Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

VOL. X.—No. 101. JANUARY, 1896. MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

THE MOVEMENT IN ENGLAND.

The year 1895 has been one of the dullest so far as Anarchist propaganda is concerned, notwithstanding that a good deal of quiet educational work has been accomplished.

However, we have not the slightest occasion to be discouraged when we remember that it has been a year in which the forces of reaction have used every means at their disposal to close up their ranks and stem the flowing tide of revolution.

But let the past take care of itself: we are concerned now with the future—with the year which lies before us.

The question naturally arises: What can be done in the New Year to help on the cause we all have at heart? To relax our efforts in the least degree, merely because stirring events are not happening to attract public attention to our ideas, would be a most fatal mistake.

We must never be deceived by an apparent calm in days like these, when events happen so suddenly and develope so rapidly. Our work is just as urgent under all circumstances, and the energy and enthusiasm of comrades in the propaganda will bear just as good fruit now as it has ever borne before.

What is deserving of our serious consideration at the present moment above all other things is the question: How can we ensure that in the year that is before us our energies shall be applied to produce the best possible results?

First and foremost it will occur to all of us to remark how much we are in need of lecturers, not only for our London meetings, but of lecturers also who could as occasion arose go into the provinces with their help.

Our comrades of the *Torch* group have already taken steps that may help to meet this want by starting a discussion class on Wednesday evenings, which we trust will have good results; also we are glad to announce the issue of a list of lectures which will be delivered by well-known London comrades if application be made to W. Banham, 52 Sedgmoor Place, Camberwell, S.E.

These signs of activity promise well for the New Year, but we feel that to make our efforts more effective still and to bring the London groups in closer touch with comrades in the provinces (a matter which was sadly neglected in 1895) it would be an immense advantage if an earnest London propagandist group could be formed which would not only organise indoor and outdoor lectures for London, but would also collect funds for the purpose of sending periodically a lecturer into the provinces. This latter point seems to us a matter of the greatest importance; for, if by any means we can help and encourage Anarchist activity in the provinces, we shall find the London movement benefited thereby, as it always has been. For our part, we do not hesitate to say that the movement in England has been handicapped to no inconsiderable extent by the want of a practical means of "mutual aid" between London and the provinces. We are not for a moment asserting that nothing has been done in this direction, but we must all certainly feel that much more might have been accomplished, with immense advantage to the movement.

Now, we are convinced that we have the nucleus of a London propagandist group already at work, and in a very few weeks it would be possibe to have it organised for the definite purpose we have suggested. We know it will be be said that to send lecturers to the provinces means expense. Well, let us open a propaganda fund without delay, to which we can send our shillings or our pence as circumstances permit.

If this part of the propaganda could be efficiently carried through, we feel sure there would be a good harvest for the Anarchist movement in 1896. As we have said before we say again: the fact of times being "dull" should be no hindrance to the spreading of our ideas; our field is as wide as ever it was. Reaction or no reaction, our work has still to be done; and, perhaps, even more in times like these than in periods of excitement will sound educational propaganda have its effect. We have to appeal from the English nation drunk and vitiated by the orgies of capitalism to the English nation sober with a deepening sense of the need for change in the basis of its social life.

Perhaps one of the truest things that can be said of the English people is that many of them are Anarchists without knowing it, and in educating this unconscious Anarchism into an intelligent and purposeful force to aid in the reorganisation of society lies our best hope for the future. The new year will find plenty of this work for our hands if we have but the will to do it.

The brag and bluster indulged in by the governments concerns us not, we have to show that the workers' battle has to be fought at home and to this battle we must give all our energies.

1895.

We intend to begin in the next issue a monthly survey of the international Anarchist movement, preceded by a review of the chief events of 1895; as an introduction we will this time consider the chief general events of 1895 to see on what ground and against which foremost enemies and obstacles our comrades and ourselves have to work in the different countries.

Leaving, thus, the immediate Anarchist agitation aside for the moment, we put the usual question at the close of a year: was it a year of progress or of reaction? For, though our ideas of progress do not coincide with the title "progressive" given to many reactionary things sometimes, we can consider each event from the standpoint of whether it shows an increase or a diminution of the power of *authority* in the widest sense, not only of physical force in the hands of governments and property-owners, but of the *belief in authority* which is an immensely greater obstacle to progress than the mere physical force in the hands of our enemies. In this sense the progress of State Socialism in the working-class movement would be a fact as reactionary as direct oppression on Russian or Turkish lines.

We must also discern between new adherents, if there are any, won for authority and between manifestations of the existing latent state of things for which one year may offer greater opportunities, another less. Thus, when we ask whether the year 1895 showed more symptoms of lessening or strengthening of authority, of revival or decay of freedom, we should give it as our personal impression that—whilst authority and its upholders are being daily more exposed by failures of all kinds, showing their corruption, rcttenness and incompetency, and whilst we doubt that the passing events can have won over one single sincere person to the belief in the necessity of authority, but, on the contrary, many lost their belief in it and are more or less on their way towards Anarchism—plenty of occasions were given to the big crowd of authoritarians to show how numerous they still are and this had the usual suggestive influence on the mass of indifferents who in other years are moved to temporary sympathy with freedom by daring acts of revolt, of which this year was exceedingly poor.

In fact, when we except a number of cases in which discharged workmen killed or wounded their employers and were themselves, in the three most notable cases at Aniche (France), Mulhouse (Alsace), and Pryibram (Bohemia), killed by their own bomb, suicide or the executioner, we remember but very few and insignificant acts of individual revolt. Also, strikes get more and more under the influence of the arbitration movement; the State is looked to to interfere and they become matters of political intrigue, like the French glass bottle makers' strike at Carmaux, exploited by the French politicians; or else, the brutalities of the police and gendarmes are borne without resistance, as in the brickmakers' strike at Vienna last spring, etc. Sicily, Spain, etc., are silent; collective revolt is seen nowhere.

For, under the latter head, we cannot comprise the political revolts in Cuba and Armenia, which, directed against a miserable system of oppression and plunder, have as yet shown no other aims than the formation of independent or semi-independent States on the old lines. In free Cuba the rich plantations will be held by the same exploiters of black and white labor, as *e.g.* in "free" Hayti under a Toulouque or a Hippolyte; and the Armenians, separated from Turkey, will share the fate of the Bulgarians, being a sham State under the predominant influence of Russia, which Bulgaria, after a period of efforts to shake it off, is rapidly re-establishing now.

Still, to the cause of progress in general, these two revolts can do no harm; for, if successful, they will at least do away for a time with the national questions there and open the eyes of the people to the real causes of their permanent misery,—in the same way, Home Rule would not solve the problem of Irish misery, but would enable the Irish to find out its real causes.

Capitalism is hard at work to conquer the last remaining parts of the globe for "civilisation," by methods increasingly infamous. By the continuous extension of the commercial system its own roots are sapped; for, when every country is brought to produce in the most perfected way all that it wants—and towards this we are driving,—when the local sources of wealth are opened everywhere, the basis of exportation and commerce is destroyed, population is decentralised and localised, and the economic basis for *Anarchy* is laid.

But, before this, capitalism, greedy for extension, may yet celebrate many orgies of crime and bloodshed. The extension of English domination in South Africa, the German domination over other parts of that unhappy continent (upheld by the flogging of women, etc.), the French onslaught on Madagascar, the Italian war against Abyssinia—the last stronghold of African independence,—all this makes Africa the scene of murder and theft under all forms and pretexts.——*(To be Concluded.)*

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

Monthly, One Penny; post free, 1½d.; U.S.A., 3 Cents; France, 15 Centimes.

Annual Subscription, post free, 1s. 6d.; U.S.A., 36 Cents; France, 1fr. 80c. Foreign subscriptions should be sent by International Money Order, payable to C. M. Wilson.

Wholesale Price, 1s. 4d. per quire of 27, carriage free to all parts.

All communications, exchanges, &c., for "Freedom" to be addressed to THE EDITOR, 7, LAMBS CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, W. C.

Notice to Subscribers.—If there is a blue mark against this notice your subscription is due, and must be sent before next month if you wish to go on receiving the paper.

Back Numbers.—Vol. I., October 1886 to September 1887 (No. 2 sold out), price 2s. Vol. II., October 1887 to September 1888 (Nos. 16, 17, 18, 19 sold out), price 1s. 6d. Vol. III., October 1888 to December 1889, price 1s. 6d. Vol. IV., January to December 1890, price 1s. Vol. V., January to December 1891, price 1s. Carriage: single volumes, 2d., five volumes, 6d., throughout the United Kingdom.

NOTES.

SERGIUS STEPNIAK.

The awful disaster which has robbed the revolutionary movement of the services of Sergius Stepniak will, long ere this appears, be known to all comrades in all its details. The shocking circumstances under which that precious life was lost in the very flower of manhood will form one of the saddest chapters in revolutionary history. Philosophise as we may we cannot console ourselves with any reflections over such an end to such a man. As in the case of the greatest among men whose early efforts have promised a splendid harvest for the world we acknowledge the inevitable; but the feeling that it *might not have been* will always assert itself. We express our deepest sympathy with Madame Stepniak and all the Russian comrades, who will feel his loss so acutely.

In our next issue will appear a brief biography by one who knew him intimately.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

Now that we have reached mid-winter our thoughts turn naturally to "the problem of the unemployed." Not that our unfortunate fellow creatures who are out of work are only to be found at this time of year; but now their sufferings are so much more intensified by the inclemency of our climate that even callous-minded people are moved to some feeling of compassion, especially in the case of those unhappy outcasts who have the sky for a roof and the gutter for a bed. The capitalist may truly say, "the unemployed we have always with us, and very useful they are to help keep down the wages of the employed." And the untold suffering of thousands of human beings, who otherwise might be the happy and contented members of a decently organised community, becomes a necessity, in order, we are told, that the rich may continue to be the rich!

What hope is there for our starving fellow-workers? No hope, we are sure, in such a system as ours. The end of all this misery can only come with the end of the system which produces it.

THE PANGS OF HUNGER.

Whilst speaking of the unemployed one is reminded how glibly people and the press speak of the unemployed "problem" as something which may be judiciously worked out in the course of time without disturbing the serenity of the governing and propertied classes.

Do they ever reflect, we wonder, on the sufferings, the merely physical sufferings, of a human being who is starving? Yet they are surrounded by such suffering; and only too often does it, directly or indirectly, lead to death. It may not be out of of place, therefore, to give a description of these sufferings as described by George Henry Lewis:—

"The sensation of hunger," he says, "is at first rather agreeable; [we expect this is the sensation well-to-do people experience who don't believe there is any such thing as starvation] but it quickly becomes unpleasant if prolonged. The sense of keen appetite is delightful, but that 'sinking in the stomach' which ensues, quickly passes from an uneasy sensation into positive pain. The pain soon becomes acute; and, if food be still withheld, we feel as if the stomach were being torn by pincers. This is followed by a state of general exhaustion, feverishness, headache, light-headedness, often flaming into madness. The whole being seems possessed by one desire, before which even the energetic instinct of maternity has been known to give way, and mothers have actually disputed with their companions for the flesh of their dead children."

THE WAR CLOUD.

Is the year '96 to witness a new Armageddon? Are our rulers rushing on to a cataclysm the outcome of which no man can foretell? We hardly think so, notwithstanding the present aspect of things. The war-scare is always a paying game for the reactionaries to play; and, although to be sure there is the risk of things developing a little too seriously, yet diplomacy offers so many ways of arriving at "peace with honor" that the game is hardly worth the candle. Obviously, war between the "great powers" is not what the governing classes want: that might bring unforeseen consequences in its train—even, perhaps, revolution at home. To arouse the Jingo spirit as much as possible, that social questions may be forgotten; to have an occasional brush with "savages" in the rush for new markets; to indulge in unlimited tall talk over "boundaries" and "scientific frontiers" seems to us the more likely policy of the exploiters and their backers, the governments.

Likely enough, more serious matters may arise out of the rebellion in Cuba than out of all the crises which Anglo-American and South-African affairs have brought about. Meanwhile let us remember that, after all, the most vital matter for us is the revolutionary movement at home.

FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE RIDICULOUS.

There is no need to repeat what we have said of Miss Lanchester's brave conduct; it has taken its place in the world and cannot be effaced, it is an example for all who fight for liberty.

But now the scene is changed. Miss Lanchester and her friends, we regret to see, are appealing to the law for justice! We are quite sure they can keep on appealing: there is not much doubt which side will get tired first. It does certainly seem a little strange—or, rather, it *would* seem so did we not know how old ideas blind people—that Miss Lanchester and her friends should expect redress for her grievances from the very powers which did their best to crush her. Lawyers will readily find some justification for Dr. Blandford, who, they will argue, if mistaken, at anyrate intended to act in the interests of law and order. It is too much to expect the law to smite itself on the cheek. The rebellious act was a lesson the world needed, and it had it. Let it be remembered that if in future more respect is shown for the liberty of the individual, it will be by virtue of this act and not by the appeals which are now being made to the crass stupidities of the law.

"THOSE WHOM GOD HATH JOINED TOGETHER."

"Hoary fathers," "British matrons" and the host of "marriageable" young ladies, all those in fact who are the severest sticklers for the marriage-bond, should seriously consider what "legality" does for them so far as wedded life is concerned. True, it will ensure them "respectability," and if they can get comfort from that, why, poor souls, let them have it. But the joys of respectability are a poor comfort in those cases (and their name is legion) where man and wife are wide as the poles asunder in all things save the bond. Worse still is it in the case of such unfortunates as Charlotte Beard and Elizabeth Thomas, whose experiences of matrimony make a nice chapter of horrors for young maids to read.

At the inquest on Mrs. Beard (for she was indirectly done to death by her *legal* partner) it transpired that she was kept in a state of semi-starvation for years, and in her last illness was so neglected as to have practically died on that account. The worthy Mr. Beard was discharged after being censured, and is now at large and free to find another victim—in which legality will aid him.

There was an adjournment in the case of Elizabeth Thomas, who, according to the husbands statement, was in a state of intoxication when he administered the beating which caused her death; so we must wait to see what the law will recommend in this particular instance. As to that, it will make little difference: all those things will happen again. But, apart from the badge of respectability which marriage confers, if it is true happiness that men and women want in this relationship, there is far more prospect of getting it outside the legal tie than in it. A marriage certificate is not a certificate of mutual love and respect, anyway.

THE RED RECORD.

The *Coast Seamen's Journal*, of San Francisco, has done good work in issuing, as a supplement in pamphlet form, an account of the barbarities practised upon seamen by brutal captains and officers of ships in the mercantile marine. It is entitled *The Red Record*, and justly so; for none of the brutalities which are sometimes practised on land by exploiters on their wage-slaves can equal the atrocities committed on seamen by their "superior officers." We will quote one instance out of fifty or more that are given.

> "The TAM O'SHANTER (2nd case), Captain Peabody, arrived in San Francisco, July, 1893. Charges of the grossest brutality made against Second-Mate R. Crocker (late of "Commodore T. H. Allen"). Crocker stands 6 feet 3 in height and weighs 260 pounds. Crocker assaulted several seamen. One in particular, Harry Hill, bore nine wounds, five of them still unhealed. A piece was bitten out of his left palm, a mouthful of flesh was bitten out of his left arm and his left nostril torn away as far as the bridge of the nose. Crocker is reported to have kicked the seamen from "pure devilment." He attempted to kick one seaman from aloft; seaman slid down to the deck, Crocker followed him and administered a beating, the marks of which he showed in court. Crocker held on $500 (£100) bail. Case tried; usual verdict—acquittal."

One would imagine that a sailor as a rule has enough of dangers and hardships without being mangled by wild beasts like Crocker.

It is, of course, an excellent thing to enlighten public opinion on these matters, but we are sure that while present conditions obtain there will not be much amelioration of the hard and brutal conditions under which seamen suffer. As a matter of fact, everything which could be done to ensure their happiness, safety and comfort, should be done and would be done by a community in which all men were regarded as equals. It is evident from past experience that the law can not and will not do anything vital to alter these things. A strong international seamen's union is, after all, most likely to effect a change; but at the same time it should be remembered that a revolution in men's social relations will at once end these conflicts between master and slave.

INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVE.

It is not often the opportunity of exercising individual initiative

humanely and spontaneously occurs in the miserable, sordid conditions of existence to-day; but it is an encouraging thing to note that when the opporunity does occur the human will is ready to respond to the occasion. An account is given of how, at a recent fire, a woman in grave peril was rescued from a third floor window, seventy feet from the ground, by two policemen and a workingman. It is a striking instance of initiative and co-operation acting harmoniously and spontaneously. A ladder was placed against the house, but, being several feet too short, the only chance of rescue was by one man standing on the top rung, being steadied by the others, persuading the woman to place her feet on his shoulders and thus bring her down to the ladder. This was successfully done, and the saving of this woman's life was due to the courage and initiative of these three men. There is plenty of hope for the building up of a better system of society whilst deeds of this sort can be chronicled; and it proves to us that in critical times we should not lack men of this spirit to overcome the difficulties of re-organising society on a free and equal basis. Some people will, of course, say that these were exceptional men; but, after all, is it not the opportunities which are exceptional?

THE REACTION.

The epoch in which we are living may, without exaggeration, be characterised as one of the most reactionary in modern history.

Thousands of Socialists pining in prisons and fortresses, or in *domicilio coatto* in Italy; political and intellectual life, and even the human conscience itself, crushed down by barbarous police tyranny in Russia; the Armenian nation massacred before the eyes of Europe, none holding out a friendly hand to them, as in the days of Byron and Landor, John Brown and Garibaldi; outrageous and absurd persecutions of Socialists in Germany; an obscurantist and openly plutocratic policy, and a clerical reaction, led by Jesuits of all sorts, in this country; such are the main features of our incomparable times. Reaction and oppression in politics and religion, weakness and confusion in the ideas and the conscience of European humanity.

When the odious policy of tyranny and obscurantism is exercised by a government one cannot be surprised. It is faithful to its historical traditions. A Conservative ministry is perfectly logical in trying to throw back the intellectual and social life of England to the time of George III. of odious memory. The chief of the Conservative government only acted as one might expect when he appealed to the Jesuits and the plutocratic exploiters to take energetic measures against ideas of emancipation and against the labor movement. "What we can do, we must do quickly," he said to the people's enemies. And he might have added, with legitimate pride, "Just for this purpose we obtained an overwhelming majority at the general election; a majority obtained by the touching alliance between the Church and the Public-house, the brewers, the landlords and the Independent Labor Party; the Imperialist Unionists and the Social Democratic Federation, as Centralist and Unionist as they." Yes, he might have said as much as this.

No less logical were those troglodytes of the glacial period sitting in the House of Lords, when declaiming, by the mouth of Lord Wemyss, that "at present their lordship's House was not in peril; that the clergy of Wales and Scotland were now safe from attacks; property was secure.....It would not be thought necessary in the interests of the poor to pauperise the rich (*i.e.* the legacy duties and other taxes upon the rich ought to be abolished).....The noble lord criticises at considerable length the proposed Socialist legislation (that of the late government), including old age pensions, poor law reform, better housing of the working classes and shorter hours (eight) of labor."

Logical, too, was the Lord Chancellor, when assuring the noble troglodytes that "no one would support any of the evils which the noble lord has denounced."—(Parliamentary report, Sept. 4, *Daily Chronicle*, Sept. 5, 1895.) For the well-being of mankind is an "evil," an insult to those ancient spectres, the defenders of the privileges of divine right.

And behind them, the black band of clericals is all astir, "the Infamous," whom Voltaire desires to overthrow; whilst around them crawl the greedy mass of exploiters controlling the Ministry, who promise them not to give the needful orders for the Navy until the shipbuilders have succeeded in breaking up the workers' unions. One and all they are endeavouring to turn the elementary schools into Jesuit seminaries, and to close the Free Libraries "because workmen's wives read only novels." In other words, women of the people read Dickens, Kingsley, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy or William Morris, and are not able, like the fair dames of the aristocracy and the middle-class, to appreciate the crudities of "Aoristis" and A. Chénier, the coarseness of Zola and the frivolities of Parisian boulevard novelettes. Thus Free Libraries are seen to be a needless burden upon the rate-payer; let them be closed!

Whence comes this threatening wave of reaction? To what and to whom must its origin and impetus be attributed?

First and foremost, to the mischievous doctrines of the charlatans of modern science, falsely so called; and, in the next place, to the propaganda of legalism and submission amongst the discontented and the oppressed. In our fathers' time, as we know, the opposition were driving at the curtailment of the powers of the State, in favor of local self-government. Now the opposition are endeavouring to set up an absolute central government, in an all-powerful State. Thus it happens that the former foes of the powers of the State, of police rule, militarism and bureaucracy, now look favorably upon the monstrous development of the centralised State; in the childish hope that, some fine day, thanks to imaginary "concentration of capital," they themselves will be in possession of the formidable power of the modern State. But the number of exploiters increases at the same time as the strength of the State, whilst the energetic resistance of the people and their revolutionary initiative grows less and less, thanks to the propaganda of legalism, discipline and submission. The oppressors, no longer held in check, perceive themselves to be reinforced and therefore return to their old tactics of obscurantism and despotism.

"O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name!" cried Madame Roland upon the scaffold. We, in our days, may exclaim, "What crimes are committed in the name of Science." It is in the name of science that the school of Lombroso, largely reinforced by prosecutors and police agents, preaches the doctrine of innate criminality and return to the cruel old absurdities of predestination and fatalism. It is in the name of science that the charlatans and police agents with Bertillon and his fellows restore the Inquisition and its torture, under the pretext of anthropometry. It is as a learned professor that the Russian Torquemada, Pobedonostseff, directs the persecution of religious "heretics." It is as scientific men that the leaders of the existing English government encourage the Jesuits in their crusade against instruction and the plutocrats against trades-unions.

But most revolting of all, is the reaction, the submission, the subordination, the discipline preached as "scientific Socialism." The all-absorbent and all-powerful State, mankind organised into an army, an universal, obligatory method of production, consumption regulated by the central authority; a future scientific society, wherein the toiler will have less freedom in the choice of an occupation than he has to-day; and, above all, the central power in the hands of the "learned men" who tried to impose their stupid and immoral dictatorship upon the International and the Commune of Paris.

A perpetual candidate of the International Labor Party, who is perpetually beaten at elections, not content that he and his friends have facilitated the attainment of power by the Conservatives in this country, has begun to figure in the name of "scientific Socialism" against Democracy, Federalism, the Referendum, and direct legislation in Switzerland. I very much doubt if this courageous candidate knows that the "bears," the *Moutry* of Berne, already, without having real scientific Socialism are always trying to force the centralisation he so much likes upon the Swiss peasantry.

Another leader of the same scientific Socialism teaches us: "The self-governing workshop belongs not to Socialism.....To suppose that the industrial affairs of a complicated industrial State can be run without strict subordination and discipline, without obedience to orders .....is to dream not of Socialism."*

State monopoly, industrial and agricultural armies, discipline, order subordination, obedience, these are what is preached to the disinherited and oppressed. And this slavish propaganda has been carried on for thirty years, under the name of scientific Socialism. How can we be surprised that at last it has succeeded in demoralising our generation to such an extent that the most modest act of insubordination is universally reprobated? Poor science! Wretched generation!

How shall we find words duly to stigmatise all these revolting absurdities? Above all, it is disgusting that all these pretended scientific men are ignoramuses or charlatans both in history and in Socialism.

Historic tradition teaches us that mankind progressed and enfranchised itself by fighting against power, authority and its organs. It also teaches us that the richest development, political, social and intellectual, has always been realised in autonomous societies, in small federations of communes and little federal republics. Centralised States, on the contrary, stop all progress and nations submit to a centralist *regime* when they are in a state of decay or stagnation. The Ionian republics, the republics of Italy from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and of Spain before Charles V., and Switzerland amid her bare and rugged mountains, are striking illustrations, and so, on the other side, are Persia, Russia, and the Spain of Phillip II. and his successors. All the great historians of the preceding generation preached government by the direct legislation of the autonomous people (F. Schlosser, E. Oguinnet, Michelet, August Thierry, etc.), or, like Buckle, they demonstrated that the best government was that which abolishes the most laws. Or else they said, with Carlyle, "Reform Ministries are as barren as the East wind," and of parliamentary elections, so dear to our dull scientists, that a vote was the right to send "one twenty-thousanth part of a master of tongue to the National Palaver."

In the days of our fathers, when Victor Hugo pilloried the crown and crowned heads, when Heine, Byron and Shelley, and many more, sang of revolt, when Longfellow sang of the abolition of slavery and Dickens pleaded the cause of the oppressed and disinherited, then warmhearted men and advanced parties acted upon their own initiative, without waiting for orders and authorisations. They created the epoch between 1857 and 1865, which saw the war of independence in Italy and the anti-slavery contest in the United States, the abolition of serfdom in Russia, and the rise of the International, the age of "the very poetry of politics." They did not await the orders or authorisation of Sultan, Tzar or Emperor before coming to the aid of the oppressed or the massacred. No, hundreds of thousands of heroic men gathered together in defence of the liberty held so high by Garibaldi, that incarnation of humanitarian ideas and the spirit of freedom.

In our time, the fate of the oppressed is confided to the diplomacy of ministers; the masses, deadened by the "scientific" propaganda of degradation and slavery, remain motionless while a nation is being exterminated. Whilst ministers and diplomatists exchange compliments

* Sidney Webb, L.C.C. & F.F.S., *Socialism true and false.* pages 15 & 18.

and apostles of scientific slavery mislead the masses, the emissaries of the Sultan are murdering children, outraging girls and ripping up pregnant women. And the blood of these innocents is upon all those political, literary, scientific and Socialistic reactionaries, who have prostituted the science, emasculated the Socialism and depraved the conscience of our generation. AN OLD INTERNATIONALIST.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT.

In ancient times, when men believed in "miracles," when men believed that all human beings had "a free will," it was but logical to hold a criminal responsible for his deed and punish him accordingly. However irrational this belief might have been, the people of that time were at least logical. Once admit that a man has a "free will," it must follow that he has absolute control over his actions; and if by his actions he commits a "crime," it is but just that he should bear the penalty of his own misdeed. The popular belief was that crimes were committed wilfully, and to kill criminals was to get rid of them and thus frighten others from following in their footsteps. Hence, as a necessary result, we have the old maxim, "An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth."

But nowadays, when man pretends to be more cultured than his ancestors, when we partly know that "man is as free as a bird in a cage," when we claim to know that every act, every fancy and every dream is backed by an efficient cause, it is absurd to hold a man responsible for his deed. It is ridiculously painful and painfully ridiculous to suppose that a sane person prefers unhappiness to joy. It can not be said that man intends permanently to injure himself, and that he commits crimes in order to fill his life with misery. Though man is Nature's last and most perfect production, he is, after all, a slave to all the climatic, economical and political conditions; he cannot separate himself from the environments of Nature. Given a certain man and certain conditions and he will act in a certain way. Certain effects follow certain causes, just as night follows the day. Man is irresistibly led to do, or impelled to do, certain things, and there are other things he can not do.

We know that if any one of us is a product of our civilization, all of us are: you cannot rationally say that one class of persons are produced by the present social system and another class are not. And if, after all our knowledge, we still keep on doing as our ancestors have done; if, after all, we say: "A blow has been struck at the community, and the community must deal a blow in return," we are not only cruel and irrational but also illogical. We have no reason for punishing a criminal, since he is an inevitable product of our civilisation. One man is no more to be blamed for being a criminal than another for being ill. They are both victims and ought to be pitied rather than punished.

There is no reformation in degradation. Whoever is degraded by society becomes its enemy; the seeds of malice are sown in his heart, and to the day of his death will he hate the hand that sowed those seeds.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that all criminal or rather anti-social deeds fill me with unspeakable horror; but that horror does not make me overlook the patent fact that all criminals are concomitants of this glorious Christian civilisation; it cannot make me overlook the patent fact that all crimes are but poor imitations of the acts committed by our soldiers, police and hangmen, whose bloody work is praised and glorified by the press and by the people, with a few pleasing exceptions.

Hence I say, that to kill or punish a criminal is simply to create more criminals and do nothing towards their reformation or prevention. By putting a man cruelly to death in order to show how valuable another man's life is, we cannot remedy the evil; hundreds and thousands of men and women have been killed for crimes committed,—has the number of criminals grown smaller? Are we any nearer a society without crimes? No! I say, and most emphatically, No! It is said that about seven thousand murders have been committed in the United States during the year 1893, and the offences of lesser degree have been so numerous that even an approximate estimate can hardly be formed. However, I am not dealing with statistics, but I have called your attention to this fact in order to show you how far we are from non-criminality, despite the application of the most severe kind of punishments.

Society in general is responsible for its criminality; the prevailing poverty among the masses and the rush for the spoil among the rich are the chief causes of all crimes. The problem of progress and poverty has to be solved before we can hope to reach that stage of civilisation where we shall have no more criminals. Before this has been done, you may kill as many criminals as you choose, but you can not in that way prevent the remaining causes from producing others. You might as well cut off an occasional thistle-head with the expectation of killing the crop, as hope to exterminate crime through the deterrent power of punishment. H. A. KOCH.

THE PROPAGANDA.

REPORTS.

THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST WORKERS' AND TRADE UNION CONGRESS.
Anarchist Committee.

The Committee chosen at the Conference of London Anarchists on December 26th, met for the first time on January 1st. J. Tochatti, was appointed secretary, W. Wess treasurer, and T. Reece assistant-secretary. Correspondence relating to the position of Trade Unions and other working-class organisations, not binding themselves unreservedly to political action, at the International Congress was read and answered as agreed to. The Committee decided to open up communication with the provincial Anarchist groups and non-political workmens' organisations for the purpose of ensuring concerted action against the unfair and despotic conduct of the Marxist majority of the Organising Committee, who are endeavouring to throttle anything like independent criticism or effective opposition by shutting out the delegates of the non-political section of the international labor movement. It was also agreed that a manifesto, similar to the one drawn up by the Anarchists prior to the Zurich Congress, should be issued as early in the month as possible.

A fund was opened to meet printing and other incidental expenses, to which contributions of comrades are earnestly requested. All moneys should be sent to W. Wess, 42 Cressy Houses, Cressy Street, Stepney, and all other communications to J. Tochatti, Carmagnole House, Hammersmith, who will afford any further information. Contributions will be acknowledged in our papers, and a monthly balance sheet will be issued. The committee will now meet weekly, and the co-operation of all those who love justice and fair play is welcomed.

T. REECE, assistant sec.

A variety of useful work for Anarchism has been put in by Leggatt, Turner, Kitz, Tochatti, and Banham, who have lectured at various I.L.P. and S.D.F. branches, provoked good discussion, and received very favorable attention. A debate between C. T. Quinn and W. G. Pearson, on Social Democracy versus Anarchism, took place on January 12th at Milton Hall, Kentish Town; Quinn asked a number of questions which Pearson failed to answer, and scored accordingly.

A lecture list, containing the names of nine lecturers and thirty-five subjects, has been printed in a neat and attractive style and is being distributed amongst most Liberal, Social Democratic and Independent Labor clubs in London. Any comrade knowing a lecture hall or club in his neighbourhood where one of our speakers might get an invitation can have a few of these lists on application to W. Banham, 52 Sedgmoor Place, Camberwell, S.E.

Our old friends, the K division of police, "guardians of the peace" in Stratford, have been at their tricks again. On Sunday, January 29th, while Sam Roden was speaking at The Grove 606K kicked the platform from under him, cutting his hand severely in the fall, and showed a vigorous appreciation of the good old adage, "Never kick a man until he's down." In 1886, six comrades went there to hold a meeting; five of them appeared in the dock next morning and one of these intellectual body-snatchers, 60K, solemnly informed the magistrate that he saw one of the prisoners standing on a stool "preaching seduction"; and although the neighbourhood was obstructed by the huge carcases of eighteen policemen and a lunatic on horseback who charged the audience with his sword drawn, our comrades were declared guilty of the offence.

Amongst a number of London comrades there has for some time been a desire for a better kind of Anarchist organisation than has previously existed. They have at length made a start in their particular direction. "The Associated Anarchists" has been founded with the object of furthering Anarchism by organised effort. They have printed a small circular setting forth their object, methods, and a series of free agreements for carrying on their business and propaganda. They also intend to shortly issue a manifesto explaining their ideas on organisation more fully. T. REECE.

DEPTFORD.—During the past two months the Anarchist Communist propaganda here has been kept up with greater regularity. Open-air meetings have been addressed by comrades Leggatt, Roden, Ford, Turner and Carter, —Leggatt and Roden speaking to enormous crowds. On Sunday, Nov. 3rd, at Smith's Coffee Tavern, Deptford Bridge, near Broadway, a start was made with the indoor propaganda, when comrade Harragan gave a slashing, outspoken address on "Anarchy and how to realise it," to a very appreciative audience, who applauded loudly the revolutionary remarks of our comrade. On Sunday, Nov. 10, comrade Presbury was to have lectured on "The Chicago Martyrs," but, not putting in an appearance, his place was taken by comrade Henri Belsé, who, after giving an account of the events which led up to the murder of our five comrades, read the speech of our comrade August Spies. Comrade Turner lectured on the 17th on "First principles of Anarchy and Socialism," to a rather poor audience; intelligent opposition was given by comrade Bell of the I.L.P., which was answered to the satisfaction of all. Sunday, Nov. 24, comrade Olivia Rossetti was to have lectured on "The Revolutionary Movement in Italy," a good audience were waiting, but our comrade failed to put in an appearance; our local speakers not being present, we were in a bit of a fix; however, sooner than send the audience away, a comrade read a part of "Expropriation" and replied to a rather animated discussion. South London comrades are requested to turn up regularly and support. W. H.

GLASGOW—The propaganda here has been rather quiet of late owing to the lack of speakers and also to the inclement weather, but we have not been idle. On Sunday, October 13th, some comrades attended a lecture (the first of a series organised by the Individualists of the Auberon Herbert school) and offered some criticism on the lecture, with the result that Banham accepted an invitation to lecture for them. On the 21st, Harry Quelch lectured for the S.D.F. on "Social Democracy"; several comrades took part in the discussion and Banham challenged him, or any representative of the S.D.F., to publicly debate the question of "Anarchist Communism v. Social Democracy." Quelch, in reply, refused to debate, saying that we were not worth it; he then proceeded to misrepresent, ridicule and abuse our principles, not even attempting to reply by argument to any of the points raised. As this is the way Social Democrats treat their opponents before they have gained power, what will it be like when they have (if they ever do) "captured the political machine." On Sunday morning, October 27th, Levenson and Banham addressed an audience of about 600 people, to whom we sold a considerable quantity of literature, on Glasgow Green; and in the evening Banham lectured on "Anarchist Communism—What it means," to an attentive audience in the Individualists' Hall, Brunswick Street, and the merits of Communism, Individualism and Free Competition were debated in good style.

No. 1. THE WAGE SYSTEM. BY PETER KROPOTKINE. 1d.

No. 2. THE COMMUNE OF PARIS. BY PETER KROPOTKINE. 1d.

No. 3. A TALK ABOUT ANARCHIST-COMMUNISM BETWEEN TWO WORKERS. BY E. MALATESTA. 1d.

No. 4. ANARCHIST-COMMUNISM: ITS BASIS AND PRINCIPLES. BY PETER KROPOTKINE. 1d.

No. 5. ANARCHY. BY E. MALATESTA. 1d.

No. 6. ANARCHIST MORALITY. BY PETER KROPOTKINE. 1d.

No. 7. EXPROPRIATION. BY PETER KROPOTKINE. 1d.

No. 8. ANARCHISM AND OUTRAGE. BY C. M. WILSON ½d.

No. 9. ANARCHY ON TRIAL—George Etiévant, Jean Grave and Caserio Santo. 32 pages; 1d.

Printed and published by J. TURNER at 7 Lambs Conduit Street, London, W.C.