

Freedom

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NOTES.

Freedom and Morality.

We really are making progress! Mr. Cecil Chapman, the Tower Bridge magistrate, will be "making history" if he continues in his present course. The very same remarks he made about children—"criminal" children, as the "good" people call them—learning to work out a system of life on their own responsibility in the "Little Commonwealth," have been exceeded, in the matter of philosophic insight, by his observations on the question of divorce. We should be the last to wish to put a police magistrate on a pedestal, but when he has the wisdom and the courage to publicly declare that "the greater the freedom, the greater the chance of morality in a nation," we can only describe it as *unique* propaganda in the right direction. People who would laugh at this if stated as a fundamental principle of Anarchism, will treat it seriously coming from the lips of a stipendiary. Of course, the logical deductions from this—the greater the freedom, the higher the morality; the greater the tyranny, the greater the vice and corruption—will not be worked out. But it seems important to clear up one point. In the various senses in which the word "morality" is used, there is often great confusion. Those who are moral (?) through fear and coercion, are guilty of one of the worst crimes against our human nature—moral cowardice. But those who act *freely* from honest convictions, even though against conventional codes, are to that extent truly moral.

A Capitalist Dictionary.

The gentleman who undertook to drive a coach and four through any Act of Parliament must have been quite aware of the delightful ambiguity of legal terminology, but it is doubtful if he would be so confident about interpreting the English language as used by the governing classes. As things are going at the present moment, a special dictionary compiled in the interest of capitalists and landlords is an urgent necessity. The language used by our masters in the Ulster campaign is a case in point, and leaves us all in a state of bewilderment. Sedition, insurrection, discipline, duty, obedience, and many other words have now such contradictory meanings, according as they are used by workers or by masters, that it is quite hopeless to come to any conclusion about "rights" or wrongs by the mere process of reasoning. Next to the word Anarchism, Syndicalism seems to be suffering the worst outrages. But the Shipping Federation will soon be needing a special lexicographer, according to their latest ukase. They have decided, on account of lowness of freight charges, to recommend the "holding up" of a number of boats so that cost of freightage may be increased. Now when, in an important industry, the worker, to have more bread, withholds his labour, it is called "a menace to society." So, according to the capitalist dictionary, the worker deserves to be shot, while the directors of the Shipping Federation will probably later on be knighted. How nice! Not only can they use force just as seems to them best, but even our mother-tongue was invented simply to protect their interests.

Women and Strikes.

We wish we could be sure that the interest taken by some prominent Suffragettes in the strike of Messrs. C. & E. Morton's girls at Millwall would induce these ladies to turn their attention to the economic struggle, in which women are becoming more and more involved as time goes on. For instance, out of the spontaneous strike of these plucky girls has come a victory, which does what Parliament has not yet done in a century. It stops the employment of mere children at children's wages on

work which is now done by adults. Would voting some fool into Parliament have done as much for them? Not in a generation. Yet a generation devoted to direct economic action by women as well as by men would mean such a revolution in our social system that the bases of a gloriously free society—bringing well-being, health, and moral and intellectual regeneration equally to men and women—could be laid. We are the first to admire the courage and devotion of those women who sacrificed so much—even life itself—to what they regard as the great cause of women's suffrage. But we say again and again, that no voting will ever bring what women need. The contemptible results of political action are ever before our eyes. That equality, which for man as well as for woman will mean self-realisation and free development, can only come with the Social Revolution. Why will they not work for that?

South Africa.

Smuts and Botha must be learning a well-needed lesson by this time, if they understand the portent of the recent elections. The great mass of the population must feel very much as did the vast gathering in Hyde Park on Sunday, March 1. It is one of the most hopeful signs for future developments that international feelings of solidarity are so steadily growing. Every possible effort should be made to encourage them, for we never know when some great crisis in a people's destiny may need a vast international agitation to save them from the worst evils of reaction. The barbarous methods of Botha and his set, culminating in the deportations, have been too much for the people of South Africa, though few would have anticipated that so strong a feeling of hatred of these infamies had taken root. And like the great demonstration here, all has been the outcome of popular indignation, since little enough was done that can be credited to the "leaders." The people are awakening—that is the lesson of it all. And in spite of Blatchford's attack on Tom Mann for daring to sail without the consent of the "party," we are convinced he has arrived at the right moment to do good work for oppressed labour in the Transvaal.

Revolution and Recognition.

Emboldened by the success of John Ward's speech on the resignations in the Army, that heroic leader of railwaymen, Mr. J. H. Thomas, M.P., took heart of grace and actually suggested that as in September next 400,000 railway workers would be in revolt against the Conciliation Boards, they might consider the advisability of arming themselves to enforce their demands. In the present state of the political atmosphere, he felt on very safe ground in rushing into the limelight with a threat that at other times he would have denounced as Syndicalism. But the remarkable thing is that hardly has the echo of his speech died away than on the Sunday following he announces that he has received a letter from the railway companies stating that a committee has been appointed to meet the men's committee to discuss the situation, which amounts, of course, to recognition of the men's Union. Now the obvious inference is that the fighting speech of this "leader" has really brought the companies to their senses; a thing which he perhaps hardly anticipated. Mr. Thomas's heroics will not last; he will soon be the respectable official again. But we hope the railwaymen will make a very good note of it.

Whatever fosters militarism makes for barbarism, and whatever fosters peace makes for civilisation. There are two fundamentally opposed principles on which social life may be organised—compulsory co-operation and voluntary co-operation: the one implying coercive institutions and the other free institutions. Just in proportion as militant activity is great does the coercive regime (which army organisation exemplifies in full) pervade more and more the whole society.—HERBERT SPENCER.

The Modern State.

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

V.

THE MONOPOLIES.

Let us continue to consider how the Modern State—that which established itself after the sixteenth century in Europe on the ruins of the mediaeval cities, and later on grew up in the young American Republics—how this State has worked, and works still, to enslave the individual.

Having been compelled to make up, more or less, with the *personal* freedom of those strata of society that had freed themselves from the feudal yoke in the free cities, the Modern State began to work, as we saw it, to retain the feudal servitude, as long as possible, in the villages, and at the same time to reimpose the old servitude in a new shape. It worked to bring all its subjects under the double yoke of its own functionaries—its bureaucracy—and of new classes of privileged people: the State Church, the landlords, and some specially favoured merchants, capitalists, and moneylenders.

In a preceding chapter we saw how the State utilised for this purpose one of its arms—Taxation. Now we must see how it used another of its arms—the creation of privileges and monopolies to the advantage of some of its subjects, against all others. Here we shall see the State accomplishing its proper, its true function.

It began to use this arm at its very beginning—as soon as the authority of a king began to be established upon the ruins of the mediaeval free Republics. This was how the State was constituted—how it enrolled in its service the landlord, the soldier, the clergyman, and the judge, and brought these four robbers to recognise its sovereignty.

To this mission the State remains true till to-day. Because, if it failed in it—if it ceased for a moment to represent a Mutual Insurance Company between the privileged lord, the soldier, the priest, and the judge—that would be the death of the institution, of the historical growth which is known as “The State.”

* *

It is striking, indeed, to see to what an extent the creation of monopolies in favour of those who already possessed privileges by birth or by belonging to the theocratic, military, or judicial caste constituted the very essence of the organisation which began to develop itself in the sixteenth century.

We can take any nation we like: France, England, or the German, the Italian, or the Slavonic States—everywhere we find in them the same character. So let us take England, where the growth of monopolies has been studied best, to see how the creation of monopolies and the growth of the powers of the State went hand in hand.*

Already, before the reign of Elizabeth, when the State was only at its very beginning, the Tudor kings were granting all sorts of monopolies to their favourites. But under Elizabeth, when maritime commerce began to develop, and quite a number of new industries were introduced in England, this tendency became still more marked. Every new industry was made a monopoly, either in favour of foreigners who paid the Queen, or in favour of courtiers whom it was desired to reward for their services (against the nation).

The right of exploiting the alum deposits in Yorkshire, salt, tin mines, the coal mines about Newcastle, the glass industry, the improved manufacture of soap, of pins, and so on—all these were turned into monopolies, which enriched all sorts of individuals, and at the same time killed the small industries and stood in the way of the development of several large ones. Thus, in order to protect from competition those courtiers to whom the monopoly of soap-making was granted, private persons were forbidden to make soap for their own household laundry.

Under James I., the “concessions” and the creation of new monopolies went on increasing in number up to the year 1624, when at last, at the approach of the Revolution, a law was passed against the monopolies. But this law was a double-faced one: it condemned the monopolies, but at the same time it retained the old ones, and granted important new ones. And then it was violated as soon as it was passed. Advantage was taken of one of the paragraphs of the law, which protected the old urban corporations; and under this pretext a monopoly was established in some city, to be extended later on to a whole region. From 1630 to 1650, the Government also took advantage of the so-called “patent letters” for granting new monopolies.

The Revolution of 1648-1688 was required to put a check on that orgy of monopolies. In 1689, when a new Parliament began

to work (representing an alliance between the commercial and industrial middle class and the landed aristocracy, against the absolute power of the King and the rule of the courtiers), some measures were taken against the creation of new monopolies by the King. The economist historians even say that almost for a hundred years the British Parliament opposed the creation of such industrial monopolies as would favour some manufacturers to the detriment of others.

It must be recognised that such was, indeed, the consequence of the Revolution and the coming to power of the middle class. In this way, several great industries, such as cotton, wool, iron, coal-mining, and so on, were allowed to grow without being hampered by monopolists. They could even develop so as to become *national* industries, in which a mass of small employers took part; and this permitted, in its turn, thousands of working men to make in the small factories and workshops those numberless improvements without which the industries never would have reached the high level they reached then in this country.

* *

However, the State bureaucracy continued to grow and to gain force. Centralisation, which is the very essence of every State, was making its way; and very soon the creation of new monopolies began in a new way—this time on a much larger scale than it was under the Tudor kings. Then, the art of monopolising was in its infancy. Now, the State was reaching its maturity.

If Parliament was prevented to some extent by the representatives of the local middle class from interfering in England itself with the newly growing industries, its leaders had other ways to fortune: they had a free hand for monopolising in the Colonies, and here they could act on a grand scale.

The East India Company and the Hudson Bay Company in Canada became rich kingdoms assigned to private individuals. Later on, concessions of whole territories in America, of gold-fields in Australia, of privileged lines of navigation, and so on, together with special grants establishing monopolies in various branches of industry, became the means by which the State granted fabulous incomes to its favourites. Immense fortunes were made in this way, and the old ones rapidly increased ten and hundred-fold.

Besides, composed as it was of middle-class representatives in the House of Commons and landed aristocracy in the House of Lords, the British Parliament had other ways to exploit the nation than to favour a few factory owners at the expense of the others. It had all the rural population to re-enslave. So it did it. Throughout the eighteenth century it worked with the set purpose of handing over the agricultural population of this country, fettered like serfs, to the landed aristocracy. By means of the Enclosure Acts, Parliament robbed the peasants. It recognised as the private property of the landlord the lands that belonged to the village communities, and made a gift of them to him, as soon as the would-be landlord had made some sort of enclosure round them. Historically, he had not the slightest shadow of right to these lands: *they belonged to the village community*. All that he might have claimed was the right of pasture on an equal footing with all the commoners, whenever that right was granted him by the community. He was the *magistrate* of the locality and the *head of the militia*—but *not the owner of the land*. And yet Parliament, by an act of sheer robbery, gave him the communal lands; and in this way between 1709 and 1869 more than 7,500,000 acres of communal lands were simply taken from their legal owners and given to the titled robbers.* The net result of this legislation is, that nowadays *one-third* of all the cultivatable area of England belongs to 525 families.

* *

The Enclosure Acts were sheer acts of robbery. But in the eighteenth century the State, rejuvenated by the Parliamentary Revolution of 1688, felt itself strong enough to face discontent and to crush down the peasant revolts. Had it not for that the support of the middle classes?

For Parliament, while it thus threw its boons to the landlords, did not forget the bourgeois masters of industrial concerns. While it expelled from the villages the agricultural population, it peopled the towns with famishing “hands,” ready to be bought by the factory owners at famine wages. Besides, in virtue of the interpretation put by Parliament on the Poor Law, the agents of the cotton factories visited the workhouses, where whole families of poor people were imprisoned, and took away cartloads of children, who, under the name of “workhouse apprentices,” were compelled to work fourteen and sixteen hours a day in cotton factories. There are whole towns in Lancashire whose population bears till now the stamp of such an origin.

* We have, for England, the work of Hermann Levy, “Monopoly and Competition” (London, 1911). It is especially useful for the study of monopolies, as the author pays no attention to the State, and studies only the economic causes of monopolies; he thus has no preconceived idea against the State. See also G. Unwin’s “Industrial Organisation” (Oxford, 1904), H. Price’s “English Patents of Monopolies” (Boston, 1896), W. Cunningham’s “The Growth of English Industry,” and especially the works of Hermann Levy and Macrosty.

* Concerning these acts of robbery and the evils they caused, one will find full information, with maps, in an elaborate recent work by Dr. Gilbert Slater, “The English Peasantry and the Inclosure of Common Fields” (London, 1907); also Thorold Rogers’s “Six Centuries of Work and Wages.” About the land question generally, and the way the nation was robbed by her legislators, see the work of Alfred Russel Wallace, “Land Nationalisation; its Necessity and its Aims”; and many others.

The impoverished blood of the hungry children, brought from the workhouses of the South of England, and compelled by the whips of the foremen to work in the factory from the age of seven—is seen till now in the anaemic, physically undeveloped population of many a small town of Lancashire and Yorkshire. *Those horrors lasted till the awakening of Labour in 1830-48.*

Besides, in order to favour the national industries in Great Britain, the British Parliament crushed down the industries that began to grow in the Colonies and in Ireland. Thus was killed the beautiful weaving industry which had attained such perfection in India. The rich market offered by her immense population was thus opened to the inferior British goods. In the same way the linen industry was killed in Ireland—in favour of the Lancashire cottons.

We thus see that if the middle-class Parliament, anxious to enrich the British middle classes by the development of national industries, opposed the creation of monopolies in favour of a few individuals as against all others, it found a way of enriching its favourites at the expense of the rural population and the Colonies, which were simply handed over to the rapacity of adventurers. At the same time, it did not fail to retain the mining monopolies that had been established in the preceding century. It thus maintained the monopoly of the Newcastle mineowners, which lasted till 1844, and that of the copper mines till 1820.

And in the meantime new branches of monopolies, far more profitable than the old ones, began to be created by the same legislators.

(To be continued.)

A General View of Anarchism.

By G. BARRETT.

IV.—(Continued.)

Anarchism is often brushed aside by the politicians with the remark that it is a beautiful dream, but quite impossible. It is for this reason that I have taken here a purely practical view of it; and now, in order that we may be quite sure of meeting no insurmountable difficulties in running our new society, we must first examine it a little more in detail.

It may be said that, in taking bread-making as an example, I have chosen a subject about which there is little room for a difference of opinion. Every one agrees on the necessity for bread, and practically every one as to its method of manufacture. When you get to complex things about which people differ widely, how, then, will you do without law or some form of control from above?

It may well be argued that man cannot live by bread alone, and unless our new form of society has room within it for the highest culture as well as the barest necessities, it is condemned. For these reasons I must be forgiven if the details given in the example here taken are followed far enough to be a little tedious.

It is doubly worth while to answer this difficulty, because, if the explanation is followed, the reader will see that it explains also how he can begin to apply his Anarchist principles—for I am sure by this time he is an Anarchist—to the workers' organisations.

Most of these, alas! while they claim to exist for the purpose of fighting Capitalism and authority, are themselves bossed and controlled exactly as a capitalist institution is. It is clear that the next step towards the revolution will be the reconstruction of these organisations, so that they will be as free from the control of "leaders" and executives as will be the free society they are out to build. This step is already being taken.

To return to my argument: as a contrast to bread-making, we will take art. About this subject few people think alike, and most people don't think at all. If, then, our principles of free agreement are capable of supplying some art institute that will satisfy every one, we need not fear but that it will hold out all right in simpler cases.

Let us take the thing as it exists to-day, and root out from it the influence of government. Art galleries are now generally run by the corporations of large cities. The money is raised by rates; that is to say, every one is compelled to pay to buy and house pictures. While a great number absolutely care nothing for them, some may even object to them as being immoral. At the very outside, then, the institution is unrepresentative, and in its small way absolutely tyrannical.

In a free society the art institution, just as the bakeries, would grow into being in direct response to the desire for it. Those in a community who were interested in art would naturally meet together and discuss their plans. It would be their pleasure, and they would not compel any one to help them who was not in sympathy with their ideas. In this way the size of the institution would exactly represent the amount of interest taken in it—it would represent the artistic element of the community.

Among artists, however, there are many different opinions as

to what really is art. If our institution is to be one great affair, with majority rule inside, it is clear that there will be only one class of pictures on the walls, probably painted by popular Academicians, while the progressive section will not be represented in any way. If, on the other hand, we cut out altogether this idea of government, and allow liberty to obtain inside, just as it was liberty which brought our institution into being, we find that it will become representative in detail just as it was in bulk. When these artists meet together, those who are in the majority will not wish to dictate to the minority, but they will simply see that in the design of the building their needs are catered for. The minority, before it agrees to co-operate, will also see that room is made for its ideas.

If these two parties cannot agree to differ in this way, they would split apart entirely and have two separate buildings; but as this would pay neither of them, it is not likely to happen. It is clear also that with such a free method of organisation, not merely two opinions would be represented, but there would be as many different sorts of pictures as there were different ideas in art, except in those cases where two or more sections united in a compromise because they were not strong enough or sufficiently different from their neighbours to stand alone.

Here then, again, we have a truly *representative* institution. Just as we have seen above society growing into existence as the result of the individual need for bread, and just as we have found it impossible to suppose that starvation could exist when this need was used as the direct and only driving power behind the bakers and the bakery, so now, when we come to deal with man's higher needs, we find that these can be supplied simply and perfectly by rooting out the last relic of the old-fashioned ideas of authority, and substituting for master and man the equal liberty of all.

* *

Is it not now evident that this Anarchist Revolution is *the* revolution towards which the Labour movement has been working so long? It was in spite of the most savage laws that the workers first formed their protective Unions against the brutal exploitation of the capitalists. To-day it is the same struggle, for it is still the representatives of the Government who are bludgeoning the workers down into the mines and back to their factories, to work on the terms that the masters dictate.

On the one side are the disciplined, uniformed ranks of the Government obeying the word of command—they create nothing, their highest virtue is obedience, which means the sacrifice of judgment, the one quality that would make them higher than the beasts. On the other side are the irregular, motley ranks of the workers. In their hearts is rebellion, and their minds are filled with great ideals—ill-formed and imperfect, a dim consciousness of a mighty power to create something infinitely great and beautiful, for it is they who have moulded the wealth of the world into shape.

Who can doubt what is the meaning of this great struggle? Is it to end in a few extra crusts of bread for the workers' army? Is it merely to ensure that they shall be allowed to work rather than starve? Will peace be declared when a new party of politicians sit in Parliament?

It is far greater than all of these; it is the age-long struggle between the past and the future; it is the great war between liberty and slavery. On the one side are the decaying relics of the dead past, and on the other is the ever-growing strength of young ideals. Ignorance and submission against understanding and self-reliance.

There is but one way to understand this great rising of the common people. It is but a feeble mind that sees it merely as an attempt to reform the controlling power. The struggle will continue until each side, by the logic of their actual position in it, will be forced to realise its full significance; and then nothing can stop the final battle, the overthrow of government and the establishment of liberty.

This is the task of the revolution. It means the destruction of the governing class, which holds the keys of the world's wealth; and it will throw open the treasure-houses of the world to those who have built them and stored them with riches. The policeman's bludgeon, by which authority supersedes justice; the fantastic uniforms of our kings and soldiers, hopeless substitute for manhood and courage; the wigs of our learned judges and men of the law, vain semblance of wisdom—all these and much more shall be pitched into huge bonfires that will glow as the rising sun through the streets of our cities, and at which the poor shall warm their half-starved bodies and hungry souls. The masquerade will have a sudden end, and the whole paraphernalia of destruction, which to-day keeps the world in check, will itself be destroyed by the rising forces of construction—the revolt of the workers. The social system dominated by brute force will give place to the new free society, born of and kept in existence by the free co-operation of those who form it.

And is that the end of all things?

No, that is the foundation of our future greatness, for Anarchy is the necessary condition for human progress.

[THE END.]

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Government in the Melting-Pot.

Events move rapidly in these days of "speeding-up." All nations, and all forms of government, from the autocrat of All the Russias to the President of the United States Republic, feel the pressure of developments arising from swiftly spreading ideas and new conceptions of social life in all its relationships—to property, to art, to morality. The world-wide unrest, though fundamentally economic, is not by any means solely confined to the struggle for bread. It is not only the sweated and the unemployed who have a grievance, but movements arise to espouse the cause of motherhood, to initiate new methods in education, to assert woman's claim to a share in citizenship, and in a score of different ways to demand an enlargement of individual and social life.

And each time that a serious effort is made to arouse popular interest in the ideals that animate the more advanced sections of the community, the propagandists are constantly finding the obstruction of outworn institutions and fossilised conventions barring the way. The developments taking place to-day in England have shaken many of her most cherished traditions. Her feudal aristocracy are coming rapidly to death-grips with the democracy. And the struggle which is even now beginning before our eyes is having the inevitable result of throwing the most time-honoured institutions into the melting-pot.

At the present moment, government itself is, in a sense, at the bar of popular judgment. For although Botha in South Africa gave the world to understand very clearly that, in the ultimate, all forms of government rest on bullets and bayonets, the real lesson, that *government ceases to exist without an army*, has never before been brought home so clearly to the Englishman's mind as it has been to-day. Force, and force alone, is the last word of the Government and the law when its authority is really endangered. If the case of Ulster was one to be considered seriously, instead of as it is, a mere excuse of the reactionaries to resist the encroachment of democracy on their aristocratic privileges, it would form matter for very interesting discussion on the rights of minorities.

The real issue, as it happens, turns now on the use of the Army; and if those who read will learn, it will be perfectly clear that government rests on that organisation of coercive force, and that whoever controls that power in the final result controls our lives. Now, instead, of party passion and class prejudice, let us bring a little reason to bear on this question: To shoot or not to shoot? Take the case just referred to—Botha's action in the Transvaal. His use of the armed forces against the strikers was supported by the hired liars of the law, who again were in the pay of the mine-owning millionaires. Would Mr. Asquith and his Cabinet regard that as a right use of an army against the rights of a people? Does he not see that as things are ordered to-day there is no such thing as "rights" strictly speaking; that, as we said before, all rests on force? This Anarchist argument constantly meets with the answer that force is necessary to preserve "order." Certainly, if by "order" is meant all the abominable injustices that are legalised to-day. But it is interested perversion of the truth to say that the people, if freed from their chains, would live—well, like Governments live to-day! When, before his flight, James II. burned all the writs convoking Parliament, and the revolution produced one of the worst

panics in London, what happened? It lasted but a few days, and then, as Green tell us, "*the orderly instinct of the people soon reasserted itself.*" We italicise these words that do but simple justice to the people.

It would seem that our "disorders" really arise from the crimes of those who *will* rule—that is, of those who think they are sent here to coerce men to obey laws which they in their wisdom have ordained are needful for us. But here, again, we find the whole matter of the justice of the law being called in question. No one is satisfied, not even Ministers themselves. In reference to the blasphemy laws, Mr. Asquith said: "No one can defend the existing state of the law on this subject." But *some* do defend it, and use it to imprison others for opinion's sake. Again, we read that Mr. Churchill described the speech of Mr. F. E. Smith as an example that "merely shows how easy it is for a distinguished lawyer to procure the conviction of an innocent man."

These two expressions of opinion, given by two of the most important persons acting in the interests of Parliamentary rule, give us the key to the whole situation. We know from them that laws which "no one can defend" are by virtue of the use of executive power employed in the interests of bigotry against enlightenment; and as a corollary of the law's injustice, we are told point-blank that it is easy for "a distinguished lawyer to procure the conviction of an innocent man"! And if we rise in protest against these legal infamies, are we to be imprisoned, or even shot down, by the forces of law and order?

These are the questions that are being asked with as much pertinence as the question of the soldiers' "right" to shoot strikers. It is the whole fabric of an unjust, exploiting, capitalistic society that is tottering. Its laws, its morals, its very *raison d'être* are in the melting-pot of popular criticism; and the use of the Army, as all are beginning now to see, is not to maintain "order," but to maintain class rule and support capitalist robbery.

THE MEXICAN REBELLION.

We are pleased to welcome from prison the four Mexican comrades imprisoned by the United States Government—viz., the two Magóns, Librado Rivera, and Anselmo Figueroa, who have lost no time in taking up their work where they left off. They have always held that the land question is the real question at issue in Mexico, and the "peace terms" published by General Villa show that he recognises it as well. Among the conditions, stated as "indispensable," are: "Guarantee of a change in the land laws, so that deeds to land would be more generally distributed," and "Ratification of the confiscation by the rebels of the Terrazas, Creel, and other estates." With regard to the question of intervention, the following letter recently received states the position better than we could put it:—

"We are glad to see that you are doing your best to get a wide circulation of 'Land and Liberty,' for, in our judgment, that is what is needed, so as to prepare the proletariat for the coming events: I mean foreign armed intervention in Mexico. For, in my opinion, intervention is unavoidable. I do not mean American intervention, but a combined intervention of all the Powers.

"The Mexican Revolution is a very heavy task for the United States to deal with single-handed. Besides, European 'Big Interests' would not see with loving eyes the United States getting hold of all the richness of Mexico for herself, and much less when Europe has larger interests in Mexico than the United States. Moreover, English capitalists covet the same rich oil fields of Tampico, Mexico, that American capitalists in their turn want to get hold of; and as the Mexican "bandits" will take possession of that field, both capitalists will finally make common cause.

"But let us suppose that there were no foreign interests in Mexico. From the very moment that there is a strong social and economic revolution that endangers the capitalistic institutions, the capitalist class has to turn loose its dogs of war into Mexico as a natural law of self-preservation. And for that time to come, it is needed most imperatively that the working class all over the world know what we are fighting for, and that our fight is their own fight, the very same fight that they themselves will have to fight in the near future if they do not want to be crowded off the earth.

"That is why, my dear Comrade, we are so glad to learn that you are taking pains to see that the pamphlet 'Land and Liberty' reaches as many people as possible.

"Hoping to hear from you some time, I remain, yours for Anarchy,
E. FLORES MAGÓN."

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SIDELIGHTS ON SOCIAL SUBJECTS.

The much-vexed Ulster question has during the past few weeks shown us in vivid light the demoralised body which is supposed to govern us for our good. That the whole system of government is in process of decay is more than apparent by the recent events. Blunder has followed blunder, despite Asquith's heroic efforts to save the position. The chief point for Anarchists to consider is, of course, that a great blow has been struck at authority and discipline by the action of the Army officers. Asquith in his speech plainly sees the widespread effect of the Army "strike," and it now only rests with the worker to comprehend the means by which society is held together. Let him ponder Asquith's speech on the crisis made in the House on March 23: "This dispensing power to appraise in different degrees of value the different injunctions of the law—to regard one and to disregard another—if that is to become part of our Constitution, then the whole fabric by which society has hitherto been bound together will crumble." The great thing to be dreaded, in his estimation, is the awakening intelligence of the masses—of the development of their thinking capacity. He rightly recognises that if the recent strike is condoned, then at no very distant date it may be necessary to deal with a strike of the privates called out against strikers in the industrial army, men who will by their action "leave the civil power in impotence." The whole thought is unnerving to this great statesman, who trembles for the future of the Empire—and of Capital. Such a calamity must be averted at all costs. Law and order must continue to chloroform, in the interest of society itself.

Ludwig Büchner, in his "Last Words on Materialism," puts Asquith's case in a nutshell when he says: "According to the experience of all hypnotisers, young people of the working, military, and serving classes, who are accustomed to mechanical obedience, are the most suitable subjects for hypnotic suggestion. Whereas older and better educated people, who combine spiritual self-control with personal independence, are refractory." Asquith knows quite well that government can only exist by means of the hypnotism of authority. An educated Army would insist on questioning orders from headquarters, and in that moment would be transformed from a machine of destruction into a mass of conscious human units, when the slaughter of brother workers would become an impossibility. Then, indeed, the revolution would be an accomplished fact; the hypnotising Government could no longer hold society together in the interests of the exploiters, and discipline and authority would receive their death-blow. Let us prepare to point the moral of the Army strike.

The Annual Report on the British Army for the year ended September, 1913, just issued, shows a vast falling off in recruits. Although 28,091 recruits enlisted in the Regular Army, 28,766 left the colours on transfer to Reserve, as invalids, or as an indulgence. No wonder the War Office is scared and makes desperate efforts to retrieve the position by lurid and lying advertisements. The percentage of under-standard enlistments was 5.93 as compared with 1.12 in 1909-10. What a commentary upon the physical deterioration of the workers and the disfavour in which the Army is held by the physically fit! The poor results achieved are naively enough attributed to "the continued activity in trade and emigration." The wise men in the War Office, therefore, recognise that the Army is the last resort of the bottom dog of society, of the human target who purchases life at 1s. per day, and whose identity is discarded the moment the uniform is donned—henceforth the wearer to be numbered and disciplined, becoming in time a perfect automaton for destructive purposes, whose sole function shall be to obey the word of command.

Professor Kroeber, of the Californian University, has made a discovery. He declares that Eugenics is the greatest snare of modern thought. He says: "Ninety-nine per cent. of what is commonly attributed to heredity has nothing to do with it and is merely environment. . . . Even Galton himself, the founder of Eugenics, was deluded through overlooking civilisation's influence on man. It is easier to talk of breeding improved human beings than to begin improving one's self and training one's children. The future of the human race can be enhanced only through character-building and courageous adherence to ideals by nations." But the Eugenists refuse to accept this dictum, for they are certainly not prepared to concede the enormous part played by environment in determining human characteristics. It is disconcerting to have these theories discredited, but in our eyes Eugenics must stand condemned so long as it remains merely a fad of the idle rich, or, worse still, a so-called science conveniently useful to capitalists in their endeavours to square the circle of industrial muddle they themselves have created in their lust for profits.

The Anarchist case against law grows more and more justifiable. Asquith, in his reply to the deputation on the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, admitted that "no one could defend the existing state of the law. . . . The interpretation of the judges had varied from time to time, and of late years a more restricted view had been taken by them." "The laws," he said, "are partial. . . . They are uncertain. They have been differently interpreted from generation to generation; and I am afraid that there is a certain amount of truth in what has

been said to-day, that they are rarely enforced, except against ill-educated and humble persons. That adds a sense of special injustice to a grievance which is already a considerable one. I do not know of any object which they serve."

Yet, despite this confession, he turned a deaf ear to the request for Government assistance. The truth is, that one in Asquith's position cannot attack these laws without calling into question the usefulness or otherwise of all Parliamentary enactments. This wise lawyer is too conscious of the necessity for the maintenance of law in order to secure the good behaviour of the masses, to want to disturb it in any of its ramifications. But he assured the deputants of his sympathy and goodwill! We will hope they were comforted accordingly. The whole question of blasphemy is farcical. As Mr. Silas Hocking put it: "There was as much blasphemy inside the churches as outside. What was blasphemy for one, might be a sort of beatitude for another." For ourselves, let us not only continue to "blaspheme," but also seek to destroy all those forces that aim at the destruction of human freedom.

McKenna, the genial optimist, is troubled; McKenna is a much harrassed man. A dilemma has presented itself which baffles even his ingenuity. A problem confronts him that can only be solved in one way—yet he hesitates. So he is open to receive suggestions on possible legislation dealing with the outrages against property perpetrated by Suffragettes. The only suggestion yet made—that the offenders should be deported—apparently does not commend itself to him; he has evidently never heard of South Africa, and he is anxious to know where to deport these disturbers of his happiness. Where, indeed! Suggestions? Why certainly. Let us bombard him with them, suggestions that if applied shall settle not only the Suffrage question once and for all, but shall restore something like order out of this social chaos. But we doubt if McKenna is courageous enough to sign his own official death warrant by accepting them and putting them into practice.

M. B. HOPE.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

The new Miners' Federation (Federation of the Underground Workers), which comprises coal, iron, and slate miners, and is affiliated to the Confederation of Labour, declared a strike a week before the date—March 1—fixed by the Congress at Lens. The strike had been decided upon at the Congress as a last measure to be used against the Government if the old-age pension and insurance Bill for miners should be passed in its present form by the Senate. A few days after this happened, the order to strike was given, and the movement rapidly spread in all mining districts. Only in the North, where the old Miners' Federation, dominated by the Social Democratic politician Basly, is strong, the strike was not general. But this demonstration of solidarity has shown that the new Federation is capable of developing great energy and activity in case of necessity; and the strikers, relying on this, resumed work when the Minister of Labour promised that their claims—chief of which is that the Bill shall apply to all mine-workers, not only the coal miners—will receive full attention when the Bill is finally dealt with. Under the pressure of the strike, it was amusing to see how the usual slow machine of legislation became quite energetic: the Bill, instead of waiting for months, perhaps years, after going through the Senate, was promptly reintroduced into Parliament. It remains now to be seen how far the Ministerial promise will be carried out, and if Article 11 of the Bill, to which the miners object, will be altered according to their wish. If the present Ministry should fall—an eventuality not at all unlikely in view of the unsavoury political disclosures of some of its chief supporters—we wonder if the next Labour Minister will feel himself bound by his predecessor's promise, and if the miners will not again be forced to use the strike to obtain a hearing for their demands.

The difficulties of the economic struggle of the French mine-workers are increased not only by the existence of the Northern Miners' Federation, which under the influence of their political leader makes united action and solidarity nearly impossible, but by the continuous influx of foreign labour, which remains outside any local workers' organisation. In the Pas-de-Calais mining district alone there are over 47,000 foreign miners, mostly from Eastern Europe, including Greeks, Turks, Russians, Poles, Roumanians, Austrians, Belgians, and even Kabyles from North Africa. This motley population arrives usually with the fixed idea of saving money and returning in a year or two with a small capital. The economic and political aspirations of the local French workers, who by their Unions have obtained a certain standard of wages, and who are steadily pushing on to a greater social well-being, are unintelligible to the new arrivals; and if they understand a little, they know that they are birds of passage, and do not think it is worth while to risk anything. They usually live in groups together on a level of comfort, or, rather, absence of comfort, which a French miner would scorn. They often send for a priest of their country, and live in the same atmosphere of superstition, ignorance, and misery as at home. As they are usually not very good miners, they receive lower wages; and naturally the French workers do not look very kindly upon this passing population. But especially with the new three years' military service, most of the young French workers are taken away from production in the prime of life, and their places have to be filled up; besides, the foreign labourers are cheaper—and

what does a capitalist, however patriotic, care more for than dividends?

It is a difficult problem for our French comrades, and they will have to do the only thing possible—try to reach the foreign workers by propaganda in their own language, as the I.W.W. in America is doing with success; and further, to take concerted action with the Labour organisations as far as they exist in the countries whence these labourers are recruited, to impress their members with the ideal of international Labour solidarity.

Argentina.

Probably this year a Congress of Labour organisations will be held in Buenos Aires, to which the Unions of the Argentine, Brazil, Chili, and Peru have promised to send delegates. The idea is a good one, as in each of those countries Labour fights a desperately hard battle; and they may find strength in common action when necessary, and financial and moral help in all cases.

We all know that the workers' organisations of Latin countries, among which the South American Republics must be counted, have revolutionary tendencies, and are often very near to Anarchism. Therefore, the Government is very alert in crushing down all strikes and Labour unrest.

The *Protesta* of Buenos Aires gives a list of misdeeds by the Government, which shows that every step towards progress by the workers is met by brute force.

1901.—Police shoot defenceless strikers at Rosario and Buenos Aires.

1902.—Parliament approves the "Residential Laws," which empower the police to expel from the Argentine any person who openly professes or manifests "subversive" ideas, helps or instigates strikes, etc.

1904.—On two occasions the police shoot the people from behind, killing six and wounding many.

1905.—Similar events.

1907.—In four cases the police repeat their exploits of 1904 and 1905.

1909.—A reign of terror; thousands expelled, imprisoned, etc.

1910.—Burning of our headquarters, labour press, etc.; nightly police searches in the homes of "social heretics"; in a word, Inquisition in full swing. The Press muzzled; the adoption of the new "laws of social order," which give yet greater power into the hands of the police.

Since then the Government has come down again on our comrades, and the *Protesta* asks help to get those men out of prison.

All through the struggle with the Government—the willing tool in the hands of the capitalists—hordes of immigrants, lured by the promises of agents that work will be found for them by the Government, are shipped from Europe and Asia to the Argentine. Their condition is pitiable in the extreme, but the shipping companies do not care as long as they receive their fares. The *Vanguardia* of Buenos Aires states that the problem of unemployment is growing more and more acute, and unless the Government stops, at least temporarily, the influx of immigrants, the conditions must get dangerous.

Cuba.

At present, there are two papers advocating our ideas appearing regularly. In Havana, the Anarchist weekly, *Tierra*, and the revolutionary Syndicalist, *El Dependiente*. Where it is possible, schools on Ferrer's model are founded by our comrades; and that is the most promising feature of the movement. A propaganda tour by Vasquez and Estevez has helped considerably towards the spreading of Anarchist and Syndicalist ideas.

Bulgaria.

A new paper, *Rabotnicheska Misl* ("Labour Thoughts"), has appeared in Sofia. Though it is not so large as the Anarchist paper which existed before the war, we admire the energy which has made the publication of this periodical possible. Perhaps now the cost of war is brought home to the people, they may be ready to listen to the voice of reason and brotherhood without distinction of religion.

The Easter Conference.

Those who intend being present at the Conference at Newcastle on Easter Sunday and Monday will no doubt be making their arrangements now, and it will be necessary that they should have some particulars as to refreshments, lodgings, etc. As was stated in the invitation circular, there will be catering accommodation by the B.S.P. We feel that this is an advantage owing to the fact that the cafés do not open on Sundays in Newcastle. It will greatly assist us if comrades would let us know their requirements, so that we could form some idea, and let the B.S.P. people know. With regard to hotel accommodation, we do not think that there will be much difficulty in that direction, although the prices are not so favourable as they were at Liverpool, 4s. 6d. and 5s. being about the usual price for bed and breakfast. If comrades would let us know what they will require, we shall be glad to assist them in the way of fixing up quarters.

We are having the agenda printed, and a copy will be handed to each comrade on the first morning of the Conference. In this way, we will save the expense of postage. Further information can be obtained on application to me at 75 Hyde Park Street, Gateshead.

R. CLEGHORN.

A PRIMER OF ANARCHISM.

I am one of those who think that the rule of force should be put a stop to. Some say we throw bombs! I tell you this so that you may know the name we go by, for it is too long to print here, as all my words are to be short. We have read and thought of all that has gone on in past years, and have seen that all the strife and woe which have made this world a hell on earth for those who toil has been the fruit of the rule of brute force. We say that the best way for folks to live is at peace; but how can we live at peace if we let some man or set of men use force to such men as do not use force to them? That is why we are foes to the State.

The State, as it may be or has been in the form of a king, or the State as it may be in the form of a lot of men whom you vote for (though they may be of your own class), has but one sort of rule: that of brute force for all those who, like us, wish to live their lives in their own way. The State says: "No one shall use force but me!" and the use of force by the State is said to be "Law": the will of the State is Law! but the use of force by one of you is said to be "Crime." We can only tell an act of law from an act of crime when we know by whom such act was done. If the act is done in the name of the State, it is an act of law; but if an act just like it is done by one of you, it is a crime—if the State says so. When the State says: "No one shall use force but me," it does not tell us why, for there is no "why" but that, with the State, "might is right"; and as long as we hold the State in awe, we shall be slaves.

Now, the State spreads its wings on all who rob those who toil. It steals the land from those who live and work on it, and gives it to its friends to own. They who thus own the land do not want to work on it, but to take rent from those who work on it; and thus they get rich and do not work, while the State stands by with its force of arms to see that its friends are free to rob those who work. In the same way the State treats those who own the tools of trade. These men do not own the tools of trade so that they may use them, but so that they may make those who know how to make most of the good things of life give to them the best part of the fruits of their toil for the mere right to use the tools of trade. As long as these thieves own the tools, and other thieves own the land, all those who work will have to slave and starve. The greed of these thieves grows by what it feeds on, and they seek to take more and more from those who work.

Now and then the men who work go on strike to get more pay for their toil; but the State comes to the aid of those who own the tools, to lock up or shoot down the men who are on strike. But still, if the men who are on strike chance to win, and the men who own the tools say they will pay more to the men who work, it must not be thought that this is a gain for those who toil. Oh! no. There are tricks in trade, and they who own the tools know the tricks. These thieves may not, at first, like to pay more to the men who work; but then, if they raise the price of the goods which these men make, they get their own back when they sell them—I mean the goods, not the men who work, for they are "sold" all through the piece. So in the end the men who gain a rise in pay lose it in the price of what they buy. Add to this the fact that those men in trades that did not strike have to pay the rise in price as well, though they have not got a rise in pay, and you soon see what fun it is to go on strike.

Such is our view of the terms on which men have to work in this style of things, where the State stands with its rule of force to help those who own the land and the tools to grind down those who work. Now we who want to put an end to the rule of force say that the best way to stop the thieves who own the land and the tools is to put an end to the State, which, with its mass of arms and force, stands at the back of these thieves. If we take count, we shall find that we who work are more than they whom we work for. So, too, are we more than they who form the State. We make the tools with which those who own them rob us, and we make the arms with which the State kills us in strikes and wars. But so long as the State owns the arms, and can get men of our own class to shoot us down, it is no use for us to fight the State with brute force. What can we do? *We can starve the State!* How can we do it?

If we all meet, talk, think, and form plans from time to time, we shall, as soon as we are of one mind on the chief point—that is, to put an end to the State—at last know how to put up a force that will not be put down. We shall not need to stand up in a mass to face the shot and shell. That would be the act of fools. When the great mass of those who work get the thought well set in their minds that they will not toil for those who own the land and the tools, nor for the State that locks them up or shoots them down, it will be all up, or, if you like it, "Down with the State!"

Do you say that this will not be done? That men will not be of one mind to put an end to the State? Then you do not read the signs of the times as they stand forth from day to day. The thought of "Down with the State!" has sprung up in the minds of men who think and men who toil all through the world. And when the minds of the mass of men take in this thought in all its strength, a force will take shape that will throw down the State for all time.

Let us, then, do our share to spread the thought that is to make men free from those who own the land and tools, and from the State that helps the thieves.

In all its forms: Down with the State!

WILLIAM J. ROBINS.

Anarchism: Communist or Individualist?

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE—Because I see, in the existence of two opposing schools of Anarchism, one exclusively Communist and the other exclusively Individualistic, who “never speak as we pass by,” a division that distracts its disputants from their proper task of organising a public force for the overthrow of their common enemy, the State, I am no longer inclined to stand under the dual definitions of either Anarchist Communism or Individualist Anarchism. For, from out of the above two schools of thought I see the necessity and probability of the emergence of a third party, whose members, recruited both from Anarchist Communism and Individualist Anarchism, standing squarely upon the principle of individual, that is equal liberty, shall centralise their attacks upon the institution of government, leaving liberty to decide as to the best economic formula, or formulas, of future society. And, from the tenor of his timely article, I take it that our comrade “M. N.” is the first member of this third party, to whom I may say: “Your hand on it, comrade!” unless, better still, we can succeed in persuading the devotees of the former two schools to throw aside their economic bigotry and march forward unitedly towards Anarchy. For Anarchy is liberty, and it is not liberty to insist that the future society shall be patterned exclusively either upon the principles of the mutual bank and the private police force, or upon the theory of the common kitchen and the common potato-patch.

Perhaps the pamphlet from which “M. N.” translates his P.S. is by Felix Pyat, author of “The Ragpicker of Paris,” which was translated into English by Benj. R. Tucker, somewhere near the year 1890.—Yours fraternally,

W. J. R.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE—Is not our comrade “M. N.” rather beating the air in his article on Communist and Individualist conceptions of an Anarchist society? Every form of society requires an economic basis. By what arrangement of our economic life can we secure for all the greatest freedom and the fullest satisfaction of all life's needs? Undoubtedly in the Free Commune. How could it be otherwise? What is “M. N.” afraid of? He may wish to enjoy isolation. Well, in the Free Commune he can have all the privacy his heart can wish for. Every one must have that, or he would not be free. It does not need mutual banking to assure that; nor a hut in a forest. Besides, he might fall ill! What good would “equal exchange” be then? And what in the name of heaven is “equal exchange”? There never was such a thing—never. Mutual accommodation there has been often enough; a kind of “give and take” where values could not be measured or weighed. But economic values, after all, are only approximations; and if that's all you want, well, Communism gives you that better than anything, since it says “to each according to his needs,” and saves us from wasting half our lives in weighing and measuring and carping and quarrelling.

To my thinking, “M. N.” is quite wrong in antagonising Communism and Individualism, if by Individualism he means the full development of the individual, the freely-grown personality. I would say that our individualities will never have the energy, and, above all, the *stimulus*, to grow except in the Free Commune. But if “M. N.” means Individualism in the sense claimed by Individualist Anarchists, then, I say, to the devil with it. I have read for years the writings, the barren and fruitless discussions, both here and in America, of this so-called “school,” all ending in “confusion worse confounded.” Fortunately, they mostly retire into that bourgeois environment which best satisfies their egotism.

I can't pass over “M. N.'s” very great mistake about the resolution at the French Anarchist Communist Conference in Paris last year. The Anarchist Communists may surely claim to have their Conference *sans* the Individualists; and if “M. N.” would like to work with these Individualists, he will richly deserve all the liberty he can win for himself on their economic basis.

In conclusion, I say this: No man has ever lived, or ever could have lived, without being indebted at some time during his life to the spirit of Communism, which is always present in some form in human society.—Fraternally yours,

EGALITE.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR SIR—I have read with interest “M. N.'s” very tolerant and fair-minded article, but in my view he errs in making Anarchist Communism stand for co-operation in production, while Individualism is made to stand for “individually independent” production—“relative isolation.” There is no warrant for such a distinction. The advantages of co-operation and division of labour, of production on a large scale, are cordially recognised by all Individualists. Stephen Pearl Andrews, in his “Science of Society,” expressly points out that individualisation of interests (which is Individualism) has “none of the features of isolation,” and is “adverse alone to sinking the distinction or blending the lines of individual property, but in no manner to the closest association, the most intimate relations, and the most effective co-operation between the owners of the interests thus sharply defined.” With this rectification of one of his premises, “M. N.'s” main conclusion (namely, that neither the Communist's economic hypothesis nor the Individualist's ought to be rejected, that both are necessary) can no longer be considered valid. I am at one with him, however, in desiring to see Anarchism dissociated from any particular economic doctrine. There ought to be no need to qualify our Anarchism by such terms as “Individualism” and “Communism.” Differences in regard to methods there must and will be, but differences as to the sufficiency of Anarchism there should not be. Anarchism is simply the negation of government, the belief in liberty as the one necessary condition of social life. Whoever adds to this or takes away from it, whoever would attach a particular economic doctrine to it, whoever would make Anarchism negate more than government, is not an Anarchist; he is an authoritarian. Whoever negates the right to own property, or limits the right to accumulate property, acquired and accumulated without violation of this one condition, is not an Anarchist. Whoever fears or distrusts liberty is not an Anarchist.

It is because Communist teaching, influenced by authoritarian Socialism, from which it proceeded, has hitherto tended to doubt the complete adequacy of liberty and to deny the justice not alone of legally-privileged property, but of all private-possession property, including capital, that the chief

differences, the sectional exclusiveness, of the two schools of Anarchists have arisen. “M. N.” himself is not free from this tendency; witness his approving reference to “a genuine, free, unselfish Individualism, where freedom of action would no longer be misused to crush the weaker and to form monopolies, as to-day.” I should like to be informed how freedom of action, even with the most selfish Individualism, could result in the crushing of the weak and the formation of monopolies. Until I am enlightened on the point I shall remain an Anarchist, believing that freedom of action cannot be “misused.”

“M. N.” true to the spirit of Anarchism, desires the liberty to turn from any form of “Communist” production to any form of “Individualist” production. Such liberty implies the right to own, and necessitates a means of exchange, if the act of secession is not to entail loss and injustice. Says Kropotkin in “The Conquest of Bread”: “If all adults bind themselves to work five hours a day from the age of twenty or twenty-two to forty-five or fifty . . . such a society could in return guarantee well-being to all its members.” Suppose one works ten years for such a society and then wishes to withdraw, perhaps to join another society, perhaps for a spell of relative isolation, can it be done otherwise, in the absence of any means of appraisal or exchange, than by the forfeiture, partial or complete, of one's just share of the accumulated wealth of the society? That is one of the reasons why “Individualists” interest themselves, and “Communists” also should interest themselves, in the question of equitable exchange, not as an economic doctrine to be attached to Anarchism, but as a labour-saving, friction-avoiding contrivance necessary in order to attain for us the maximum of individual liberty combined with economic justice. Only with this right of secession without injustice assured, and with a complementary agreement on the property question, can there be hope for unity and common action between Individualists and Communists, and the need for these distinctive “labels” disappear—a consummation I as earnestly hope for as your contributor.—Yours fraternally,

C. W.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE—It would seem that “M. N.” has been living in a small world of narrow dogmatism or has been excited by some disputes amongst Continental Anarchists whose circumstances have favoured the growth of sectarianism in their midst. So far as this country is concerned, the imputation is untrue that Anarchist Communists have exhibited any tendency to excommunicate people who share with them in any degree the opinion that law and authority must be abolished in order that human freedom and happiness may be assured. There never has been shown any desire to “vanquish” or “overthrow” Individualist Anarchists. On the contrary, there has been a desire to work with them in a cordial spirit, feeling that liberty is the road to unity as well as order.

To speak frankly, it would be better to address those people who, calling themselves Individualists, have persistently and sometimes offensively ruled other Anarchists out of the movement and termed them “Communists” only. While Anarchist Communists have consistently centred their efforts upon the abolition of law and government, as the first real step to a general and permanent state of social and economic freedom, the “Individualists” have insisted, in a style and spirit worthy of Calvin himself, that one must accept their economic nostrums. To try to draw them into seeming theoretical agreement with Anarchist Communists in the name of unity, is exactly the way to promote the very dissension “M. N.” deplors.

So far as the objection of the ordinary Individualist to Anarchist Communism is concerned, he generally fears that in a Communist state of society he would be restricted and coerced by the community. But the absence of the idea and habit of government should remove that danger to individual initiative and expression. Besides, there would be no organised force to exert compulsion upon the individual who chooses to live his life in his own way. Our friend “M. N.” need not shudder too much at the idea of the “syndicates” (outlandish word!) controlling industry. The industrial Syndicate or Federation may consist of both autonomous groups and independent individuals bringing the sum total of their efforts into social harmony on a bigger scale. Whatever may be the situation on the Continent, in England Anarchist Communists are as great sticklers for individual freedom as any Individualist can be. Liberty must be individual to be general. The principle of solidarity is that which binds us to our fellows, which makes happiness and progress possible, for without it tyranny and slavery must reign. Certainly, it does not imply uniformity. Its growth and expression have been greatest (as witness the events of the last few years) when ideas or opinions have become most diverse and conflicting. It is the antithesis of Capitalism and government, which make every man the enemy of his fellow. It is becoming more and more evident in the world's great social struggle that solidarity is the main road to freedom. It is so specially because the system of monopoly and wage-slavery crushes the few who would achieve freedom by themselves, their *spirit* being equal to the task, but their strength and resources too small to counter the power of the ruling class.

It is somewhat difficult and premature to discuss the every-day arrangements of a future state of society, but it is easy to see that in view of the enormous wealth-producing potentialities of that time, and the ease with which both people and commodities may be moved from place to place, and bearing in mind the further great conquests which science will achieve, that the misanthrope, the eccentric, the independent, and the pioneer may all pursue their own sweet will, while they respect the equal liberty of others, and may do so without seriously disturbing or injuring anybody other than themselves. He would be a strange Anarchist who would coerce them into conformity with the minds or habits of others.

That human society will ever come to a state of “rest” no one can seriously believe. The struggle needs to be raised to a higher plane than the present chaos of misery and ugliness. Humanity is revolting against the continuance of the present irrational system, which threatens not merely the health and happiness of the larger number, but the very existence of many millions of human beings. It may be that the propaganda of Anarchism has not yet met with the success it deserves, but there cannot be any doubt that its activity is not merely coincident with, but acts as a prime source of inspiration and incentive to, the world's great social revolt. The intellectual differences amongst Anarchists are of little account. If they are so strong as to prevent them working in concord with each other, then they should refrain from attempting to force themselves upon each other and avoid spiteful recrimination, thus making “formal resolutions” quite unnecessary and inexcusable.—Yours sincerely,

G.

An Urgent Appeal for the Weekly Paper.

Comrades, the success of the weekly is assured if all comrades who realise how much "the times" demand such a paper will give the London group, who have it in hand, their earnest and immediate support.

The opportunity has presented itself of securing a printing press; this obtained and established in FREEDOM office means that both the weekly and the monthly can be printed "at home," also bills, pamphlets, posters, etc.

But £50 is needed by May 1. Failing this, we cannot have the machine, the acquisition of which would considerably assist in making the paper a success, besides assuring greater efficiency consequent upon starting without a serious handicap. This £50 must be raised by May 1, and will be easily, if you and your group can send along a small subscription (say 6d. each per week during April, greater or smaller) no matter so long as it reaches Fred W. Dunn, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W., by May 1.

Comrades, don't let us miss this fine opportunity to arm the cause with so invaluable and powerful a weapon. Do your bit, do it now, and the London group will do theirs.

We are, yours fraternally,

BERT PLATTIN, Bristol.

FRED W. DUNN, London.

P.S.—The above appeal has been sent out to comrades near and far, and we hope all those who have not received a copy will do what they can, only it must be done quickly. So far we have received—R. J. A., £1.

PROPAGANDA NOTES.

HAZEL GROVE, STOCKPORT.—On Saturday, February 28, the rebels of this district formally opened their new meeting-place, the Communist Club, at 29 Station Street, Hazel Grove. It will remain a red-letter day in the history of all the real advocates of freedom and justice in Hazel Grove. At five o'clock many comrades from Cheadle, Stockport, Reddish, Oldham, and New Mills enjoyed an excellent meal prepared by comrades of both sexes. It was a treat to enter the rooms, which had been very artistically decorated, and looked bright and cheerful, and to see the smiling faces of so many of the rebel element, knowing at the same time that behind the smiles there was a feeling of joy that at last a meeting-place in which rebels can breathe, speak, and act is actually available in this district. With the co-operation of a comrade, the place has been secured for some years at least.

After tea, there was a sing-song, followed by a discussion. During the discussion it was quite evident that many of the comrades present realised the principles and ideals upon which the Workers' Freedom Groups are formed. The comrades from Oldham demonstrated that their group, which has been formed some months, is making itself known in the place. To many Trade Unionists and so-called Socialists, the idea of running a group without officials is absurd; but if they were to try it, as Oldham and many other places are doing, they would find that the absurdity only exists in their thoughts, for in experience it is quite easy and is the only practical method consistent with and leading to a condition of Free Society.

We trust that all comrades of true rebel spirit within reach of Hazel Grove will take advantage of the rooms, and help the comrades there to keep the flag of Freedom and Justice flying. They heartily invite scoffers and doubters to their discussions, knowing full well that the organisation for Anarchist Communism is the only practical workers' movement, and that it is the only form of society wherein class distinction and privilege cannot exist. The goal of the Workers' Freedom Groups is Anarchist Communism, and no one can be a true Socialist who stops short of that same goal.

The comrades intend keeping Hazel Grove well served with Anarchist literature, and hope for the co-operation of all lovers of "Justice for all."

J. J. G.

GLASGOW.—Things have been going well here recently. Our room has been filled every Sunday evening this month. The writer has spoken to a debating society in Bridgeton, and had an exceedingly good night, eight taking part in the discussion. On March 15 a debate took place at 74 Buchanan Street, between our comrade J. Farmer and R. Dick, I.L.P., on "Anarchism v. Social Democracy." Comrade Farmer, though having done little platform work, capably maintained the Anarchist position. It was very interesting. R. Dick was confounded by Farmer's position, and ended by confounding himself.

Literature sales are on the increase. A new meeting-place has been tried at the Botanic Gardens, where a good crowd listened to the principles of Anarchism for an hour and a half. Half-a-dozen comrades from here expect to be at the Newcastle Conference, where the writer hopes especially to meet East London comrades. If ever opportunity was afforded to make widespread our propaganda, it is now. Everywhere criticism of Parliamentarism, interest in the strike weapon and the economic struggle becoming the factor. Let us be vigorous, and a real move in the direction of Anarchism is possible.

W. PONDER.

FOREST GATE.—All Anarchists are specially invited to meet at Mr. Jones's, 19 Birchdale Road, Forest Gate, every other Friday, 8 to 10. Next meeting April 10.

West London Anarchist Communist Group.—Sunday, 11.30, Putney Bridge (Putney side); 8 p.m., The Grove, Hammersmith. Tuesday, 8.15, Walham Green Church, Fulham.

BIRMINGHAM.—Group meetings (Comrades only) will be held on April 19 and May 3. For time and place communicate with C. Martens, 355 Lower High Street, West Bromwich.

CHOPWELL (Co. Durham).—Friends or foes are invited to the Communist Club, Derwent Street, where a hearty welcome is given. Discussions and Study Circles every night.

BOSTON, Mass., U.S.A.—The "Freedom Group" holds meetings every third Wednesday evening of each month at 62 Chambers Street, W. End. Comrades interested in Anarchist propaganda are invited to come.—H. BLOCK, Secretary, 484A Columbus Avenue, Boston.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(March 5—April 1.)

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