

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

Numerous—but Powerless.

Certainly the most striking and dramatic incident of the latest International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam was the scornful question put by Jaurès to Bebel, "What have you gained for the political and social life of the German people with your three million Socialist votes?" and Bebel's answer as an excuse of their impotency, "In Germany there are eleven million votes; we must have seven or eight million in order to obtain some practical results."

This was an indirect admission that German Social Democracy, belauded and praised for the past thirty years, with its three million Socialist votes, has, so far, gained not a single practical concession, economic or social, for the benefit of the proletariat.

They call themselves—these three million voters—revolutionists! Historical documents show that during the great French Revolution the parties of action numbered never more than 37,000. Revolutionists of Italy, who accomplished with Mazzini, the brothers Bandiera, Manin and Garibaldi, such heroic deeds, and who liberated their country, could never count on more than a few thousands of organised supporters in the whole of Italy.

Why were these three million German "revolutionists" unable, not only to compel the Imperial Government to carry out fundamental changes in the existing order, but failed to obtain even such minor reforms as a ten hours' day, and could not preserve for the people the once-enjoyed freedom of press and speech?

The answer to all these questions may be found in the existing political and social order of the German Empire.

First of all, then, "German Empire" is only a military and diplomatic term; there exist no German citizens: there are Prussians, Bavarians, etc.; there is no German public instruction, and the Imperial Reichstag, according to the original pact between the federated states, has no right to touch any existing economic or social organisation in the different German States, which have each their own national hereditary reigning family, ministers, senate and parliament. In those States the existing social organisation and legislation have still preserved the feudal character. In none of them does the political equality of the citizen exist—none has direct representation for the national Parliament. For instance, in Saxony, called by the Social Democrats "the red kingdom," because of the twenty three Saxon deputies for the Reichstag twenty two are Social Democrats, the national parliament is elected, not by direct popular vote but, as was done in France before the great Revolution, by elected "electors" divided into three classes.

Owing to this system the Social Democrats have no influence on the Saxon Parliament, and in Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, and other States Democracy has no rights, no universal suffrage, and that Germany in the life of each State is still in a semi-feudal condition. In order to emancipate democracy, not only a social revolution, but even a political struggle must take place in each of those States respectively. But did you ever hear of a Prussian, Saxon or Bavarian Socialist or revolutionary party? No; because no such parties exist; Social Democracy is a united, centralised pan-German party, like the German Empire, which is centralised for military and diplomatic purposes. Till now, not a single Social Democrat or foreign friend and admirer has raised the question whether a social revolution may be accomplished in Germany by a party which has no rights or political significance in each of the self-governing States. If charity begins at home, liberty and political rights must be also conquered at home and for every man. A slave at home who does not rebel against his immediate oppressors cannot be a true fighter for an abstract formula of an imperial revolution, especially when the decision of an Imperial Reichstag cannot be imposed upon the Govern-

ments of the different German States. Even if the Social Democrats had an overwhelming majority in the Reichstag, they would be obliged to accomplish an independent revolution in each State respectively; but this cannot be done so long as there are no national revolutionary parties. Taken as Prussians, Bavarians or Saxons the Social Democrats are impotent.

The Government which presented German democracy with universal suffrage for the Imperial Reichstag understood this perfectly well. The Hohenzollern and the German statesmen, headed by Bismarck, saw from the beginning of the creation of Germany that the feudal aristocracy in the different States was far from being satisfied with Prussia's supremacy, that a strong tendency existed towards "particularism." In order to guarantee the future unity of the Empire and to consolidate the Hohenzollern on the imperial throne, they decided to unite democracy by giving universal suffrage to people deprived of political rights in their own States. The expectation of these statesmen was fully realised; democracy, under the name of Social Democracy, created a pan-German, centralised party, which can boast of three million votes, and yet has no influence in any State. The service thus rendered by universal suffrage is so valued by the Emperor and his Ministers, that notwithstanding the Kaiser's hatred of Social Democracy, notwithstanding the exceptional laws of Bismarck's time, the right of universal suffrage has never been restricted. The Kaiser and his Ministers knew quite well that notwithstanding all the revolutionary and Socialist phraseology of Liebknecht, Bebel and their party were strengthening the centralised unity of the Empire, and that they, as revolutionists, remained practically insignificant so long as they were kept in political submission in Prussia, Bavaria and other States where the people do not possess any of the Democratic rights in the modern sense.

The most ridiculous thing is that the representatives of such a party appeared at the International Socialist Congress in the rôle of teachers of political liberty and democracy to Swiss, French and United States Republican citizens.

LIBERTY.

What do they know of Liberty
Who rise in wrath and then agree
To settle down under the rule
Of a foolish crowd in place of one fool?
And what do they know, although they rise,
And make the foolish crowd grow wise?
If all were wise excepting one,
Their law would break the poor man down.
And what of Liberty could he know,
Or they who treated the one man so?
And if any man say "There is no fool,"
Himself is exception to his rule.
The fool who sits in the justice-seat
Oppresses the wise man at his feet.
The wise man sitting in the fool's place
Makes the fool laugh at wisdom's disgrace.
If you bow down to a fool-made law,
You are worshipping a blind jackdaw;
If you make a law of the words of a sage,
You are putting the bird in an iron cage.
Find a man who's just like me,
And I'll live under the same law as he.
But if he says one where I say two
It is evident that the law won't do.
When these things are understood
We shall do the things no man could;
Religion will be the thought of each,
And Art not at all what artists teach,
And Science everything worth knowing,
And this is the way the world is going.

K. W.

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NOTES.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND LIBERALISM.

Have we in England anything to hope from the probable return of a Liberal Government to power next year? In a way we ought to have something to hope for from a party whose professed watchword is freedom. But no one who impartially regards the Liberal party, little as it is governed by any ideas, can doubt that it has fallen under the domination of one that is fatal: it has started on a course of action that can only lead, if it leads anywhere, to State Socialism. They will have everything for the people: nothing by the people—in Napoleon's expressive phrase. Yet there is a section of the party—a very unpopular section, it is true—the home of lost causes, despised and reviled, hooted at as pro-Boers, laughed at as constant Home Rulers: impractical people who talk ideals at election times: a section from whom we have something to hope. Not much, perhaps; a faint beginning of sympathy and understanding, unavoidably hampered by their position and tradition: yet it is a leaven that must ultimately have its effect upon the lump. Its action will be tardy, but not wholly negligible.

Unfortunately, these are just the people who will not be strengthened, but rather weakened by the return of their party to power. Ideals, even liberal ones, may flourish in opposition: but office is a deadly blight. The essential difference between a Liberal and a Conservative is so dwindled away, that once in office there is nothing to be looked for from either of them. In fact, no party *qua* party can do anything for us. Isolated members of one of the great political creeds may assist, without knowing it almost; but in as far as they do so they must be rebels. The policeman-liberty the Liberal party can give is worth nothing; they do not even begin to understand that what we want is something quite different

M. A. A.

JINGO *par excellence*.

Blatchford's latest outburst of Jingoism gives him a first-class qualification for the editorship of the *Daily Mail*. He is certainly quite out of place on the *Clarion*. He talks of Socialism, which means, if it means anything at all, at least international brotherhood. Yet it is to him and the likes of him that we owe Chinese slavery in the Transvaal. He now upholds our raid on Tibet, which, besides being as infamous as the Jameson raid, is a thousand times more cowardly. Not one word of pity has he for those brave, unhappy shepherds who fought our machine guns with sticks and stones—fought the hirelings of the English capitalists, remember, who are backed up by a so-called Socialist. But why waste time on him? The old saying is as true as ever "Once a soldier, always a soldier"; and we may add, Once a Jingo, always a Jingo.

AN OLD QUERY.

"A Farm Labourer," writing us on the old subject of political action, asks: "Can those readers steeped in historical lore point out any reforms of recent times by which the humblest labourers have benefited, and which have been acquired by talk, print or force, outside such assemblies" as Parliament and Borough Councils?

Although we are revolutionists and not reformers, we think we can answer our friend's question in the affirmative, if we agree as to what constitutes "reform." Take the Early Closing movement. That has had a fair success, and has been a good thing for numbers of shop assistants. How as it been gained? Our friend will say by Act of Parliament. Not at all. Everyone knows the Act is a failure. But wherever the

reform is an accomplished fact it is owing to the agitation, the hard work, the keen watchfulness of those who do yeoman service outside of politics. Was the docker's "tanner" obtained in Parliament? No. Was ever encroachment on common lands resisted, or a footpath or open space preserved for the people by Parliament? No. But these things have been done, and are being done, by voluntary efforts outside. These are small things, of course, and do not touch root causes of evils; but that is the way with reforms.

There are other and larger movements we could refer to, such as co-operation and trade unionism, but these we must refer to on another occasion.

SCIENCE CALLED "CHRISTIAN."

A generation that has allowed itself to be duped by Balfours and Chamberlains is sure to have in its midst a large proportion of sickly-minded and feebly developed individuals who become easy victims to the cranks and imposters—mere "flies" caught in the webs of these crafty spiders. Spiritualism, theosophy, christian science, and the rest of the arrant nonsense indulged in under other names, are all titles employed to disguise the one common design of exploiting the superstitious proclivities of the masses. Dr. Draper has well shown in his fine work, "The Conflict between Religion and Science," how christianity, for ages, combatted science in the usual christian way, with torture, with burning, with the block. So it made war on progress. Now those methods are lost to it, and new tactics being required, it endeavours to subvert the materialistic basis of science with telepathy, table-rappings, and faith cures. This mixture of clowning and craftiness would find few victims if little children were taught the elementary facts of the physical sciences in a simple way that their young minds could easily assimilate. If this were done, as it could and should be done, then at last there would be an end of ghosts and devils and all the hideous spectres conjured up by religious and spiritualist lunatics to torture the minds of little children—and some grown up ones too.

NEW EDITION OF SWINBURNE.

After nearly a generation a collected edition of Swinburne's poems is at last appearing; and an opportunity is thus afforded of judging, as a whole, work of incontestably the greatest living English poet. Swinburne's final place in English literature may be doubtful: controversy will always rage round his poetry, great with that peculiar quality which repels some temperaments as strongly as it attracts others. And yet in days when the crude doctrines of force and inhumanity find blatant expression in doggerel hardly to be dignified by the name of verse, we must turn with a profound sense of relief to a poet who has given splendid voice to ideas that are always individual and sincere, often high and universal. One can indeed say that too much of Swinburne's unequalled power of melody has run to mere extravagance; there are times when, re-reading the "Poems and Ballads"—the first of the volumes of the collected edition—one cannot help feeling that the metal is hardly of an intrinsic fineness worthy of the matchless moulding of its stamp: the expression has overpassed the theme. The changeless and unbroken perfection of the form lulls the intellect to sleep; one is carried dreaming, by the golden tide of sound, on the waves of a rhythm of irresistible swiftness and beauty whither one knows not, and hardly cares. Waking when the charm has ceased, one grieves that a master of such superb melody should not rouse the soul to something high; one cries for something greater than the acrid sweetness of pleasure, and the sick longing for death that follows on its cloying taste.

When we pass to the second volume we find what we sought. In the "Songs before Sunrise" Swinburne has found an inspiration: the "thing became a trumpet, whence he blew soul-animating strains"; here is the clarion call that awakens from languor and rouses to high ambition and noble endurance. We are in "the stir of those forces whence issued the world": the resistless, soaring impetus of the revolutionary idea was never so magnificently before us.

Even now to read the "Prelude," the "Eve of Revolution," or the "Pilgrims," is to feel more than the ardour of those past days: it is to feel hope for the future, a new belief in one's ideals, a new enthusiasm for the cause, a new love for that mistress, ageless and deathless, whom "we know more fair than anything." The austere ideal beauty of the revolutionary idea is glorified by the thunder of the verse:—

"Hath she on earth no place of habitation?
Age to age calling, nation answering nation,
Cries out 'Where is she?' and there is none to say.
For if she be not in the spirit of man,
If in the human heart she find no place,
In vain we cry unto her seeking her face."

It is a voice to shame us when we despair, to rouse us from our languor, to inspire and thrill.

"Enough is this of light for one life's span
That all mankind are mortal, but not man." M. A. A.

THE ESSENCE OF ANARCHISM.

The essential characteristics of Anarchism, *i.e.*, those peculiarities which differentiate it from all other social theories or philosophies, will form the subject of this article: it is not, therefore, a compendious definition of Anarchism which will here be attempted. Such definitions—terse, comprehensive and clear—are already before the world, and can be condensed into the one word—Liberty.

A clear definition, and one easily grasped, is necessary for the inculcating of any idea and for the grouping of persons in its defence and for its diffusion; it is necessary to have such a definition at hand as a touchstone and rule whereby to judge the ideas, measures and methods presented to us; and it is by comparison with such an accepted definition of our principles that we may most readily decide as to how far a particular act or mode of action is in accordance with our ideal, and how far we can, without any sacrifice of consistency, co-operate with other persons or parties. Socialism has suffered a great contraction of its aims, a great adulteration of its principles, and a great diminution of its once revolutionary vigour, precisely through neglecting to insist upon and reiterate a complete definition of what is meant by Socialism, and what is expected to be grasped and accepted by those to whom the title of Socialist is extended. This neglect has been the consequence of a too great desire to increase the number of nominal adherents, and of giving way to the temptation to gain recruits by lowering the standard of ideas presented for their acceptance, thus winning numerical adhesion to "Socialism" the name, at the expense of Socialism the thing. Hence, in some countries, a large proportion of the Socialist party is made up of men who have no real title to be regarded as anything more than reformers, Radicals, Republicans, or sometimes even mere faddists.

Still, definitions, though absolutely necessary for the coherence of a party and for protecting its principles from dilution or evaporation, are not sufficient for propagandist purposes, people being as a rule too lazy to take up a compendious statement, and, after applying it to the multifarious concerns of life, deduce therefrom a logical judgment as to its validity as a rule of conduct and as a statement of truth. Such persons can more readily learn the superiority of libertarian methods by a comparison of Anarchist Communism with other schools of Socialism, and certainly the differences are of a very far-reaching and practical nature.

One distinctive peculiarity of Anarchist Communism is that it has no temptation to offer the man who seeks "to rise in the world"; it has no billets in its gift; for all men alike it has but one inducement—freedom, but one position—that of workers for its sublime and entrancing object, the Social Revolution, with its transformed world and its transfigured humanity. This inability of Anarchism to satisfy the vulgar ambitions which usually incite men of intelligence and energy to take an active part in other movements—ecclesiastical, political and social—naturally limits the number who come forward to face obliquity and enmity in its defence, but it at the same time marks their disinterestedness and honesty, personal qualities which are no mean testimony in favour of any cause, and which command the respect at least even of opponents.

If, however, Anarchism has no bribe to offer in the way of superior power or position, and so proves insipid to the taste of the arrogant and masterful, it enjoys the enormous compensation of inflicting no humiliation on its most modest and least self-assertive partisans, who are now in the day of conflict, as they will be in the free society of the future, comrades owning no master, but performing their labour of love in their own fashion and as they feel their circumstances and abilities permit, or their enthusiasm impel. There is no party discipline to which the Anarchist must submit, it suffices for him to accept the principles of the party—individual freedom of action, the regulation by each of his own life and personal development, association with his fellows in accordance with his own tastes, sympathies and affinities, and recognition of the Communist declaration that the wealth of the world belongs by right to the people of the world—each individual possessing the right to share in its use according to his needs and aptitudes. Party discipline is doubtless a very useful educational means in the hands of those who seek to build up the Social Democratic State, preparing the minds of their adherents for that ready submission to authority which is essential to their scheme, and which must become habitual to those who are expected to work with regularity and exactitude as component parts of a vast over-ruling social mechanism. Anarchism has no use for such discipline, which would indeed be fatal to its purpose of forming the independent and self-reliant characters which will befit free men in the future free society.

It has been truly remarked that a man does not favour government or coercive authority in order that he may himself be compelled to do that which is repugnant to him, or be restrained from acting as he desires; consequently he must be a supporter of government in order that others may be coerced or restrained, presumably either to do what he thinks they ought to do, or to abstain from doing what does not suit his fancy. Putting all regard for liberty out of sight for the moment, what a ridiculous conception of elementary justice is here revealed! Yet such is the meddlesome and intolerant spirit which we continually encounter, and which is the result of countless successive generations of legal interference with individual conduct, that we cannot but recognise the existence of a perverted sentiment which leads masses of men to entrust others with powers which are sure, sooner or later, to

be used against themselves, rather than forego the satisfaction of seeing others worried and hampered because they differ in their choice of a line of conduct, or because they cannot see eye to eye with their intolerant critics.

Anarchism grates upon the feelings of these busybodies, who must be expected to continue to oppose its advocacy of equal liberty; while those persons, on the other hand, who love liberty well enough to extend it to others, and who wisely see their own liberty guaranteed by that extension, may be trusted to become fervid adherents to Anarchism so soon as it shall have been fully comprehended by them. Let us remember that we have to help them to gain this comprehension, and let us devote our energies to spreading the light.

From a practical point of view, the methods of Anarchism contrast most favourably with the programme of Parliamentary Socialism. The latter proposes to gain power by winning over the voting majority to its side, and by so doing gives itself the task of pushing a weight uphill only to see it roll back at the critical moment, for it is a well-known fact that there is a tendency on the part of a large section of the population to transfer its support from the party which it has helped into power and to give it to the other side. This is why the French call the electoral struggle "the game of see-saw"; the fickle crowd, which is serious in nothing, and has no settled convictions about anything, holds the balance of voting power in its hands, and, after seeing one party in power for a while, likes "to give," as the saying goes, "the other side a turn." But if these people are going to keep up a constant ebb and flow in politics between Liberal and Conservative, or between old-fashioned Liberal and more modern Radical, when is Socialism going to have a chance?

And supposing these people did by their votes give Socialism a majority, how long could they be depended upon to adhere to their opinion? The changes which Socialism seeks to introduce would take some time to realise by legal enactments and administrative reforms, and the improved conditions expected therefrom would naturally take still longer to become established, while the implacable enemies of social emancipation would take advantage of this disturbed transition period to stir up discontent among the impatient and unthinking against the new venture.

But all this presupposes the extremely improbable contingency of the dominant parties and classes ever allowing matters to progress so far; a *coup d'état* can always be invoked in time, and "saviours of society" are always ready to come to the rescue of menaced privileges. Even if the reactionary and conservative elements were to prove so incredibly supine as to allow Socialism to acquire a legal title to legislative power, the question would by no means be settled; for, to use the words of an accredited spokesman of the opponents of Socialism, Professor Flint, "The immediate effect of Parliament passing into law a collectivist programme would not be the establishment of Collectivism, but the origination of social and civil war, out of which has always come, and must come, the repression of free Parliamentary government, and the substitution for it of military and absolutist government." I do not agree with the latter part of Professor Flint's conclusion; it is quite possible that a Collectivist majority might be successful in the civil war which the professor rightly, as I think, predicts; but if, after all the working and waiting for political power, the Social Revolution still has to be effected by force, why not, in the name of common sense, prepare for the eventuality instead of directing all our attention to mere political agitation?

Anarchist, do not need to wait for the conversion of a majority in order to assert their claims, and although, of course, such preliminary conversion would enormously simplify their task, they cannot help feeling that it will be a consequence of success, not a necessary means thereto.

Whenever we have a sufficient force at our disposal we shall assert our right to absolute freedom, the numerical proportion of the active minority required depending inversely upon the energy of the individuals composing it, and also upon the favourable circumstances of the moment—such as governmental weakness, administrative incapacity, military disorganisation, or popular discontent. Numbers, on which alone an electoral contest depends, are only one, and by no means the most important, factor in any other kind of struggle; ten brave men can master twenty cowards, a man of conviction is worth a dozen waverers, and a few men of intelligence can outwit the stupidity of many. We shall not stay to count heads before taking each forward step, but press onward to the glorious future which cries to us—Daring! Daring! More daring!

HENRY GLASSE.

We hear with deep regret the news that Comrade John Smith died so long ago as October, 1903. He was a mason by trade, a great natural orator; his white hair, sturdy figure, broad Doric, ready wit, sound common sense, strong character and sterling honesty, commanded the respect of all who heard him, and obtained for him the deep affection of his fellow workers in the cause.

Those London Comrades who knew Annie Sinclair will be deeply grieved to hear of her untimely death at the age of twenty-two. Her loveable nature had endeared her to many friends, and the sadness of her end is embittered by the knowledge that had it not been for the life conditions, forced upon her by an inhuman social system, she might still be with us.

LITERARY NOTE.

We are very pleased to call the attention of readers to the fourth large edition of Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, at the low price of 6d. nett. We trust this excellent little work will continue to sell. Its educational value is really important.

Our comrades of *L'Ere Nouvelle* are organising a general manifestation amongst the workers of all nations calling for a cessation of the horrible slaughter now taking place in the Far East. For further particulars, write to J. Trégouboff, 8, rue Toullier, Paris, Ve.

Our thanks are due to an anonymous friend who so kindly sent the photographs of the slum dwellings of Liverpool for our Spanish comrades.

S. K.

REPORTS.

Leeds.

Our Comrades are still carrying on unemployed agitations. From September 5th to the 10th we have had the Trade Union Congress in the Leeds Town Hall, when our speakers—Sollit and Pollock, assisted by Woolham (S.D.F.), and speakers of the Brotherhood (Christian Communists) voiced the grievance of the workers in the city square, having done so since the month of June. On Sunday, previous to Congress meeting, a large demonstration marched to Woodhouse Moor (trade unionists) with ten bands of music, and banners flaunting in the breeze.

Our speakers and group, with some unemployed, formed up in rear—with banners inscribed, "Bread or Work," to the no small discomfort of some of the "respectable" trade unionists, who looked uneasy as their hearts swelled, no doubt, to the strains of brazen instruments.

However, that did not matter. Arriving on the moor, we ran two meetings, costing nothing but energy, and had as big crowds as the unionists had at their three platforms, which cost them perhaps £50 or £60.

Sollit spoke in his usual vigorous style, pointing out the absurdity of all the blare and noise while their masters were piling up colossal fortunes that expense of those who were making it, whilst, on the other hand, causing the most inveterate poverty, lack even of bread, absence of every hope, and an unemployed always with us summer and winter; and a feeling of revolt stirred that big crowd when he said the very foundations of the social edifice were rotten, and probably would collapse, amid mire and blood. That a great act of Justice was needed to sweep the old bad world away in order that the new could be built. Pollock supplemented bravely by saying we Anarchists do not wait for majorities, if we did then indeed we might despair of the realisation of our desires. What we need is a sufficient and efficient minority, with energy and resolution, to sweep that rotten edifice away, which Sollit truly had depicted. That all the great changes of the past have been the result of the action of resolute minorities. That majorities come in afterwards to set the seal of their approval on the changes wrought by earnest men. People belonging to this category are always willing to accept any improvement of their lot provided always they do not have to work for it; but it is to men of a different temper we appeal, and when a sufficient number of such men and women have been won over to our ideas we shall be ready to use the opportunities which history shows us are never long in presenting themselves to those who desire them.

So it will be seen the feeble few had a big field day, and did not compromise our educational work—through the starving unemployed who were present collecting for themselves two shillings and sixpence per man to take to their starving wives and children at home.

Dundee.

The few Comrades here contemplate a vigorous campaign during the winter and hope soon to have accommodation for indoor meetings and discussion. We also have a project for forming a labour union on Libertarian lines. The members, few so far, will be principally factory and calendar workers.

ALVAN MARLAW.

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