complete certainty is that the advanced movement has gained immensely as a result of the stupid tactics of the authorities. The same with the disgraceful attempt to deport our comrade Malatesta. Though unfortunately he had to suffer imprisonment, yet the subterranean workings of an infamous secret police system had an exposure, and, happily enough, at the same time a defeat. The same may be said of the result of the Ettore-Giovannitti trial. The capitalists, with the help of the police, had concocted a black conspiracy against these men, and their acquittal was once more a victory on the right side.

Notwithstanding our antagonism to all forms of government, it would be absurd to ignore the direction that is being taken by developments both in Europe and the Far East. The declaration of a Republic in China, small as it may seem to our immediate view, yet indicates a most profound change in the temper of a people, which later must have stupendous results not only for China herself, but for the world. Probably one of the first nations to feel this will be Japan, crushed as she is to-day by the iron heel of a vile despotism.

The war in the Balkans and the victory of the Allies marks the fall of another despotism that has lasted too long. Hating war as we all do, and sympathising as we all must with the frightful sufferings of the people who endure its horrors, quite irrespective of nationalities, no one who cares for the Social Revolution could have welcomed the victory of the Turks. Their rule in Europe has been a menace to all the progress and development that enables a nation to realise itself. The Allies, when all is over, will assuredly have their own internal troubles to attend to. But if the Turkish menace is ended, we can feel sure that new forces will develop in the direction of progress. That these views are not shared by many Anarchists is well known. Nevertheless, they may be given here for what they are worth, and it is not impossible the near future may verify them.

CELEBRATION OF KROPOTKIN'S BIRTHDAY.

The tea and social gathering to celebrate Kropotkin's birthday was a great success, comrades coming from all parts, including a group from Leicester and G. Barrett and his wife from Glasgow. The absence of Kropotkin was a great disappointment, but greater regret was felt that illness kept him away. Just over a hundred sat down to tea, after which short speeches were made dealing with Kropotkin's work in the Socialist and Anarchist movement. Malatesta, Rocker, Tcherkesoff, Herbert Burrows, A. Gorrie, J. Lane, F. Kitz, G. Barrett, Mrs. Wilkinson, and others bore testimony to the value of our comrade's work in building up the present great movement for the emancipation of the workers and the founding of a free society. Previous to the speeches the following letter from Kropotkin was read:—

DEAR COMRADES AND FRIENDS,

I had so much cherished the idea of being to-morrow in your midst for a few hours, and I hoped to be able to do so till to-day. But the fatigue of the last few days has told heavily upon me, and I see myself compelled to give up that pleasure. I need not tell you how it grieves me. The more so as we are living through a great historical moment, and at such moments one feels especially the need of being in close touch with his friends and comrades. Everyone feels the general awakening that is going on amidst the toiling masses all over the world. More than that: one may feel already that this awakening is not going to spend itself in mere words. Great events are nearing us. And already now we may say that the Anarchist idea will have to say its word in these events. The labourers all over the world will not be lulled with mere patchwork reforms of the present conditions. They will go beyond the limits which Socialist reformers tried to impose on them. And in their efforts in so doing they surely will ask us, the Anarchists, to show the boldness of our thought, and to aid the people to display in full its *creative powers* for working out new institutions, leading to free Anarchist-Communism. Upon our foresight and energy will depend to a great extent the distance that will be covered in the struggle of mankind against its two enemies: *Capital*—the chief support of the State—and *the State*—the chief creator and support of modern Capitalism.

From a full heart with you, dear brothers, comrades, and friends,
Brighton, December 12, 1912.

PETER KROPOTKIN.

Illness of Kropotkin.

Since his birthday, our comrade has been seriously ill with double pneumonia; but our readers will be pleased to hear that Madame Kropotkin writes (January 8) to say that he is now progressing favourably. "Temperature nearly normal, lungs clearing."

"ARBITRATION" IN NEW ZEALAND.

A bitter fight between Capital and Labour is taking place at Waihi, in New Zealand. The Arbitration Act, strange to say, is the immediate cause of this incident in the never-ending struggle between exploiters and exploited. The miners of Waihi, being dissatisfied with the Arbitration Board, gave notice to cancel the registration of their Union under the Act, so as to be free to deal direct with their employers. But the politicians who drafted the Act had not overlooked the possibility of refractory Unions, and had inserted a clause which provides that if not less than fifteen workpeople form a Union, they can go to the Arbitration Board and get an award binding on the whole of the workers in that industry in the district. The mineowners of Waihi decided to take advantage of this clause, and with the aid of some blacklegs and a few ex-Union men formed a new Union and applied for registration, although representing only a small fraction of those employed at the mines. Thereupon the whole of the members of the original Union went on strike, and for many weeks the mines were practically idle. The Federation of Labour came to the men's assistance and money came in freely.

The mineowners tried hard to get labour for their mines, but blacklegs were scarce, and but a comparatively small number were at work. When it seemed as though the masters must be beaten and the Arbitration Act discredited, the Government came to the rescue. Although there had been no disturbance during these weeks, batches of police were drafted into the town to protect "law and order." These "guardians of the peace" tried hard to carry out their real mission to cause riots, but were unsuccessful. Then they arrested over sixty of the strikers, including the Union officials, all of whom were sent to prison because they refused to give bonds to "keep the peace"!

In spite of this, the men still kept firm and maintained the line of pickets. This so enraged the authorities that they determined on more brutal methods. Each day the blacklegs, among whom were some half-bred Maoris, were escorted to and from the mines by the police, who allowed them to hurl abusive language at the strikers and their families. On November 11 the blacklegs charged and ill-treated some of the wives and children of the strikers, and said that next day they would do worse, and advised the strikers to clear right out of the town. The police escort simply stood by and laughed.

The next day, November 12, the blacklegs kept their word. The mines were closed for the day, and, assisted by the police, the blacklegs terrorised the town. They started by an attack on the Union's headquarters. One of the strikers, Frederick Evans, fired a revolver and hit a policeman. He was at once knocked down and so brutally treated that in a few minutes he was dead. The police and blacklegs then took charge of the hall, where later on the principal magistrate, the mayor of the town, congratulated them on their work and said he hoped they had seen the last of the Federation of Labour in Waihi. Thus encouraged, they went on to attack the strikers in their homes. Men, women, and children were beaten, given forty-eight hours to clear out of the town, and their homes smashed up before their eyes. Eighteen hundred people were driven out of the town during that week, and one account describes the place as "a deserted village; hundreds of houses stand empty, many others hold the furniture of the exiled miners; the town reeks of the scab, the hooligan, the policeman, and the business man."

The attitude of the Government is just what might have been expected. In reply to a deputation of refugees, the Premier said "they were quite safe in going back to Waihi if they themselves were willing to obey the law"! While the Minister of Justice (?) remarked that to talk of a reign of terror was ridiculous. "The reign of terror in Waihi came to an end when the Federationists took their departure."

The Press, as usual, rose to the occasion. Misrepresentation and villification of the Federation of Labour was the keynote. Every possible (and impossible) lie was printed. They said the riot was started by the strikers, and the poor blacklegs were the victims; although how it happened that the assailants had their homes smashed up, and the victims were unhurt, they forgot to explain. But the dirtiest action of the Press was the printing of extracts from letters stolen from the Union's headquarters. These are the gentlemen who at their congresses hold forth on the noble mission of the Press!

The *Maoriland Worker* issued a special edition containing the facts of "Waihi's Black Week," and in the issue of November 29, in a stirring appeal to the workers of New Zealand, the editor says:—"For all the devilry committed during that infamous week the Government and its Police Commissioner are chiefly to blame. This is said deliberately. It is a charge. It can be proved."

From the *Worker* of December 6, just to hand, we learn that the Federation of Labour has declared the strike "off." The resolution passed by the strikers says: "After participating in the greatest industrial struggle in New Zealand's history, which ranks as one of the most strenuous, orderly, and clear-cut fights for Industrial Unionism in Australasia, we feel compelled, owing to the forces arrayed against us—consisting of the Government, with all its Union-smashing forces, the law court, and all its degrading partisanship; in fact, every conceivable force of capitalism—to arrive at this decision."

We hope our readers will remember these facts whenever New Zealand is held up as an instance of the benefits Arbitration confers on the workers.

THE WAR IN THE BALKANS.

It has been arranged that I should state why my sympathies in the present European crisis are unconditionally with Turkey and Austria. Theoretically, we cannot sympathise with any existing State, large or small; but in a case of murderous assault, which is what war is, sympathies are with the party attacked and not with the aggressor. It is different in the case of bona-fide revolts, the courageous initiative of maybe hopeless minorities; but States do not attack another State except when they think it can safely be done. I will do my best not to identify peoples and Governments, though history shows that a warlike policy, if successful, is never disavowed by a people, who always expect to profit by it. France was never so happy as she has been since Millerand resuscitated noisy and aggressive patriotism. In the present case I refuse to follow those who make a nice distinction between the dear people of Tolstoy—and occasionally of pogroms—and official Russia, whilst Turkey is to them "the Turk," who is nothing but hopeless, unspeakable, everything that is bad.

The present struggle is, in my opinion, not a struggle between little Montenegro and big Turkey, little Serbia and big Austria, but between the isolated Turkish and Austro-German interests, strictly on the defence, and unfettered Pan Slavist greed, egged on and supported by the bitter and absolute enmity of France and England against everything that is German. We saw how public opinion was "educated" by politicians and the Press, until the South African War became "inevitable"; the same game is going on about Germany—these are the first-fruits of this campaign.

Turkey in past centuries was a danger to Europe, of which none is better aware than Austria, invaded as late as 1683, as far as Vienna, by a Turkish army "of 400,000 men, officered in part by French captains and engineers, lent for the service by Louis XIV., who was anxious to see the Imperial [Austro-German] power humbled in the dust" ("The Story of the Nations," Vol. XIV., p. 226, 1908 ed.). To-day the Slavonic countries, backed up by Russia, make a similar step forward, to crush Turkey and to humble Austria, with every shirt on the backs of their armies paid for by loans from Republican France, which, like the Imperial France of the Napoleons and the absolute monarchy of Richelieu and Louis XIV., has but one aim—to crush the German power.

The advance of Turkey was definitely stopped by Austria two hundred years ago (Treaties of 1699 and 1718). Russian advance dates from about this time; the classic example is the ruin and destruction of Poland. But why did Prussia and Austria take part in the division of Poland? Simply because otherwise Russia would have taken the whole of Poland (just as England to-day is taking half of Persia, lest Russia should seize the whole of it). By holding the port of Danzig, the Baltic would have been made a Russian sea, and German development strangled. Russia, then, was incessantly striving to gain ground against Turkey (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), fostering discontent and fomenting insurrections among the Christian Balkan Slavs. It is exactly this which provoked the sometimes harsh treatment of these nations by the Turks and always prevented real reforms; for the Turks were fully justified in seeing the hand of Russia in all this; and when they struck the Bulgarian peasant, they meant to strike the Russian behind him, who pulled the strings.

The situation in Turkey before everything was embittered by Russian intrigues is thus described in the "Historians' History of the World" (London, *Times*, Vol. XXIV., 1907, p. 362): "The difference between the lot of the rayahs [Christian peasants] under their Turkish masters and that of the serfs of Christendom under their fellow Christians and fellow countrymen, who were their lords, was practically shown by the anxiety which the inhabitants of the countries near the Turkish frontier showed to escape from their homes, and to live under that Turkish yoke which is frequently represented as having always been so tyrannical."

Of course, until late in the last century all the Powers, England before all, saw what Russia's real aims were, and that Turkey's power was an invaluable check on Russian advance in the Near East. As the Balkan Slavs threw in their lot with Russia, they had to bear the consequences, and may still have to do so. When Greece, in Byron's time, rose to a sincere struggle for independence, all Europe took her cause up and forced the leading statesmen to save the Greeks from being crushed. But in all that was done by the Turkish Slavs Russia's hand was too visible to inspire confidence or sympathy in any but Pan Slavists or Garibaldian enthusiasts. Russia's desire—oh, so unselfish!—to become the protector of the Christians in Turkey was met by France and England with the Crimean War.

After the Franco-German War of 1870-71, Russia wished to pay herself for the neutrality she had kept by a raid on Turkey. To obtain Austria's neutrality in face of this Slav expansion on the Balkan—politics are the game of taking or giving mainly what belongs to other people—Russia, at Reichstadt (July, 1876), secretly pledged herself to let Bosnia and Herzegovina (where an accidental insurrection in July, 1875, had been kept alive to keep the "Eastern question" going) become Austria's part and never Serbia's—a transaction fully brought to light in 1908 during the annexation crisis, when Russia would fain have forgotten all about it.

At that very moment Gladstone played into the hands of Russia.

by taking up the "Bulgarian atrocities" of May, 1876. He did so, not, of course, to turn Disraeli out of office; still, whatever his real motives were, his action paved the way for Russia's project to "liberate" as much of Turkey as she could get hold of. The effects of Gladstone's oratory are felt in England to this hour, and are helping Russia's game in 1912 as they did in 1876. It is difficult to believe in the sincerity of the indignation of politicians who take no notice of nine "horrors," but trepitate with indignation over the tenth, which has something in it to attract their patronage. If all nations which committed horrors in times past were to be the subject of a permanent vendetta, everyone's hand would be against everyone else. The slaughter of the people of Paris after the Commune, the endless sufferings of the Russian revolutionists, and the horrible crushing of the Polish insurrection of 1863 left Gladstone silent. When Russia "liberated" the Turkomans by wholesale massacre, when the Amur was filled with Chinese corpses, when Persian Liberals are hanged, no wide-sounding atrocity cry is raised. But just mention "the Turk," and all the horror-mongers are up in arms. The indelible effects of early religious teaching, the hatred of the "enemies of Christianity," are at the bottom of this, however free-thinking some Turkophobes may fancy themselves to be; eternal hatred and the craving for revenge are such thoroughly Christian virtues!

After the Turkish War (1877-78) Russia's greed as shown in the Treaty of San Stefano (March 3, 1878) was so intolerable that united Europe, England and Germany in the front, tore that treaty to pieces at the Berlin Congress (June, 1878). Europe knew at that time what "liberation" by Russia meant; the peoples of the Caucasus and of Central Asia, Mongolians and Persians, Poles and Finns, know it still better. Russia is constantly "liberating" all round, her own people even by hanging, deporting, or starving them!

Austria occupied Bosnia by order of the Berlin Congress, after hard fighting against the Turks (1878). This step was, by the way, bitterly opposed by the German-speaking Austrians, and cost them their political supremacy, the Emperor from that day turning to the Slavs, and Austria has since been the paradise of the Slavs, who unceasingly wage Nationalist warfare on the Germans, whose patience is wellnigh exhausted. Bosnia remained undisturbed from that time, the only Balkan territory of which this can be said. When, in 1908, the Young Turks re-established the Constitution of 1876, Austria proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia, whilst handing back to Turkey the district of Novibazar (absorbed to-day by Serbia and Montenegro). This question was peacefully settled with Turkey, and Bosnia got a local Parliament. This really had to be done, because, after the assassination of King Alexandra and Queen Draga of Serbia, Peter, an abject tool of Russia, got hold of the throne of Serbia, since when that country had shown persistent sullen hostility to Austria, and coveted Bosnia and other territories. If the Turks held Bosnia, Serbia would have taken it from them on an occasion like the present war, and the whole Balkans would then have been under Russian control, Austria losing what Russia herself had guaranteed to her in 1876.

Serbia had no claim whatever on Bosnia, yet, believing herself intangible with Russia at her back—Russia keeping dubious silence, and France and England, her present friends, encouraging this attitude—she left the question of peace or war in suspense to the very last moment. This caused enormous expense and terrible anxiety to the peaceful Austrian population—and in 1912 the same game was repeated at Austria's expense.

Bulgaria, after taking Eastern Roumelia from Turkey (1885), was attacked, not by the Turks, but by their brother Servians, who got beaten to an uncommon extent. Austria then saved Serbia by bidding the Bulgarian advance to stop. Bulgaria tried to get along without Russia; some may still remember the famous exodus of General Kaulbars. But from that moment sneaking violence ruled supreme; the kidnapping of Prince Alexander of Battenberg, the hacking to pieces of Stambulov, who had fearlessly opposed Russia's plots and bombs everywhere—all this tended to persuade Prince Ferdinand, who is no fool, that Russia urgently desired his friendship, and so Bulgaria took the loyally proffered hand, though the ambitious Ferdinand may think that the last word has not yet been said. The machinations of the Russian Minister at Bucharest, Hitsovo, were proverbial at the time; all this is abundantly proved by history.

By and by the Balkan intriguers thought it advisable to create a centre of fermentation in Macedonia; so the famous "bands" made their appearance, containing some enthusiasts, no doubt, but also good professional brigands, and political agents to pull the strings. These Bulgarian, Greek, and Servian bands, as many publications show, killed, firstly, Turks on sight, to keep up their "revolutionary" character; secondly, Christians of rival nationalities—the Bulgarians killing Greeks, the Greeks Bulgarians, both of them Servians, and *vice versa*, the few scattered Kutzo-Wallachs (Roumanians) being the common game of all three, while the Albanians, who hit back, were rather left alone; thirdly, they each levied blackmail (patriotic contributions, I ought to say) on the villagers of their own nationality, and killed these when they refused; fourthly, internal quarrels were settled by murder—Boris Sarnfov, the originator of the band system, died in this way. Thus, Macedonia was the murderer's happy playground; and when the Turks killed or hanged a few, an outcry would be raised by English Balkan Committees, and reforms would be urgently demanded from Turkey. If the fiftieth part of these Macedonian band outrages had happened in Ireland, she would have seen Cromwellian

days, and Home Rule would be buried for ages. But the *cruel* Turks, after their bloodless revolution in 1908, simply proclaimed a *complete amnesty*, and then enjoyed the spectacle of these heroic bands coming in in the form of the bandits and vagrants of the district, some of whom, the real agents, would soon slink away to the Governmental quarters of their respective nationalities, being secret service men. At this moment (1908) a stream of light fell on all these anti-Turkish machinations, but everything seems forgotten now.

Ever since 1908, when Russia's effort to get at Turkey by England's permission, as the price of joining England against Germany (Reval meeting of King Edward and Nicolas), had been frustrated by the Young Turks' revolution, Turkey has found spokes in all her wheels. The Abdul Hamid gang was encouraged to try a counter-revolution. The Albanians were cunningly estranged from the Turks; Nicolas of Montenegro, whom Alexander III. called "my only friend," had a hand in this—Russia, of course, did not, her friends will say! Italy, with her Montenegrin queen, committed the Tripolitan brigandage. When Turkey's best officers went to Africa, the remainder were set to fight each other last summer. The Macedonian brigands started in business again; the Kotchana explosion killed peaceful inhabitants, Turks and others. What wonder that the Turks retaliated at last and killed a number of Christians; they would not have been men if they had suffered these outrages to go on permanently unmolested. There is no country in the world, I make bold to say, where so much cold-blooded murder has been committed against a peaceful peasant population such as the Turks are, and all this amidst the applause and with the solidarity of "Christians" everywhere, except in the "reactionary" German countries, where the utter hypocrisy of all this and the detestable underlying motives are understood from an experience which the vicinity of Russia unfortunately gives to the natives of these countries. Anybody, however, who can put two and two together may see that the Turkish Government, instead of being a powerful despotism, must be infinitely weak and powerless, to let all this go on, to let these "liberating" bands thrive and provocation become a permanent institution.

At present, then, reaping the fruits of all this, when Turkey is exhausted by a year's war with Italy, with the Arabian and Albanian revolts, etc., and when anti-German hatred and a bellicose spirit have been rekindled in France and are aflame in England, Russia is trying to hit hard at Turkey and at Austria at the same time.

This is the origin of the Balkan conspiracy of 1912, which, besides many facts already made public, the state of complete preparation for war of the Allies and the unpreparedness of Turkey show to have been skilfully engineered. Even with all this they did *not* succeed completely. Turkey has fought better and inflicted more losses on them than they care to admit, though the truth is now filtering through. Of course, now that Turkey begins to have a chance to win yet, her very good friends at once try to persuade her not to fight any longer. Heads, I win; tails, you lose—this lofty morality always inspires the Christians in their dealings with "the ruffian Turk"!

At the beginning of this war an attempt was made to revive the stories of Turkish atrocities, but it was really felt they were all lies, and after the Allies' first victories no more was heard of them. Accounts of atrocities committed against Turks, on the contrary, begin to come in from everywhere—from Montenegro, where strangely few *wounded* Turks were brought in, to Albania, where the Servians are said to have slaughtered the Albanian Mahometans wholesale, and to Salonika, where the first act of the Greek "liberators" was a little pogrom.

I will not mention the present state of the Macedonian population after so many years' sway of the bands; but the condition of the Bulgarian population when Turkish rule ceased, in 1877, is thus described in "The Cambridge Modern History," Vol. XII., 1910, p. 383:—"Economically, the condition of the Bulgarians during the later years of Ottoman rule contrasted favourably with that of some independent Christian races.....In fact, the Russian officers who visited Bulgaria during the war of 1877 found that the 'little brothers,' whom they had come to free, were better off under the Turkish yoke than many of their own *mujiks* under the benevolent despotism of the Tsar. In the words of an impartial eye-witness, to exchange places with the Bulgarian *rayah* 'would have been no bad bargain for the Russian peasants.'"

Bulgaria and Serbia are now free to advance to the Aegean Sea, though neither Greece nor, I believe, England, nor even Russia, quite likes it (Russia especially, because she is jealous of any *real* independence which her tools might acquire). Serbia, however, was egged on to insist upon an Adriatic port and the connecting Albanian territory. This would really mean that Russian influence, which can now cut off Austrian commerce with the Orient by land, could also in the near future "bottle up" Austria by sea in the Adriatic, a situation which Austria cannot stand, and over which she must go to war, if necessary. If Russia, before she became England's dear friend, had, for example, insisted by hook or by crook on getting hold of a Scandinavian port, opposite England or Scotland, England would not have tolerated this either. Over this question, as in 1908 over Bosnia, Serbia was insultingly sullen and protracted a definite explanation with Austria, boasting of Russian support, which, if "officially" denied, is, of course, unofficially given, as everybody sees. Thus, as in 1908, and more so now, Austria is faced with the eventuality of war with Serbia and

Russia, which causes ruinous expenses, the stoppage of business, anxiety, and irritation of the whole population.

This intolerable situation could have been put an end to by *one word* from Russia to Serbia, or, if Serbia will not listen, to Europe. Again, *one word* from France or from England that financial support would be withdrawn from Russia if she made war over this, would bring Russia to her senses. No, *no one* speaks that word; and the Austrian population, for which I for one feel sorry, must pass all these weeks in this terrible anxiety. This attitude of these three great Powers, to me, is simply fiendish. They stand by and gloat over Austria's difficulties, which a single word, be it peace or war, would solve. They may not like to go to war, but they delight in inflicting economic ruin by their studied silence, which costs them little or nothing. All this because of Russia's racial hatred of Germans, because of France's lost glory, Germany having had the audacity to be victorious in the war of 1870-71; and because of England's deadly hatred of Germany for her temerity in having a prospering industry and commerce, and a navy of her own. Racial fanaticism, the spirit of domination and reckless commercialism combined—these three wage war against all who will not cringe before them, and some will *not*.

Needless to say that the Peace Societies all over the world have already found safe shelter in mouseholes, and are no more heard of. Socialist oratory is going off in harmless fireworks. The French C.G.T. succeeded also on this occasion in remaining in splendid isolation. And in old FREEDOM these things have to be said, as a belief in Russia's good faith is still alive in some excellent comrades!

December 12, 1912.

M. NETTLAU.

P.S.—The present crisis *may* end without a European war arising from it, but what is there to prevent the situation of 1908 and of 1912 occurring again? Serbia will again do something to provoke Austria, feeling quite immune now against retaliation. Austria will not let herself be strangled economically by a third war crisis, but will then have to fight Russia once and for all. How happy and peaceful Europe might live if France and England, supposed liberal and advanced countries, did not with all their might back up Russian despotism. By this they impose militarism and constant economic depression on the Central European German countries which mean no harm to them, and they prevent any real development of the Slavonic countries which remain under the heel of Tsarism, paid by France and countenanced by England. As long as the French and British working classes permit their Governments to uphold Tsarism in this way, they remain themselves worse oppressors of the Slavonic peoples than the Turks ever were. They would put an end to this and to many other things, if only they knew!

December 23.

[We print this article of one of our oldest comrades as stating one view of the Balkan struggle. But we must add that it does not express the opinions of all. Some of us are in hearty sympathy with the struggle of the small nationalities to free themselves from the rule of a powerful Empire.—Ed.]

To London Comrades.

It is now over six months since the International Modern Sunday School was started, and the number of children (about 100), together with the progress made, justify the School's existence. More might have been done, that we are quite willing to admit, but many difficulties had to be surmounted; some were starting troubles, no doubt, and others were due to the strange indifference of our friends to whom we had looked for help, as also owing to pecuniary troubles. It seems the comrades will not realise the fact that had they taken up this movement twenty years ago they might have had now an army of propagandists for our idea. It is due to their negligence that even their own children are now either directly antagonistic or only indifferent to the movement. We have sought in vain for a regular and adequate teacher or "friend" these last two months, and now have arrived at a crisis owing to the leaving of one who had undertaken it for the time being. To those interested the position will be clear; we must have at least one more teacher, or the School cannot be continued. If there is one for whom the children's problem is important enough, and who is willing to spend a little time in preparing the lessons, let him or her communicate *at once* with Nellie Ploschansky, 146 Stepney Green, E., or visit the School, between 3 and 5 p.m., at the New King's Hall, Commercial Road, E.

Comrades! we appeal to you to take a deeper interest in this most important movement, and help us to overcome these aforesaid difficulties.

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

United States.

The following extract is taken from a letter written by a friend in New York:—

"I suppose you read in the English newspapers about our recent election in the United States. On the whole, I think the result was moderately satisfactory. President Taft, who has been one of the most willing tools America has ever had in Capital's hands, was overwhelmingly defeated for re-election. That was one good thing. Theodore Roosevelt, who poses as an advanced Liberal, but is really a potential dictator, was also defeated. For defeat he was no doubt prepared, but his defeat was worse than he expected. That also was a good thing. The Socialist vote was nearly twice what it was at the preceding election. As you know, I am not a Socialist. However, while I am convinced that the remedy the Socialists offer for existing evils would probably make matters worse if anything, I *do* give them credit for recognising that a remedy is needed, and for realising also that everything hitherto tried has failed. So I was pleased to see the Socialist vote increased. Finally, Wilson was elected. Now, you might say that there is no cause for congratulation in this, inasmuch as the office to which he was elected will, in its nature, be subjected to capitalistic control, regardless of the personality and character of the man who fills it. It is, however, for the very reason that I am sure Wilson will prove another disappointment that I think his election was a good thing.

"The people of this country very generally appreciate that the long administration by the so-called Republican party has been extremely bad. But instead of drawing the conclusion that it was bad because the system is bad, they are under the impression simply that control of the party had fallen into bad hands. So they believe they can improve matters by turning over the administration to a different party. I am absolutely certain that within a few months they will discover that the change has done them no good. Unless I am badly mistaken, this discovery will shake their confidence in all parties. Then will be the time to make a few helpful suggestions. Of course, we have had these changes in administration before, and you might wonder why the discovery was not made long ago. I am pretty sure that the explanation for this is to be found in the fact that until very recently there has been an enormous reserve in the United States of ownerless land. With this land open to anyone who cared to cultivate it, economic conditions could not press severely on the people. This land is gone now. I don't mean to say that it has all been occupied. Most of it has been seized by the ruling class. But it is no longer open to settlement. Whoever wants to use it must do so on the capitalists' terms.

"One excellent thing is that Americans were not born already oppressed by capitalism, as most Europeans were. I can understand that it must be difficult for the average European to realise that he is oppressed for the reason that he has never known any other condition, and cannot comprehend that there is any other. In America existing conditions are less than a generation old. I myself am comparatively young, yet I can remember when anyone who wanted a farm had only to take possession of one not already occupied and it became his. So when Americans are robbed by the capitalists, they know they are being robbed, and have no disposition to submit peacefully. It is true that they do not know exactly whom or how to fight. In this respect they need education; but whereas the average European positively *objects* to being educated, the average American is anxious to be. I am very hopeful that a great deal will be accomplished in America in the next few years."

France.

On Monday, December 16, the General Strike as a protest against war took place. There was a magnificent demonstration against war. In Paris and the district of the Seine there were over 110,000 strikers, whilst in the provinces there was also a splendid response. In the Ardennes there were 30,000 men out, who were mostly metal workers. On the eastern frontier there were 50,000 strikers all told. Throughout the whole of France it was estimated, from news received by *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, that some 600,000 men were on strike in order to demonstrate their hatred against war. In Paris the police invaded the offices of the committees to impair, if possible, the work of the committees. At Lyons the mayor and préfet of police attempted to prevent the demonstration taking place, but more than 50,000 workers paraded the streets. On the evening of the 16th there were thirty-five arrests, and the magistrate distributed sentences amongst these strikers varying from five months to two years of imprisonment. All in all, it was a grand movement, full of promise for the future. The General Strike against War is the precursor of the General Strike for Expropriation. We can safely venture to say that the European Governments fear more the action of the workers when they follow the line of action of the French Syndicalists than they do of a dozen Social Democratic Congresses at Basle.—*Syndicalist*.

ANARCHY.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal.—*Century Dictionary*.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS.

The Ferrer Sunday School meets at the Communist Club, 107 Charlotte Street, W., at 3.30 prompt.

SOCIAL EDUCATION SOCIETY, 9 Manette Street (first floor), Charing Cross Road, W.

Lectures to be given on Wednesdays (8.30 sharp) in January.
22nd—"Evolution (Mutual Aid)," Lantern Lecture, J. Cook.
29th—"Agriculture, Intensive and Extensive," Lantern Lecture, J. Tochatti.
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