

Freedom

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The DREYFUS AFFAIR and the GENERAL STRIKE.

The agitation which has taken place in France upon the Dreyfus affair is most instructive under more aspects than one. The commonplace, narrow-minded British politician sees in it only a new proof of "French levity, inconsistency and dissoluteness." But the reality is, that France has simply offered to the world an immense object lesson in discrediting all the present-day institutions.

This process of demolition must be gone through before a new growth in a Communist direction may make its appearance; because, so long as people continue to believe in the honesty of parliaments, in the virtues of those who embrace a military career, or in the high mission of the priesthood, and the like, —there is no hope of ever making a new start in the right direction. The "conventional lies" of civilised mankind must be got rid of; and France, for the last few years, has done her best to perform that task.

When the Panama scandal broke out, a politician of great foresight remarked: "Now, we shall see a tearing to pieces of the financial world; but after it will come the army; and after that the clergy." So far, his prediction has been correct.

The Panama scandal has opened the eyes of the multitude to the inner springs and working of those formidable secret societies of powerfully organised robbers which plunder mankind under the shield of great financial companies. It has shown how, in order to raise a capital of, let us say, ten million pounds which will be spent on the real work of the company—a railway, a canal, or whatsoever it may be—another five million pounds are scraped simply for enabling the Hooleys to get influential names on their promoters' lists; to make immense fortunes for the promoters and the "capital scrapers;" and to interest the great bankers, by fabulous sums of money, simply that they may not oppose this special form of robbery. It has shown how voices of members of parliament are bought,—in France by paying them so much apiece (this is, of course, the infancy of the art), and elsewhere by placing them as chairmen, directors and the like. It has shown how, usually, a very small part only of the money filched from the public goes for the real construction of the canal, or the railway, or the gas and water works, the great bulk going to the promoters, the press, the rulers and other dish-lickers; and how, at last, the ratepayers or the consumers are made to pay, with immense interest, all the money that went for the buying-up of the capitalists, the press, the rulers and the dish-lickers.

No Socialist has ever given such a splendid object lesson to so large an audience. Of course, we have been told in this country, that such things can only happen in foolish France; but then dear Hooley came to tell Englishmen that everywhere it is the same; only in France, owing to the acuteness of the strife between parties, the mud has been stirred a little deeper than elsewhere.

Then came the army. Nowhere in the world had the army been placed so high as in France after the crushing defeat of 1870. It was proclaimed to be even more unimpeachable than the Pope himself. One could criticise the Pope, but no one dared to touch the army.

Now, there it is, this famous army, in the mud! Sunk in it even deeper than the financial world or the parliament. It is not General Mercier or General Boisdeffre who has lost his reputation in this "scandal." It is the military profession altogether which has lost its prestige. More is said in France in conversation than is printed in the papers, and it is said that, whatsoever Dreyfus may or may not have done, it was the ex-commander of the General Staff himself who used to sell the secret documents, and that all the higher commands of the army are filled by a similar lot of scoundrels.

In 1870, it was a marshal, Bazaine, who sold Metz to the enemy. Later on, it was a Minister of War from whom the secrets were stolen through the intermediary of his friend—a

baroness-adventuress. Now, it is the Chief of the General Staff, and the Staff as a body, who have lost the confidence of the soldiers.

As is usually the case, the indirect consequences of this affair are even far more important than the direct ones. Several months ago, when our Paris colleague, the *Temps Nouveaux*, denounced all the Anti-Dreyfusite, Anti-Semitic and General Staff camp as a vast conspiracy to put France under the rule of a Cæsar; a conspiracy which has been carried on without interruption since the Boulanger agitation, this view was described as exaggerated even by some of our friends.

Now, events have shown how serious was that league of Monarchists with the Cæsarian, dictatorial Republicans. And the workers of Paris, the moment they recognised that danger, have shown with what a splendid revolution they would meet such an attempt. All the English papers have been far below the mark in their reports, failing to convey the real character of the demonstration which took place the day of the Longchamps races. The fact is, it was a full mobilisation of the revolutionary forces of Paris.

The Anarchist daily, the *Journal du Peuple*, had three small-type columns filled with such appeals as these: "To the Revolutionary Socialists of such a district," or "To such Trade Unions;" "To-morrow, all to be at half-past two at the convened place of meeting." Or, "To the Anarchists: All at the convened spot, two o'clock. Watchword: 'Down with the clergy!'" And so on. And over a hundred thousand revolutionists of all camps: Blanquists, Socialists, Anarchists, armed with good sticks, marched in one column, singing "The International," the "*Ca ira!*" and the "Carmagnole," and ready to engage in a fight with the Monarchists and Dictatorialists.

At the present time the great preoccupation of the ruling classes is, on the one side, how to prevent the inquiry going still deeper into the doings of the General Staff; and, on the other side, what to do if the general strike breaks out this summer at Paris.

Yes, the general strike! Because, whilst all this Dreyfus agitation was going on, the great agitation for the general strike has never been suspended; it has taken root; the strike is spoken of everywhere; and at the present time the ruling classes of France are even more anxious to know what is to be done in case of a general strike, than to discover how to pass a sponge over the misdeeds of the General Staff.

English workers must have been very much astonished to learn that a Socialist leader, who belongs to the Socialist party of the French parliament, has been asked to join the Ministry, and has been given the post of Minister of Industry. The hidden motive of this unexpected step is, however, very plain. It is to bribe the Socialists, in the hope that they will do their best to oppose the general strike which is being openly spoken of in the workshops of Paris. But the parliamentary Socialists have already done their best to oppose that strike, and were powerless. That strike is *not* their invention, and they fear it even more than the Italian Socialist deputies feared the popular uprising at Milan. It is an idea which started spontaneously and has slowly grown up for the past five years in the minds of the workers who do not trust the Socialist deputies more than they trust deputies of any other description. And the presence of M. Millerand in a Ministry, by the side of that wild beast, Galliffet, will certainly not increase their confidence. It gives, of course, the measure of how far a parliamentary Socialist will go in his compromises; but the Paris workers have not forgotten who the ex-Imperialist, now Orleanist, Marquis Galliffet, is.

They know (English correspondents also told it in 1871) that he was the man who, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, would call out of a column of prisoners (workers) all the grey-haired men; and when *eleven hundred* of them were thus picked out he would order them to be shot on the spot, in the street, saying, "You have seen 1848, I know you, rebels who

insulted the Empire. Now be shot." And the quick-firing guns mowed them down "in a heap."

By accepting a position in a Ministry with that horrid beast, Gallifet, M. Millerand has certainly done more to discredit the parliamentary Socialists in France than Henry has done to discredit the General Staff—but the general strike is in the air, and it will not be M. Millerand who will prevent it from breaking out, if the workers see the necessity of adopting it.

As to Gallifet, let him only try the *coup d'état* which he dreams of. Methinks it will be the signal for the Revolution.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Italy:

Pietro Acciarito, aged 24, an iron-worker of Artana, with relatives in Rome, being out of employment in April 1897, went to that city in the hope of finding work and, what work means to the proletariat, food. There are starving people in Rome as in London. Barely an hour before these notes were penned, the writer saw an old man grab a mud-covered crust from the gutter in one of London's best-known streets and tear at it with his teeth regardless of its coating of filth. "You are hungry?" Hungry eyes turned on the speaker. "I aint had no food for two clear days and many a day afore—I'm too old to get work, you see; and I aint goin' into the work'us—that's all there is to it." And on he hurried as though some workhouse master were at his heels, like a policeman after an unmuzzled dog. As that starving man stooped to the gutter for that mud-soaked crust, dropped it may be from the jaws of some passing cur, every house in that street had its goodly mid-day meal on the table. But when men grow old they compromise with fate.

To demand meat and drink as a natural right, and to take both by force when the law says, "*Starve if you must, but for God's sake be decent*" (it being beneath authoritarian consideration that compulsory hunger in a land teeming with food forbids decency)—ah no! better to creep into a corner and die quietly. But when we are young and excitable, as was Acciarito, with good red blood coursing through brain and heart, with a body that would be full of vigour if only there was food enough inside it—then it hurts to be hungry while others are not only well fed, but overfed. Lean men are dangerous, says Shakespeare. And so one day when Pietro had striven to get work and failed, the sense of injustice, which is as a consuming fire to some, burnt so hotly within him, that he went home and sharpened a knife. Like Luccheni later, he had also made it himself. One wonders what a man's thoughts are as he shapes and whets a blade that he intends shall pierce a breast that never felt the pang of hunger and the lightheadedness that goes with it, or the sting of injustice such as that which is turning him from a civilised (decent) being back to primeval (indecent) man.

It happened that on April 22nd King Humbert, with his aide-de-camp, General Vaglia, drove out to the Capannelle racecourse to see the Italian Derby run. As the carriage passed St. John's Gate, Acciarito, now primeval man (though without the right of primeval man to chase and slay some four-footed beast to appease his hunger), dashed at the royal carriage and struck at the King with his homemade dagger. Its point pierced Humbert's tunic and sank into the cushion behind. For the second time (the first attempt on his person having been made in 1878) the King was unharmed; he drove on to the races, and Acciarito, seized by soldiers and police, was escorted to prison. Closely questioned, he repeatedly declared he had been driven to the act by hunger, that he had no accomplices, and knew of no organised plot. Three of his fellow-workmen, however, were arrested; but from want of evidence, Acciarito persisting in his declaration that he acted on his sole initiative, they were released, and the attempt was looked upon as the spontaneous act of a hungry man out of employment. Ten thousand congratulatory telegrams poured in upon the King, and Acciarito was sentenced to a long term of penal servitude. Then came silence; the prison doors closed, the world went round, and men forgot.

A newspaper story, which probably few who read believed, shed the first ray of light some months since. The story was that a journalist had contrived to gain admittance to Acciarito's prison and to take a look at him through the cell grating. What he saw when his eyes became accustomed to the gloom was the figure of a man chained to the wall, with an ashen face and eyes that had the vacant stare of idiocy, his whole aspect confirming an impression that seems even then to have got abroad, that the prisoner was being systematically starved and ill-treated at the instigation of the police, in order to extort a confession pointing to an organised Anarchist plot. And at length a so-called "confession" was wrung from the tortured man. How? Two years of solitary confinement, of semi-starvation and brutality at the hands of the prison-officials, were borne in silence; when he spoke it was through the medium of a police stratagem so infamous that it is impossible to find words strong enough to denounce either it or its dastardly authors.

To be brief, stringency having failed, a spy was placed in the cell adjoining Acciarito's; pretending to be an Anarchist, this scoundrel wormed himself into the prisoner's confidence, finally succeeding in inducing him to name his supposed accomplices. These, the men who had been arrested with him two years before, were now re-arrested and their trial began last month, Acciarito being confronted with them and the spy who had gained his confidence. There was a great muster of police, we are told, and the public took intense interest in the proceedings.

May that interest and the story that roused it, bear fruit, not in Italy alone but in every land whose citizens are taxed for the maintenance of Justice and a body of secret police. Acciarito galvanised back to life and reason by his wrongs, electrified the court by his passionate eloquence. He told how first he was imprisoned in a dark cell, deprived of air and even of actual necessities; given water foul with worms to drink, and putrid food to eat. When this treatment seemed about to deprive him of reason, it was relaxed, and he was promised a free pardon if he would "confess." But he resisted all temptations, and it was only when the director of the prison gave him a letter forged by the fiendish ingenuity of the police, purporting to come from the woman he loved, telling him of her sufferings and his child's illness—only then was it that this long-tried man's loyalty and fortitude gave way. If he told the truth (and men who suffered torture under the Inquisition were known always to lie or tell more than the truth), even if he told the truth his is not the blame. Let that and the infamy of it rest on the police, the forgers of the appeal that turned this man's will to water and led him to break the silence of months passed amid pain and temptation.

"If you were free how happy we would be," ran the portion of the letter that wrung forth Acciarito's "confession." "In the morning you would be the first to kiss our son on his pure forehead, and in the evening when you came from work he would run to your knee. On Sunday we would all go to the country. But, on the contrary, we are in mourning and misery—I a widow and he an orphan. Sometimes I am nearly crazy to think that I may even lose this jewel of our love, as he is thin and ill, and I have no money for a doctor and medicines."

The mean way, admits a reactionist paper, in which the confession was extorted, has aroused a strong feeling everywhere. We learn that, on the 2nd inst., the trial of the alleged conspirators collapsed and had to be postponed to the autumn. The defence demanded a phrenological examination of the accused, and this being refused by the Court, the various lawyers representing the prisoners, our friend Merlino amongst them, left the scene in a body. The judge called upon other counsel to defend the prisoners; but when they appeared, to their honor be it said, one of them, Signor Palomba, delivered an eloquent speech in which he affirmed that knowing absolutely nothing of the case, he "could not conduct the affair without having it on his conscience that he had injured the accused." So the trial has been postponed, and we yet trust to hear that Italian police infamy will receive its due reward, in the execration of the multitude and the failure of its schemes.

Freedom walks on neutral ground, turning neither to the right or left of personal abuse or praise of a militant attitude, but simply points out plain facts to plain people. But sometimes when plain people take to thinking over plain facts the results are not to say, curious. John Ball, Wat Tyler, Martin Luther, Cromwell and his Roundheads, these and others that crowd the memory, were plain people. And so we believe that one day a few more such will set to thinking quietly over plain facts of this kind, and reach the conclusion that police ethics and police sway have lasted long enough and may be improved out of existence with the social system that has given them birth.

Comrades who knew young Carlo Siles when in England, will regret to learn of his death in prison. The report is not confirmed, but the probabilities are that, poorly fed and confined in an unhealthy jail, he has succumbed to some disease contracted through this combined agency. He has been imprisoned since last September, when he was arrested for distributing a revolutionary manifesto in Milan, and crying out, "Long live Anarchy!" when he felt the hands of the police on his shoulder. These worthy gentlemen were hissed all the way to the station, stones thrown at them, and one gendarme was slightly injured; possibly Siles' treatment in prison may have been more rigorous in consequence of the sympathy shown at his arrest, and that his death is the consequence of such treatment. The authorities at Milan are not likely to be any more merciful or just than those in Rome, and one dead Anarchist in their dulled estimation means one Anarchist the less.

Much, were there space, could be said on the present unrest in Italy. The country, instead of quieting down, is like its own Vesuvius, smoking with discontent and bitterness. There have been free fights in the parliament owing to the government's determination to pass the Public Safety Bill, special clauses of which give the authorities power to prohibit public meetings and assemblies, to dissolve any association whose aim is a change in the social conditions or institutions, and the prevention of combination for strike purposes of any three or more agents of the railway, postal, telegraph, gas or electric light services, whilst the press is to be more gagged than ever. However, all this repression by panic-stricken Continental governments will only determine sufferers under it to rebel the more acutely, and foster a spirit of brotherhood and solidarity among the nations such as the age of man has never yet felt or seen.

Belgium:

The fate of the new Electoral Reform Bill for proportional representation, which the king and his ministers recently attempted to thrust upon the country, seems to be decided. A strong and united revolutionary Socialist party which has won the confidence of the nation, appears likely to carry everything before it, its attitude being so unmisstakeably determined that the cold, impassive, unloved, and unrespected king knows he must yield to the demands of the people or face open revolution and the loss of his throne. For it is not only Brussels but all Belgium which is crying "Down with the Clerical Party! down with the Ministry! Vive la République!" The Burgomasters of Ghent, Antwerp, and Liège as well as Brussels, stated plainly to Leopold that if the Bill was not withdrawn they could no longer be responsible for the

maintenance of order in their respective cities. Belgium—Flanders as it was 300 years ago—had under the banner of William of Orange the same opportunity as the Netherlands to throw off not alone the Spanish but the Papal yoke; however, it saw good to secede from the union of independent states for which William the Silent was then striving, and like Spain, to this day has remained in Papal swaddling-clothes. The sense of strength and solidarity that Democracy develops in men, is not, happily, to be kept within the narrow confines of priestly bands; Belgium is waking up to some purpose, and with Spain and Italy begins to think it has had enough of Clerical Parties. The feeling has even permeated the drilled ranks of the Civic Guard. At Liège one morning after parade, 250 of the men went to the Socialist Club, carrying their arms reversed as a sign of capitulation, and singing, and later made speeches to the crowd; one guard saying that the cry used to be, *For King and Country!* but that if the king did not do his duty, the cry would change to—*For our Country!* These incidents show how deeply the spirit of the Belgian people is stirred and the determination that exists to have universal suffrage at all hazards. Even if the riots were only over a question of votes, since the Belgians believe in votes it is better to fight for them than to lie quiescent under reactionary rule. So far one death has resulted from the street scimmages; but with the exception of broken heads and windows, and in spite of ball cartridges being used by the police, no material damage seems to have been done either side. One barricade was raised in Brussels, but the popular demonstrations have been sufficient to overawe Leopold and his Ministers and to force them to reconsider their Bill. Conciliation being thus mooted popular feeling subsided instantly, and now we have a truce whilst a committee, in which all parties will be represented, is forming to discuss joint electoral proposals. July 11th is the date fixed for the final decision of the government in the matter, and if the Bill is not withdrawn the workers of Mons intend to declare a general strike in their district, an example likely to be followed throughout Belgium. The active members of the revolutionary party are also said to be collecting arms and ammunition, so that Leopold will have a bad quarter of an hour if he refuses to surrender unconditionally.

The success of the Belgian Socialists has startled every reactionary government in Europe. In Austria, Spain and Italy, every nerve is being strained to prevent even a transitory revolutionary movement from coming to a head. In Italy stringent instructions have been issued to maintain order *at all costs*; telegrams are closely watched, and the very hour the parliamentary session was closed by order of the executive, the latter "went for" the Socialist Deputies who had disturbed the serenity of the Italian Chamber. Some managed to get away, but others with finer courage faced the situation. Andrea Costa, leader of the Socialists, was immediately arrested for a former political condemnation, which he had escaped by being elected Deputy, and sent to Bologna, between two Carabineers like a criminal, to serve his sentence. We fear it is too good news to be true, but the story goes that there is a growing feeling of discontent in the army, thousands of soldiers being secretly on the side of the people.

Our comrade Guerrineau has been expelled from Belgium.

Spain:

The riots which broke out lately in different parts of Spain were non-political and due to the new taxes imposed on the unhappy people—taxes to pay the salaries of hundreds of useless officials and the maintenance of a now useless army and navy. At Alicante the ever-graceless "mob" set the Octroi offices on fire; at Saragossa it pillaged the building of the Council General, threw stones at the gendarmes and wounded a general; at Valencia the Captain-general filled the streets with troops and held the artillery in readiness; barricades were thrown up, around which severe fighting took place, many persons being wounded and one unfortunate shop-assistant killed by a Mauser bullet which pierced a closed door; then came the turn of the priests, one at least of these peace-loving worthies using a revolver against the people; the arrival of soldiers alone prevented the House of the Jesuits from being burnt down; the gendarmery barracks were finally attacked and one of its officers given a sore head; an enormous number of arrests have since been made. At Barcelona there was hot fighting, over 30 persons being injured, some fatally.

At Barcelona the crowd being refused admittance to the town hall by the newly-elected municipality, fought with the Municipal Guard, four persons being killed and 17 wounded; then it threw stones at the Episcopal Palace, attacked the Church of Santa Matrona and the Jesuit School. The great demonstration to promote revision of the Anarchist trial of 1896, duly took place. Comrades will remember that 400 men were promiscuously arrested for the act of one, a supposed Frenchman, who escaped at the time and died recently in the United States. The story of the tortured, and tortures inflicted in Montjuich by Portas, has been vividly told us by T. del Marmol in *The Inquisitors of Spain*. Five men, Ascheri, Molas, Mas, Noguès and Alsina, were shot in the moat of the fortress, 20 were sent to penal servitude in Africa, and over 100 were exiled for the act of one. Public opinion is now turning to the side of the 20 imprisoned men, and a revision of the trial with the punishment of the guilty officials is hopefully looked for. At any rate, agitation toward this end will be steadily sustained till justice is had. For the moment matters have quieted down, though martial law is expected to be proclaimed in Barcelona. The Chambers of Commerce have presented an address to the Cortes, stating that the country is unable to bear further taxation; but whether the new taxes will be repealed, one knows not. All these incidents tend to show that the political atmosphere of Spain and of the European continent is at the

present moment highly charged with electricity, and that no one can tell what a day may bring forth or where the toc-in of the Revolution will first sound.

A Few Northern Propaganda Notes.

I was in Sheffield the other day, and was glad to see that Barton and Stockton had started the propaganda there again and that the Monolith once more resounded with the hum of successful Anarchist meetings. An interesting sign of the times has been the holding of a big meeting for the purpose of considering local Socialist organisation. The meeting almost unanimously declared itself against the official resolution that pledged the meeting to support the I.L.P., and carried an amendment in favor of a Socialist Society, to be perfectly autonomous. It will, I understand, be non-political. Barton has been recently sent to the Trades Council by the local Shop Assistants' Union, and hopes to do good work for the movement.

Manchester seems to be very quiet. All, or nearly all, of the speakers have left the town, so that outside work is hard to do. However, Jack Welsh and other stalwarts, aided on one occasion by Stockton, have held a few good meetings in Stevenson Square. Pay Jay Kelly argues and Warwick sells literature, so that in many ways the flag is kept flying as well as it can be under the circumstances.

The Leeds comrades have been very busy for the past nine months. Meetings have been held regularly every Sunday, wet or fine, and have been addressed by all the local speakers, Sollit, Drake, Wormald, Elstein and MacQueen, and by outside speakers in the shape of Barton, Stockton and Kelly.

The bright spot about the Leeds propaganda is that it is getting in touch with the trade union movement. Comrades Wormald and Elstein, who are on the Trades Council Executive, have been doing fine propaganda there, and the former has been carrying on an interesting correspondence in the *Amalgamated Engineers' Monthly* on the subject of Free Communism. Can't some of the other comrades in the Union fall in as well? What about you Mainwaring? When Jack Turner was in the town the group held a mass meeting for the trade unionists to show them what Anarchism really was. It was a splendid meeting, Turner being in his best form.

Talking about "outside" comrades, reminds me that H. M. Kelly has been having a little fun here. Speaking at a couple of our meetings he has had the good fortune to arouse the ire of the local Social Democrats, who went for him very much to their own discomfiture. One of them was very strong on the historical development of Socialism, and in order to prove the iniquity of Anarchism, declared grandiloquently that "the International, founded by Karl Marx, Lassalle, followed by Robert Owen, was crushed through the agency of Bakounine."

He was quite hurt when the crowd smiled.

W. MACQUEEN.

ATTENTION!

DEAR COMRADES,

Emma Goldman writes that she will visit Europe in the autumn to remain some time. She will arrive in London early in October, and she is desirous of doing her share to further the propaganda while here. It is quite unnecessary to tell you who Emma Goldman is; she has been an ardent advocate of Anarchist Communism for over a decade past; she has been in England before, and for the past three years has been touring the United States with great success, as the files of *Free Society* will show. Meetings will be arranged in and about London both in English and German; and if any comrades in the provinces can arrange meetings for her I should be glad if they will communicate with me for the arrangement of dates, etc.

The following is a list of lectures that she is prepared to deliver, leaving it to the judgment of the comrades to select which they please:

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| I. <i>The Aim of Humanity.</i> | IX. <i>America: the land of the Free and the home of the Brave.</i> |
| II. <i>Religion.</i> | X. <i>Politics: their corrupting influence on Man.</i> |
| III. <i>Patriotism.</i> | XI. <i>Strikes and their effect on the American Worker.</i> |
| IV. <i>The Basis of Morality.</i> | XII. <i>Marriage.</i> |
| V. <i>A Criticism of Ethics.</i> | XIII. <i>The New Woman.</i> |
| VI. <i>The Origin of Evil.</i> | XIV. <i>Sex Problems.</i> |
| VII. <i>Authority versus Liberty.</i> | |
| VIII. <i>Why I am an Anarchist Communist.</i> | |

Our comrade is now on a tour in the Western States of America and very busy, but she writes that she is preparing a few new lectures to add to this list.

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NOTES.

TRIUMPHANT SOCIAL DEMOCRACY!

Let it not be said that Anarchists refuse to recognise the "triumph" which Social Democracy has gained by the appointment of M. Millerand to a post in the Waldeck-Rousseau Ministry. Their "triumph," however, will prove their greatest defeat. Henceforward the world will know the Social Democrats simply as an advanced political party, willing to compromise to any extent as other political parties do, and if necessary to herd with any of the monsters of middle-class reaction that in the political jumble may cross their path.

The position of Millerand in relation to the unspeakable Galliffet is accepted quite frankly by Social Democrats here and on the Continent. Paul Brousse, in *La Petite République*, says: "I defy you, whoever you may be, to have acted differently."

In the same journal, Jaurès says: "For my part and on my own personal responsibility, I approve of Millerand's acceptance of a post in this fighting Ministry (Ministère de combat)."

Liebknicht, in the *Vorwärts*, expresses practically the same opinion. Bravo, he says in effect, for M. Waldeck-Rousseau's Ministry! and bravo for the boldness and courage which induced him to offer a post to one of us!

Lastly we give the opinion of *Justice* (July 1st): "We therefore heartily and sincerely congratulate our French comrades on the statesmanship, tact and splendid self-restraint which they have displayed all through a terribly trying time, and in spite of much provocation. It was by no means an easy matter for French Socialists to bring themselves to support a Ministry which included General Galliffet." Nevertheless, they have done it, and given us another proof of the depths to which one can sink when one becomes a politician.

And this is an act applauded by the Socialists, the true Socialists, as they like to call themselves,—who oppose Anarchist Communists with more virulence than they bestow on the capitalists.

Social Democrats are an advanced section of political and social reformers, that is all, and to parade all this pettifogging political chicanery as Socialism is a disgrace to the cause which true Socialists have at heart.

It needed such an object-lesson as Millerand has given us to clear some people's minds, and we have no doubt that at last many minds are cleared.

"CIVILISED" JAPAN.

Some two years ago fashionable, play-going Londoners used to flock to hear the "Geisha," a musical burlesque giving a bright presentation of a phase of Japanese life. Did these gay crowds ever think, we wonder of the real state of things in "civilised" Japan? We fear not; and for that reason it would be well if the truth could be brought home to them. The *Labour World*, a Japanese labour paper quoted by the *Clarion*, gives us a picture of the life of the Geisha girls which proves the reality to be a terrible tragedy for the unfortunate victims of Japanese commercial and sexual exploitation.

Nine-tenths of *geisha* (dancing girls) throughout the country are bought and sold and owned by a third party. These poor girls are compelled to work at the most disreputable piece of business; they are actual slaves in silken cloths with *shamisen* instead of chain. Worse than the slaves, for they are thrown out on the street as soon as their beauty and charm fade away. The licensed prostitute is another form of slavery that we have in Japan. It is much worse than a clandestine prostitute that exists in the West, for she is bought and kept within the brothel, she is not allowed to go out without permission from the authority, and is compelled to work the work of iniquity with a scanty diet. But hush, she is a creature of the almighty law of our country. There are sixty or seventy or possibly a hundred thousand slaves in our country. They are all girls of premature ages and working at looms or tending on the spindles from 12 to 14 or 16 hours a day, with no Sunday rest. These slaves are recruited and often entrapped among country farmers, who are utterly ignorant of what a worse condition their daughters are going to meet with. These poor girls are worked day

and night like a machine within a filthy factory, and fed on the coarsest food imaginable in Japan, and moreover they are walled off from the outside world, and must lead a monotonous life. All these for meagre wages of two or three *sen*! These girls lose soon the character of girlhood and all hope of home life. Is there anywhere in the world a worse slavery than this?

Unhappy Japan! You too will need your revolution to crush the cancer of your so called civilization.

DIRECT ACTION.

It really is astonishing that people should continue to follow the circuitous—and barren—path of politics in seeking to reform abuses which arise again and again as if in mockery of all their efforts.

It is matter of history now how Leicester fought and won the battle against compulsory vaccination. This comparatively small but impregnable stronghold defied the government of the country and had its way. Now has arisen a condition of things between the Leicester Board of Guardians and the Local Government Board which has induced the latter to threaten to issue a mandamus against the Guardians for not appointing a vaccination officer.

All the Board including six lady members are prepared to go to prison rather than obey, and as the people of Leicester have long since made up their minds on the subject there is not much doubt but that the L.G.B. will be worsted in the struggle. Is it necessary to remind the worthy people of Leicester that in this matter they are acting Anarchistically? And must we add once more that here is an immense field of activity, in which good work can be done and which will give some results. Resist, resist and always resist, if it is impossible to do anything more. It is more effective than all the voting that has even been done since the trick was first invented.

THE VALUE OF HUMAN SERVICE.

If it were not for the stupidity of the empty-heads who are constantly shouting the praises of big blusterers, political bullies and cunning knaves it would not be so everlastingly necessary to chronicle the doings of common men, men of the people, working in their quiet ways for starvation wages, acting the part of true heroes at critical moments, and restoring confidence in human nature which this wretched age does its pitiful best to destroy.

William Abberly, the signalman of Winsford station, points the moral for us once more. In the recent collision at that spot, when, as the report says, coolly and instantly realising the situation, he in the space of two minutes, ordered the Carlisle brakemen to warn the oncoming excursion train, placed the distant and home signals at danger, and further, ran on the line with a hand lamp. By all this he was the means of saving hundreds of lives. The report continues: Abberly is a quiet unassuming man of thirty-nine, and has seen nineteen years service on the North-Western system. He is lame in the right leg as the result of a shunting accident.

There is something truly pathetic in the last sentence when one remembers how the railway companies sacrifice their employees.

And now, dear reader, please answer for us the following question: Which shall we estimate as the most useful member of the community, William Abberly, or (for example) that bright political star, the Right Honorable Joseph Chamberlain M. P.?

JEAN GRAVE UPON GROUPS & ORGANISATION.

"Anarchists are altogether against organisation—they are a demented people," is the remark repeatedly heard. True it is that more than one Anarchist, with reasoning powers not of the highest, has, either in public meetings or through the press, repudiated every form of groupment or organisation; some because they confounded the term organisation with authority, others because wishing for individualism in its purest form they found that to accept what seemed meant by organisation also meant the yielding up of individual liberty. This, however, did not prevent either one or the other uniting with comrades of a like mind and working together with them as propagandists in some manner agreeable to them. "That is not organisation," they would say to those who drew their attention to the seeming contradiction, whilst the most stubborn would add, "It is simply a matter of free agreement."

Agreement, organisation—different words designating the same thing—let such pass. The discussion of words leads invariably to metaphysics, and that is ever a pressing danger in a discussion upon theories, leading too often to confusion over the simplest questions.

If there is one thing certain it is that, given the life of man and his moral, intellectual, and industrial development, he cannot live except in a society; a return to his former isolated position, that of the family, would mean retrogression. But equally certain is it that it is wholly unnecessary for men to live in the midst of vast conglomerations, as is the case with our modern cities, in order to exist; they can spread themselves over the surface of the globe in small autonomous groups of like affinities. What is necessary for them is to be living in close relation to other groups for the exchange of ideas and the products of their activities. Association is an intellectual need with man, for in order to develop his mind he must exchange ideas with other people, with many people, just as, materially, it has become a necessity to make use of the various complicated tools invented by his thought. To reduce the time necessary for the production of the material things of life, or to lengthen the hours consecrated to study, observation, or

repose; to contrive that necessary labour should be merely a question of health, and not remain, as now, a matter of painful torment; such is the aim of human evolution, and therefore everything tends towards association. So is it that whenever a human being desires to accomplish something, he finds himself obliged to join his efforts to those of his fellow men who think with him, in order to expand and give greater expression to these efforts; and this action occurs even with the most headstrong individualists, with those who deny the utility of groups.

Now, when one becomes part of a group of individuals, it is in view of combined effort for the furtherance of some particular object; in common action men seek to equalise such efforts, every one taking the place which best suits him and his power of activity. Whether this be called organisation or agreement matters not if the thing in view is accomplished. I have already many times stated that there is no occasion to frighten ourselves or to dissect words, but rather to seek for the meaning hidden within them.

It must, however, be admitted that this terror on the part of some of becoming engulfed in an authoritarian organisation was at one time justified by the tendency shown to resuscitate large federations with their Central Committees, their common programme, and like gear borrowed from authoritarian organisations, which it was supposed had already been changed because re-christened with new names or propped up with new formulas, but not with the true spirit of the initiative. Alas! amongst Anarchists this has not yet reached the intensity it should have reached in a body which lays absolute claim to it; still, the hatred to authority, to enrollment, the distaste for common rules, was strong enough among Anarchists to stamp out all such efforts.

The trouble is, that after a long period of activity, the groups have become dislocated, and that while the number of Anarchists increases the groups themselves become less numerous and active. Police persecutions have had much to do with the disappearance of groups. The prospect, so soon as one becomes known as an Anarchist, of having police spies at your door, making inquiries of your neighbours, your landlord, your employers; of being marked down for future searches and supervision—such a prospect has nothing attractive about it, least of all in localities where inquiries of this nature lead employers to blacklist you, thus condemning you and yours to misery and hunger. But there is another reason for the non-success of groups, and this lies in the mental attitude which leads many Anarchists to expect the immediate realisation of their wishes, to hope for some magic transformation of existing social conditions, and while waiting for the touch of the magic wand, they are blind to points of detail a complete alteration in which might easily be realised immediately.

However convinced a man may be, he finds it necessary to mingle with other individuals, to enter into discussion with them, to be conversant with current events and all that is doing or happening. Discussion and controversy give rise to new arguments. Again, what is the worth of conviction without action? It is all very well to liberate oneself from prejudices, to detest authority and exploitation—but these will only yield to blows; those who have learnt the baseness of such things must of necessity try to lead others to understand them also. This assuredly may be done and done individually. It is a work of importance and one not to be despised; yet ten men who unite and are bent upon taking the initiative are far more powerful than were each to work individually on his own account.

Why do they not unite? It is not necessary when forming or joining a group to make the fact widely known, or to publish every meeting or call in the papers! What is to prevent three, four, five or ten comrades who know each other, from uniting, from holding discussions together, without in any way forming a conspiracy or secret society or making themselves known to the police?

There will never be a want of work. Is there not ready-made material for active propaganda in every aspect of social life? It only remains for the individual to seek the most attractive to himself; the principle to bear in mind being, that it is not the number of members which matters, but that they shall be in full agreement upon the thing they want, and each and all imbued with a firm resolve to work for its realisation regardless of the amount of time and patience required to secure their end; for we must not forget that besides a lack of the true spirit of initiative we are often also wanting in persistence and the ability so to speak of following up a trail. Once we have decided to work for a certain end, we yearn for its rapid realisation, and since we are apt to forget that time and patience will often bring with them the means that may be wanting, quick discouragement follows.

Then, again, outside the work that may be done, we learn to know and enter into a closer fellowship with each other, an important fact. It was owing to such conditions that during certain incidents of the Dreyfus affair in September and October of '98, a handful of brawlers like those of the Patriots League, became masters of the streets, because, organised into bands, they knew each other, knew who were with and who against them; whilst the revolutionists, isolated, lost in the crowd and not knowing each other, were reduced to utter helplessness for want of knowing their own numbers. It would also be to good advantage if each group, instead of merely pursuing its individual ends, arranged—for human activity can well embrace several things at a time—for its members to affiliate themselves to other groups, so that we should finally see an uninterrupted chain drawing each individual to his fellow.

As to specifying the acts of propaganda in view of which groups could be formed, it is hardly possible, seeing that it is demand which creates supply: aid to the victims of oppression, the publication of bills, placards, pamphlets and papers; the steady support of such as already

exist; the founding of libraries for the circulation of literature among non-sympathisers around us; groups who will arrange for the purchase of Anarchist books and pamphlets for the use of libraries; the forming of an office for intervention in strikes—is it possible to enumerate all that might be done? How many things that seem impossible to us to-day, prejudices and institutions apparently impossible to uproot, that to-morrow we might be strong enough to overthrow? What might not be organised: a strike against landlords, a strike of conscripts, refusal to obey the civil government, to pay taxes, etc., etc.? What is requisite is merely the will to agitate and act when the need arrives—once ready, the line to pursue will be easily found.

NORWAY, DENMARK, AND SWEDEN.

As is well known, the two states of Norway and Sweden have for the past few years been in disagreement. Between the two states there is a so-called personal union: one king reigns over both; the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, is also the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, but otherwise they have nothing else in common beyond consuls in foreign ports and attachés in foreign capitals. Formerly, pursuant to a so-called 'between empires law,' customs duties were not levied separately by each country, but three or four years ago Sweden denounced this law. Norway has also for long desired that each country should have its own consuls and its own Minister for Foreign Affairs. Upon this question alone the attention of the country has been turned for ten years. The controversy has been carried on with great violence, especially with regard to the customs duties, and on the part of Sweden even with threats of war, (openly pronounced by her public officials,) a sham fight actually taking place near the Norwegian frontier. In spite of ministerial meetings and committees composed of representatives from both countries, nothing has led to a solution of the question, and it looks as though if the contention continues much longer the institution of State in each country must fall, or that separation will take place.

Increased tension has of late been caused by the election of representatives to the Peace Congress. Norway refused to elect joint representatives for herself and Sweden, and her government and parliamentary representatives had drawn up certain proposals on the question of arbitration; two points on which the king fully agreed. When both countries have to take part in a mutual affair the custom is for the king to form a ministerial committee, by the selection of a member of the government of each country including the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The king, arbitrarily making this a "mutual" affair, formed such a council, which he on this occasion called "the government of his Majesty," which it was not, because such a council consists alone of the joint governments. The king thereupon went abroad, leaving the Crown Prince as Regent. Then the member of the Norwegian government who had been called as one of the council, retired, after having emphatically declared that this council of ministers could not decide upon the choice of delegates to the Conference. Upon which the Crown Prince upon his own initiative elected delegates to represent both countries, his choice receiving the sanction of the Swedish Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Great discontent was immediately aroused in Norway; the Crown Prince was hissed on the street, while a portion of the press in Christiania declared that Sweden by undertaking to represent Norway against her will freed Norway from its obligations under the Union.

It was in consequence of these events that the *Anarkisten* published the article which aroused the displeasure of the Advocate General. The article runs as follows:

TO THE CITIZENS OF NORWAY.

It would seem that the public has not a clear understanding of the present situation. The fundamental law of Norway asserts that the king must not undertake any action without the sanction of a member of the Norwegian Parliament and government. In contradistinction to the will of the Norwegian parliament and government, the Crown Prince wished to elect delegates to the Peace Conference who should mutually represent both countries. But he knew that he could not select such representatives with the sanction alone of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, therefore he called a Ministerial Council so as to ensure the presence of a Norwegian member. The present member of the Norwegian government, Mr. Blehr, however, refused to be responsible for Norway in a resolution which was to confirm the election of a mutual representative for both countries at the Peace Conference at The Hague, stating that the question could not be decided by a Ministerial Council. Then the Crown Prince personally elected a representative for Norway and Sweden to the Peace Conference. For such an action on his part he needed the sanction of a member of the government who should be answerable for said action and whom the *Storting* (parliament) could call to account, as demanded by the fundamental law of Norway. The Crown Prince cannot evade the difficulty by stating that it was his intention that the elected representatives should represent Sweden only, for he has elected a Norwegian as representative. This is also a breach of the constitution. This breach is made by the reigning royal house of Norway. The Crown Prince has, as Regent, broken his oath to the constitution, and by doing so has freed every common soldier and officer of the army from their oath or vow to defend the king and obey his commands; has freed all citizens, both men and women, from bowing to the authority of the king executed through the government and officials. The citizens of Norway now indeed understand that they must reject the present reigning house from its position at the head of the Norwegian State. Such action, it may be, can now alone save the community of citizens. You citizens who have either sworn or made your vows to the constitution, and continue to make use of institutions founded upon it, you understand, we suppose, that if you do not now reject the reigning princely house, your whole system—the State itself—must fall!

During the last ten years the industries of Norway have greatly increased. Formerly wood industries, such as wood-pulp for making

paste-board, were largely exported, but manufactures of various kinds are now carried on. With the growth of trade the number of workers has also increased, and the demand for workers in all professions prevents there being a large army of the unemployed. After the cessation of the exemption of duty between Norway and Sweden, the Norwegian *Storting* in order to make a return as against the high rates of duty in Sweden, and to raise money for the armaments which the present internecine struggle or "battle of the union" necessitates, has imposed duty on all articles, on products of agriculture as well as of manufacture, of course under pretext of increasing the domestic production. You will comprehend how difficult it has been for the Norwegian workers to exist with the high prices caused by this protective duty; the prices had been high before, Norway not being a fruitful country, and the wages are lower than in England although they have been steadily rising during the last few years.

Anarchist ideas got their first adherents in Norway after the execution of the Anarchists in Chicago. Two men, I. Mortenson and R. Steinsvik, travelled about the country at that time and lectured upon Anarchism. R. Steinsvik published a year later (1890—1891) a paper, *Fædraheimen* and translated and circulated several Anarchist pamphlets. The year 1892 gained some German adherents to the idea in Christiania, and during the winter of 1893 there was a pretty lively discussion in the town. After the Anarchists there had done what they could by discussion and the circulation of pamphlets. *Proletaren*, an Anarchist paper, was published in Denmark (1896) having as many as 40 or 50 subscribers in Christiania. In April 1898 came *Anarkisten*; this paper had about 240 subscribers in Norway, and 90 in other countries, chiefly in Denmark. Besides there is in Norway an Anarchist twomonthly journal, by name *Fridom*.

The workers in Norway have not gone far with the Social Democracy. Social Democrats have polled but few votes and have no representatives in parliament. The workers have partly voted with the Left party. Three years ago they attained the common right to vote; but the Left party has now forfeited the sympathy of the workers, who now often do not vote at all. Trades Unions have in the last few years become quite strong. The Social Democrats try hard to gain an influence over the Trades Unions. Some of the Unions have amalgamated and embraced the Social Democratic programme; another group attached itself to the Left party; but for long there has been a growing sentiment among the workers to form a large alliance of unions which should not be influenced by any political party. The Social Democrats have fought this sentiment fiercely, but at a congress held for the discussion of the matter last April, an independent alliance was formed in spite of the congress; when several members had left for their homes, the Social Democrats seeing then that chance had placed them in the majority, moved that two members of the Managing Council of the Social Democratic Workers' Party, should have a seat on the Managing Council of the new alliance and vice versa, so that both councils should meet and influence voting for parliamentary and other representatives. This proposal, although against the prior intention of the congress, which had been called for the purpose of forming a non political alliance, was carried. By such machinations do the Social Democrats acquire power. The influence which they have had upon Trades Unions has often been an unfortunate one; their one endeavour being to ensure a strong Central Committee which shall decide everything and prevent the admission of any union which seeks to act on its own initiative.

In Denmark for 25 years the Social Democrats have met with great success, and a large proportion of the workers vote for their candidates. There are 13 Social Democrats in the Danish parliament, yet they have for years been even more moderate than the German Social Democrats. Consequently, in 1889, an opposition arose in their ranks which asserted that the social question could not be solved through parliament; and the Social Democrats immediately expelled these heretics from the Party. They then founded a revolutionary paper, *Arbeideren*, which appeared for about five years and displayed Communistic tendencies in its later issues.

In 1896 the number of Anarchists in Denmark had so increased that they issued the *Proletaren*, a fortnightly paper which had 500 subscribers, mostly in Copenhagen, and several in Norway and Sweden. Since then the propaganda has been carried on by discussions and by the circulation of pamphlets, though the police have caused them some trifling inconvenience by frightening the shopkeepers from letting them a meeting place. The *Anarkisten* had 70 subscribers in Denmark. The Anarchists in Copenhagen have this year started a co-operative society for the purchase of colonial produce.

The trade unions in Denmark and the majority of the workers are trade unionists) are controlled by the Social Democrats. The employers have repeatedly tried to break up the workers' organisations by great lock-outs. Two years ago there was a general lock-out of engineers, which ended in favor of the workers. The present lock-out includes 35,000 organised workers in eleven trades; its purpose is to stop the agitation for increased wages. There was a strike of joiners; they gained an increased wage and returned to work. But in seven little places in Jutland the joiners' wages had been lower than elsewhere in Denmark; these workers, therefore, demanded the same wage as the other joiners. The Society of Master Joiners notified the Central Committee of the trade unions that if they did not compel the joiners in those seven places in Jutland to start work, they would lock-out all the joiners in Denmark. The Central Committee threatened the workers with expulsion from the Alliance of Trade Unions if they did not yield. But the joiners persisted and their Union, its membership of the

Alliance having ceased, gets no support from it during the lock-out. Then the employers locked-out the whole of the Danish joiners; and the disputants in Jutland then gave up their demand. But the employers declared that it was now too late, and demanded that all should revert to the scale of pay prevailing before the strike; and, the joiners having refused, the employers association locked-out the workers in eleven trades throughout Denmark, saying they were tired of these constant demands for more wages.

Of course, it showed great want of character in the Central Committee of the Trade Unions, at the bidding of the employers, to threaten the joiners with expulsion if they did not start work. It certainly gave the employers the courage to go the whole length. The Central Committee now claims to have looked "behind the scenes," and that they knew, therefore, that the employers had for a long time intended a general lock-out. But the employers would not have ventured to go so far if they had not been encouraged by manifest weakness and fear on the part of the workers. Such is the result of direction by a strong Central Committee.

The employers, seeing that it is more easy to move a Central Committee to compliance than the workers themselves, now make it one of the conditions of ending the lock-out, that in future in all disputes, large or small, they (the employers) shall treat with the Central Committee alone.

On June 5, the day for celebrating the constitution of Denmark, the Social Democrats, as usual, organised a big procession in Copenhagen. This year 30,000 workers joined in the procession, which served as a demonstration against the lock-out. One could both laugh and cry on hearing that, in one trade, some of these workers had a banner with this inscription: "Politics is bread!"

Sweden has a bureaucratic government; for several decades it has possessed large and increasing industries, while a great part of the land is in the possession of aristocratic and bourgeois proprietors. The possessing classes have maintained a heavy protective duty for the past fifteen years, which makes it difficult for the workers to live. In the last few years a vigorous agitation has been carried on in favor of manhood suffrage, in which the Liberals and the Social Democrats have taken part; and in order to divert public attention from this movement and to maintain the protective duty, the government, powerfully assisted by the Agrarians, continued its resistance to Norway's claim to have its own Minister for Foreign Affairs and a separate consular staff.

The Trade Unions of Sweden have a powerful Alliance. Last year at their Trade Union Congress, it was resolved to endeavour to organise the unorganised workers and to try to bring all the Unions into the Alliance. They resolved, at the same time, that those Unions which, in a given space of time, would not accept the Social Democratic program should not afterwards be admitted to the Alliance. Then several Unions joined the Alliance, though many workers remained outside the organisations. The employers seized on this pretext to make war on the Trade Unions and locked-out the workers from many factories in different parts of the country. They declare that they will not employ members of the Socialist Trade Unions, and such workers are dismissed in masses; and where the workers are living in houses belonging to the employers they are evicted with their families at short notice. The lock-outs have been varied by strikes, and in several places the lock-out has lasted since March.

This is the present situation in Sweden—blind use of power to combat an empty program compiled by political jobbers. These great lock-outs in Denmark and Sweden will, no doubt, have a revolutionary influence on the workers of both countries.

Of Anarchists there are only a few in the south of Sweden.

A RIOT IN GHENT.

(Being a Parable of the Drilled Worker.)

"Ghent," said the Belgian poet, "has a speciality for queer riots. You may possibly remember those which occurred there a few years ago. Their origin was sufficiently comical. The Belgian people claimed the privilege of universal suffrage. The nation wanted to be the sovereign, to dictate its wishes, to speak as the master. This idea seized it quite suddenly; no one knew why. It had already a constitutional monarch; perhaps the people found him insufficient for their happiness. They wanted other kings—kings in civilian dress—and wanted these to be of their own choosing. Apparently they had no objection, these meek sheep, to being daily shorn and devoured; on the contrary, they insisted on being doubly shorn and devoured by members of their individual acquaintance, specially and solemnly selected for this express purpose. In order to acquire this wonderful privilege of being led to the Government slaughter-houses by butchers popularly invested and democratically consecrated, the worthy proletarians of Belgium attempted a Revolution. The people shouldered their arms and poured into the streets, giving vent to the usual war-cries. The bourgeoisie, protected by the troops, was simply amused by demonstrations which it knew were harmless. At Ghent, however, for several days matters tended towards tragedy. Barricades, fierce struggles, shrieks, revolver shots, cavalry charges, rifle reports, nothing was lacking for such a festival, not even dead men. There followed the usual result. Said skirmishes threatening to develop into civil war, the City Guard was called out. I was a member of it and was obliged to take my place under the banner of Order for the defence of Society. In my Company

there were but two *bona fide* bourgeois—an artist (who happened to be a friend of mine) and myself. The rank and file was composed mainly of workingmen, small clerks, humble salesmen and persons in poor circumstances, all eager for life, all, or nearly all, in heartfelt sympathy with the rioters. In the Company the subject was debated in low tones and the phrase ‘universal suffrage’ was constantly on the men’s lips, while they mutually agreed that if called upon to fire on the rioters they would fire over their heads.

“‘Their cause is just,’ said one. ‘They fight for our happiness,’ added another. ‘Better than that,’ exclaimed a third, ‘for our sovereignty. Our happiness is nothing. To-day we strive to be our own master.’ ‘Yes, yes, we want each and all to be masters, like the people of France.’ ‘To enforce our will, as in France.’ ‘To dictate our laws, as in France.’

“Another continued: ‘They may give what orders they choose—I won’t fire. First, because I don’t believe in it; next, because my brother is one of those fighting for our sovereignty. I should have fought willingly myself, but I have a wife and two children—’

“‘I, also,’ admitted another, ‘would willingly have joined the rioters; but my employer, who is not for the people, who desires to see us remain slaves, would have turned me out of doors and I should lose my work.’

“‘Aha! When we have universal suffrage, when we are sovereigns, it will be our turn to put our masters out of doors. We can snap our fingers at them then, and we can eat all the time; because once we have universal suffrage—’”

The very words, “universal suffrage,” opened up to them magnificent prospects, a wondrous paradise. They seemed to see tables laden with fine joints and agreeable beverages, idle hours in the sunshine, delights of all kinds; their very eyes dilated under these visions.

A little man, who till then had been silent, all at once began to reiterate, glancing hotly around him, “Faith! when we have universal suffrage, I know for whom I shall vote.”

“For whom?” said I.

“No matter; for someone!”

Astounded and somewhat irritated at their absurd illusions, I said to the little man, “I shall not fire, either; because I believe it to be a crime to kill a man. But they are fools to fight at all. Men fight for bread, for their well-being, for liberty, because they suffer the hideous miseries of poverty while their neighbours roll in wealth; but, simply to gain an illusive right like universal suffrage! for this lie, this slavery, this corruption! You do not know, then, what universal suffrage means? You talk of France—but they are dying of that in France!”

The small man shrugged his shoulders with a look of veiled disdain, as he retorted, “Say what you like, I won’t take the trouble to listen to you. I know who you are; you are not for the people.”

“If you know who I am,” I answered, “you know that I am your friend—the friend of all who are miserable. I would fight to gain for you but a tithe of the happiness you expect from—what? Can you tell me?”

“Of course I can,” was the reply.—“But go on, say what you like, I won’t listen to you.”

Grinding his teeth, he continued: “You want me to vote for *you*? Ah, ah! But I’m no fool; I won’t vote for such as you. When I have voted for the man I mean, we shall be the masters, the sovereigns. Yes, indeed; you’ll see wonderful things then. I know what I’m talking about, which is more than you do.”

Then I held my tongue. There was no more to be said. “At least,” thought I, “they won’t fire. We shall not suffer the shame of having shed blood.”

Our Captain was pacing to and fro in front of his Company, anxious, nervous, his ears straining to catch the as yet distant sounds of the tumult. From time to time cavalymen at full gallop crossed the square on which we stood. Soon the shops began to close, and citizens, pale and breathless, hurried into their houses. Little by little the clamor of the mob increased. Shrieks and cries for help became more distinct. With the sharp crack of a whip came the report of two shots from a mass of blocked-up vehicles.

Our captain turned to us. He was a cravat-maker of the city, a mild-eyed, round and rosy-faced man with a large stomach. “My lads,” said he, “they will be on us in a few moments; and, first, I shall have to appeal to them in legal form, and after that, if need be, to fire. For I know them. They are all mad—they won’t listen to me. It is a great bore! To fire on one’s fellow-citizens—on men whom one knows, is not a cheerful proceeding. But the law must be sustained. It is dreadfully tiresome! If they would only express their wishes in an orderly manner! The king is an honest man, the ministers are honest men. Things might have been arranged. However, duty before everything. All the same, we must do the least harm we can. Now, listen to me. When I order you to fire—the first rank will not do so—the second only will. And yet it is not exactly necessary that *every* man in the second rank should fire. We only want to frighten them. Three or four killed—three or four wounded—that will not be a great matter, and that will probably teach these idiots to pause. Now, my boys, you in the second rank—are there four men amongst you who will fire on the crowd when I give the word? Are there just four? Answer!”

And, to my utter stupefaction, from right to left of the whole line, there sprang from every lip the word,—“I,—I,—I,—I,—I.”

Out of the fifty men who formed that second rank, *two only* had kept their lips closed—*two only* had sternly resolved to raise their rifles into the air the moment the word “Fire!” rang out. And these two

men were the two bourgeois in the Company, the artist and myself. —*Le Journal*.

CUBA.

Our Havana contemporary, the *Nuevo Ideal*, an Anarchist weekly, informs us, that our ideas are making rapid progress in the islands of the Greater Antilles. The revolutionary proletarians after their heroic struggle against Spanish tyranny in favor of political independence, are now prepared to fight the politicians of Cuba and the United States in order to secure social emancipation and absolute liberty. Here is an extract from the manifesto of the courageous propagandist Palmiro de Lidia which appears in a recent number of the *Nuevo Ideal*:

“Those who desire to see our beloved country freed from every tyranny, must understand that the independence of Cuba is not merely a political but a social question.

Politics imply simply the art of making and imposing laws; whereas the independence of Cuba is the aspiration of an entire nation, that is to say the social aspiration of a collective body of people who wish to shake off every yoke and rise to the position of a nation free and independent in every relation. It is this two-fold aspiration, social as well as political, which should guide the Cuban people. And we workers, who are condemned to give to the workshops and plantations such blood as we have not lost upon the battlefield, we, more than ever, are ready to concentrate our enthusiasm and energies on this object, and to do our duty as social revolutionists in order that the political independence of the country may be quickly followed by the independence of its inhabitants.”

Those words only serve to confirm previous information received as to the activity that is being manifested by those who have been raising the standard of Revolutionary Socialism in the Pearl of the Antilles, and under which are already ranging themselves all the most active and capable elements of the Cuban proletariat. They also prove that as soon as the American troops once for all consecrate the political independence of the island by quitting it, the Cuban Socialists, far from wasting their energies in the barren struggle of parliamentary politics, will turn themselves resolutely to the conquest of the economic and social reforms demanded by Justice and Humanity.

T. del MARMOL.

The victims of the Walsall Plot. Release OF CHARLES, CAILES, AND BATTOLA. AN APPEAL:

COMRADES,

In September next the law, after having inflicted more than seven and a half years of imprisonment and suffering on these innocent men, will “set free” comrades Charles, Cailes and Battola. It is not necessary now to go into the details of the infamous trap, laid on the lines adopted by the Continental police, which brought our friends in the grip of the law.

At the present moment our object is to emphasise the necessity for organising, without loss of time, the help that each one will need when he finds himself again facing the problem of gaining his livelihood. Some rest will be needed before this can be done, and funds must be raised to find the means to keep our comrades in good heart till their strength is restored.

A Committee has been formed, consisting of members of the Freedom Group, to which the following have given their co-operation: S. MAINWARING, EDWARD CARPENTER, W. MACQUEEN, R. PEDDIE, JOHN TURNER and others.

Meanwhile, donations may be sent to the Secretary of the Relief Fund, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W., where subscription lists may also be obtained.

We trust that all comrades will use their best efforts to aid in this good cause. All donations will be acknowledged in *Freedom*, and we shall keep our readers well advised as to what steps are being taken to welcome and to aid our comrades on their release.

To the Editor of FREEDOM.

Solidarity.

Solidarity is a word to conjure with; it is a phrase we hear at all of our meetings. We paint, in words, beautiful pictures of the international solidarity of mankind and then, after the meeting is over and we go home, we ask ourselves: what is solidarity? is it a mere phrase which has no meaning, or is it a beautiful dream, or what is it? Here is a comrade, who lives in Hackney, who has not seen a comrade who lives in Camden Town for more than two months. Others, in Canning Town or Hoxton, whom he has seen but once in twelve months; not to

speak of comrades in the provinces whom he has never seen. I have just spent ten days in Leeds (and very pleasant days they were, too), meeting comrades of whose very existence I never knew, nor did they know of mine; and, as the train bore me away from that busy city, with the knowledge that I should retain pleasant memories for some time to come of that group of comrades left behind, the thought suggested itself: Is not this lack of intercommunication with each other, this lack of solidarity between comrades (because they do not know of each other's existence) one of the principal reasons why our movement has not grown more rapidly than it has? The name, Anarchist, no longer frightens the workers; for they have learned that we are workers ourselves, and many of those who do not agree with us respect our opinions. We can not even claim with any justice that the people refuse to listen to us; for in nearly every case where meetings are properly organised, either indoor or open-air meetings, they have been successful. Then why have we not made more progress?

One of the answers to that question seems to me to be perfectly clear: We do not know our own comrades; we are comrades and we are strangers. We talk about solidarity for mankind and do not practice it among ourselves. We all know how much there is to say and how interesting it is when a comrade visits a strange town; there is food for discussion for days about the movement where he came from and where he is, and fresh hope and enthusiasm are infused in the comrades by this visit. Then why not extend this feeling? Why not an Annual Conference and Reunion for a start?—Not the usual hackneyed, humdrum conference as in the past, where the relative merits of *Freedom* and *Comic Cuts* have been discussed; but a conference where not only will propaganda be discussed, but sociability and friendship be engendered.

What comrade who has attended those delightful afternoon teas after the lectures of the Libertarian Lecture Society that does not remember them with pleasure? No oratorical effects were attempted; no hard words indulged in; no enmities were engendered; we met to discuss propaganda and to have a social chat, and we felt sorry when we had to separate. Why not an annual conference in the same style, where the comrades could learn to know each other? There is no reason why we should not, and every reason why we should.

England is only a little 2 by 4 country anyway (my apologies to patriots), and easy to get over. Say we held a conference at Christmas, Bank Holiday or Easter, when special excursions are run for single fares. Suppose two comrades came from each of the following cities: Glasgow, Leicester, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool and Norwich (I do not put others simply because I do not know them), just taking these seven cities as an example, the fares would not average £1 per comrade, which would be £14 at £1 each; and in order to lighten the burden on the provincial comrades, if we established a Conference Fund and pooled the funds the raising of £20 would be a trifling affair. London comrades could entertain those from the provinces, and we should not only have a real good time, but further the propaganda immensely. I know a man who is so overburdened with money that he is willing to give five shillings to start the ball rolling. What do the provincial comrades say?

H. M. KELLY.

LIVERPOOL.

We are still keeping the pot boiling; and if it were not that, by the unkindness of fate, we are still without a club-room, we should have been able to collect together a few of the many seedlings we have raised and so displayed a visible increase in numbers and activity. The local I.L.P. held an alleged labor demonstration on the first Sunday in May. The day was a grand one for open-air meetings; but the meeting was small for a "demonstration"; and although they had half-a-dozen very fair speakers the audience was only about two hundred strong—mostly members of the organisation. In past years the S.D.F. used to combine with them in the Labor-Day demonstrations, but became disgusted with the conventional respectability of the I.L.P.ers, who held aloof from processions and sneered at the fighting enthusiasm of the Social Democrats.

There has been a great variety of speakers at the Monument from time to time; but about the worst is one, who for some months past, has expended his oratorical powers in ravings against Anarchism and Social Democracy, principally the latter. He is a large gentleman, who has in a manner boasted of his being the cause of the police raiding brothels and hunting the unfortunates from pillar to post. His forte is debating (?) with Social Democrats, when he declares that "Belfort Bax and William Morris are cesspools of filth and corruption." Of course, after such a convincing argument the enemy is utterly discomfited and extinguished. But there are not wanting those who assert that the good man is profuse of lies and exaggerations, and that Mr. Carlton is a full-blown specimen of up-to-date cant and morality. Our old comrade O'Shea has arrived here and gives our hard-worked comrade Despres an opportunity to rest, which if he desires to take it will, to say the least, be well earned. Comrade Kavanagh also experiments upon the audience for about half-an-hour some Sundays.

W. ANDERSON.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

FREEDOM Guarantee Fund.—N. 5s., A. M. 5s., Kampffmeyer 5s., H. K. 5s., D. 5s., C. R. 10s., Free Commune Group 5s., A. C. 1s., Canning Town 5/6.

Annual Subscriptions.—P. Robin 4/6, per do. Malaquin 1/6, Milburn 1s., Silver-ton 1/6, Free Society 1/6.

Sales of FREEDOM.—Newsagents 5/10½, Warwick 4s., Leeds 4s., T. May 4s., Canning Town 2/8.

Sales of FREEDOM Pamphlets.—Office 9/4, Free Society 4/6.

A Concert in aid of two comrades in distress, will be held at 8 o'clock in the **Athenæum Hall**, at 73 Tottenham Court Road, W., on **Monday July 24**, from 8 till 10 p.m., when National and Revolutionary songs will be sung, preceded by short introductory addresses by speakers of various nationalities,—among others: L. MICHEL, P. KROPOTKIN, E. MALATESTA, T. del MARMOL, W. TCHERKESOV, N. F. DRYHURST.

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- Our comrades announce that they intend to publish Jean Grave's famous book, *Société Mourant et l'Anarchie*, as translated by Voltairine de Cleyre, about the end of August, at the same price—1s. We shall have some for sale, and those who would like to read it can send us their orders.
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- BIBLIOGRAPHIE DE L'ANARCHIE par M. NETTLAU. Préface d' ELYSEE RECLUS; Brussels, 51 rue des Eperonniers, 1897; 294 pp. 5 francs; post free for 4 shillings prepaid.
- DIRECT ACTION VERSUS LEGISLATION, a new pamphlet by J. Blair Smith. Price one penny.



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