

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

JOHN MOST.

The sad news of the death of John Most came to us early last month from Cincinnati. An indefatigable propagandist of Socialism and Anarchism for nearly forty years, one of the most persecuted and maligned men of our time, and a good comrade, working hard for his ideas up to the last, we will tell something of his life and his work.

Johann Most was born in the old Bavarian town of Augsburg on February 6th, 1846. A bookbinder by trade, he delighted in breaking spells of work by tramping from town to town and country to country in the interval, and thus saw a good deal of Central Europe in his early years. This brought him into contact with the working-class movement, and he eagerly adopted Socialism, Republicanism, and Atheism. He spent some time in the Swiss Jura, at Locle, in 1868, when the International Working Men's Association was already established there, but not yet separated from politics. Had he known enough French to participate in that movement, and had he stayed there a few months longer, he would have met Bakunin on his first visit there in February, 1869; and an independent spirit like Most's would have embraced Bakunin's ideas with full ardour, and German Anarchist propaganda might have been begun by him at that time. As it was, he knew nothing of these ideas, inaccessible to him at the time; but he was always far in advance of the average Social Democrat, and was the *enfant terrible* of his party from the beginning, for he had not the slightest leaning towards compromise and diplomacy, and as he then considered Social Democracy to mean Socialism, Republicanism, Atheism, triumphing by means of the Social Revolution, he said so whenever he could, to the dismay of cautious party politicians. Besides, he had the right sense of humour and immense pluck, and knew how to hit hard in the right place. His habitual place of residence soon became the prison cell, with intervals of liberty, during which he committed over and over again the heinous crime of *free speech*, for which nearly ten years of his life were stolen from him by condemnations in various countries.

From the Jura he went to Vienna (1869), where just then a very active Socialist movement was going on, though the energy of the young party was piteously wasted on demanding a reform of the franchise. Most had indulged in some plain talk about the Republic, and spent his first months in prison. Then he took part in preparing the demonstration of December, 1869, by which about 20,000 working men, marching before the House of Parliament, demanded manhood suffrage. They got nothing, and their leaders were tried for high treason, among them J. Most and Andreas Scheu. By the way, in November, 1905, not 20,000 but 200,000 working men and women marched before that Parliament for the same purpose, and this time got fine Ministerial promises. Their leader, Dr. Adler, declared shortly afterwards at a meeting that they were now, for the time being, a Government party (*Regierungs partei*), and just now the Austrian Parliament is debating the caricature of manhood suffrage which the Government offers them. It was not for this that the men of 1869 had worked, and after a long trial (June, 1870) they were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Most, whose pluck and humour were conspicuous at the trial, received a sentence of six years, and went to Luben, where he was relatively well treated as a political prisoner. In February next an unexpected amnesty liberated the victims of that trial; Most was, of course, expelled from Austria!

He went to Leipzig, where he had his first encounter with official Parliamentary Social Democracy in the form of Liebknecht, who instinctively abhorred the fresh enthusiasm of Most. He told him coolly that in that country they had adopted *scientific* Socialism, and would have nothing to do with revolutionary phraseology. Most, always detested by these leaders, whose little game of moderation and statesmanship he continually upset, was immensely liked by the workers wherever he went, as he expressed their wants in plain language. He was invited to come to Chemnitz to edit the *Chemnitz Free Press*. In this Saxonian industrial town he spent some years—in prison and out of prison, if we may say so; and when he had, perhaps, had enough of Saxonian prisons, he went to Mainz to edit the Social Democratic paper there. The workers wanted him to become a member of the German Parliament, and he accepted, believing he could do some plain talking there before new and large audiences. He has told himself in his "Recollections" how utterly disappointing Parliament was to him—a feeling which some of our new Labour Members may also experience some day! Parliament is like a huge machine,

full of cogs and cranks, directed by Government and the party wire-pullers, who themselves are directed by money and other vested interests. There is no place for an independent Member, and Most, who entered it believing he could speak up for Socialism and explain the misery of the workers, never got a word in, and was permitted to speak only once or twice, when he had to pretend to speak on some very practical subject, perhaps the twenty-second amendment to a Bill for the vaccination of dogs or the like, and then the Speaker forced him to stick to the subject! So he himself experienced the futility of Parliament as a revolutionary platform—in Parliamentary reform work he never, I imagine, believed.

A speech on the Paris Commune (Berlin, March, 1874) meant for him nearly two years in the Prussian prison of Ploetzensee, near Berlin. Later he edited the *Berlin Free Press*, the largest organ of German Socialism, which was not much liked at Leipzig, where Liebknecht published the official organ, *Volksstaat*, afterwards *Vorwaerts*. The Berlin movement had been given up to the struggle between the Lassalleans and the group of Bebel and Liebknecht. Most was the right man there, being affiliated to neither of these sects. A so-called Christian Socialist movement had begun there, the inevitable forerunner of Antisemitism and Conservative corruption of the Labour movement. Most replied by a determined Freethought propaganda among Socialists, an idea the neglect of which largely explains the great hold which priests of all sorts still have on the workers under pretext of Christian Socialism! At that time Eugen Dühring had challenged Marxist Socialism, and was replied to by F. Engels in interminable articles spread over the *Vorwaerts* for years. Most did not believe that Marx and Engels had said the last word on Socialism, and that henceforth we all have but to learn their catechism by heart and cease to doubt, or discuss even. He saw dogmas in it. He kept his mind open in regard to Dühring's heresy, not accepting it either, as it was certainly not revolutionary. But all this showed to the official leaders that he was not one of their own kind, who would say white or black at their dictation. One may ask, Did he not hear of Anarchism during these years? I sincerely believe he did not; the little paper published at Berne (1876-77) may never have reached him, and the very few propagandists who came from Switzerland, like Reinsdorf and Werner, seem not to have known him then. Besides this, Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, Hirsch, and others had published the vilest anti-Anarchist tracts, distorting everything, so he had no chance to know.

The Anti-Socialist Law of 1878 was passed when he was in prison again. After his liberation he was expelled from Berlin, and he could see at once that for years no word of Socialism would be permitted to be printed or spoken in public in the whole country. The official party met this brutal repression by their famous so-called tactics (*Taktik*); they started papers with inoffensive names (e.g., "The Little Lamp") which contained not a word on Socialism, but as the editors, writers, and printers got their living by them, everything was all right for them, and many have indeed lived for years as Labour parasites of this description. Most was not one of them; he never had been. He went to London, where the German Communistic Working Men's Club soon enabled him to publish that paper which became his real life's work, the *Freiheit* (Freedom), issued regularly since January 4th, 1879.

The *Freiheit* began as a Social Democratic paper, and was written with verve, energy, enthusiasm, in strong, graphic language, which gave it at once a first place in German Socialist literature. It was strictly prohibited in Germany, but was smuggled into the country with so much greater diligence. The German workers liked it immensely. It had to record, besides the infamous police persecutions, no small number of acts of cowardice and wavering on the part of some Social Democrats. Besides, Most came into close contact with revolutionists of other countries, and soon the Social Democratic organ became a Social Revolutionary paper. It is said that Karl Marx himself was disgusted with the famous tactics of feigned submission, and was glad to see Most stand up and speak freely. But the official party—Liebknecht, Bebel, Hasendener, etc.—put their heads together to find a remedy for the growth of revolutionary Socialism, which upset their tactics. They had denounced Most as speaking with impunity from a safe asylum (we shall soon see how safe this asylum was); they now did the same thing, founding the *Sozialdemokrat* (Zurich, September 28th, 1879), opposing that Swiss paper, edited by von Vollmar, later by Edward Bernstein, to the *Freiheit*. Then began a royal fight between Most and his friends and the official party. Most's commonsense, good humour, and real indignation are in striking contrast to

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NOTES.

THE FIRST OF MAY.

The lack of courage and initiative shown by the English workers in general, and the "leaders" in particular, is made manifest by their pitiable failure to understand and enter into the true spirit of the First of May demonstration, or rather "celebration," as the official Democrats like to call it.

Assuredly it is better the workers should of their own choice turn their backs on the factories and come out to dance and sing this one day in the year rather than remain dumbly apathetic. But amongst Socialists and Democrats a sterner spirit is needed.

Our French comrades have taken the only course that is now open to Labour in its struggle against capitalism. They have left the rubbish-heap of "political action" to the crafty spirits whose ambitions have long enough deluded the workers, and they give their energies to the propaganda of the General Strike. The First of May is the great day they have chosen to enforce if possible their claim to the eight-hour day by the vigorous and courageous method of *direct action*. That is something that leads us onward—a step towards the Revolution. And what is to happen here in England? After marching to Hyde Park and back, the comrades, we are told, are invited to a meat tea at the Holborn Town Hall! And brave spirits in Russia are tortured and slain, and unhappy victims of English knavery in Natal are murdered by the law, and the pulse of the British working man remains placid and normal. And of such is the kingdom of England!

THE COMING REVOLUTION.

A. E. Fletcher, reviewing in the *Clarion* Tolstoy's "End of the Age," makes some interesting remarks on Anarchist Communism. He says, for instance, that the success of the Doukhobors in Canada proves "that Anarchist Communism is practical policy." He also sounds a note of warning to which the stiff-necked, law-abiding Britisher would do well to listen. "We are in the habit," he says, "of raving against the Russian autocrats; but there are in all countries statesmen who would not hesitate to adopt Russian methods if the people once showed any sign of successful revolt." Quite true. And again: "Nearly all Parliaments are more or less frauds, which plunder the masses and enrich privileged classes." Observe, he does not mention which are the exceptions to this general rule.

Finally, he refers to Anarchist Communism as the ideal form of society, but can see no way to it except "through Collectivism"—meaning, we suppose, the State. But where is the political form in civilised countries that answers in any way to a preparatory condition leading on to the ideal? It does not exist, and could not be found. For humanity needs to *break* the shell that cripples its efforts towards a better social life. Then the path is clear.

When imprisoned children are set free, they rush through the fields like wild creatures. They wish to *feel* what freedom is. Perhaps they stumble and get bruised, but they live better for it.

THE COURRIERES DISASTER.

The terrible mining disaster at Courrières gives one an awful and instantaneous picture of how the exploiter lives on the misery, the suffering, and the very life-blood of his victims. We do not believe in punishment, but the insatiable and inhuman greed of the directors not only needs that they should be expropriated, but that they should go into the mine, and while facing its dangers should toil to support the widows and orphans whose husbands and fathers they have deliberately murdered.

As so often happens on occasions like these, the brave hearts and clear heads of the men—the "rank and file," as the cant phrase goes—have given splendid instances of how courageously and intelligently the workers can act while officials and political spouters are taking care of their skins.

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the lame, impotent defence of his opponents, who, however, felt safe in relying on the desire for peace and quietness of the majority of their electors, who still wielded the party machinery and held the funds, and who, as old Marxists and Lassalleans, were past masters in the under-hand warfare of intrigues and slanders. Wherever Most could personally speak to the workers, he carried the day; but the police made his agitation on the Continent impossible for him. He had to leave Paris immediately after his speech at a German meeting there; he could stay but a short time in Switzerland, and was expelled from Belgium on arriving there. The official party meanwhile held a Congress at Wyden, Switzerland (1880), which was managed in such a way that Most and the delegates who might be in his favour had no chance of being there. Of course, this Congress excommunicated him.

The real reason why Most and his friends could not vanquish the official party, which just then was at its worst period, was that their own ideas were rapidly developing from Revolutionary Socialism to something very near Anarchism, and by-and-by to real Anarchism. This evolution, which was clear enough to them—in the absence of all direct means of propaganda, when only here and there a smuggled copy of the *Freiheit* could with difficulty reach them—this evolution, then, could not be made sufficiently clear to the Socialists in Germany, who knew nothing whatever about Anarchism, and had only heard or read the Marxist calumnies against Bakunin and the like. Anarchism was first mentioned in the *Freiheit* in some letters written by A. Reinsdorf (decapitated in Halle, 1885), who had been a member of the Jurassien Federation. Most was hitting hard against enemies all round, and could not at the same time theoretically propagate ideas which were new also to him. In this way the greater part of the German and Austrian readers could no longer follow the paper, and took no further interest in it. They wanted a thoroughgoing Social Democratic party, and were disgusted with the waverers and cowards; but they had no desire to go further, and gradually joined again the old flock.

A small number of men, however, enthusiastically accepted Anarchism, and in Austria during the years 1882 to 1884 the great majority of the party instinctively followed them, though any theoretical propaganda was almost impossible. They believed in a Social Revolution in the near future, and endeavoured to rouse the people by individual acts of violence, preceding by nearly ten years Ravachol and his comrades in France. The people did not follow them, and their small numbers were almost exterminated in batches—the gallows, long terms of penal servitude, or some escapes to England and America.

Most had found in London some excellent comrades who helped the *Freiheit* with enthusiastic determination. The best of all was John Neve, indefatigably devoted to Anarchist propaganda until his arrest in 1887, when he entered a German prison which he never left alive. Later, in 1880, came J. Trunk, V. Dave, and others from Paris. There was life and spirit in this propaganda as seldom in a movement, and all seemed going well when the English Government came to the help of Bismarck, put Most in jail, and in 1882 made the further publication of the *Freiheit* in London impossible.

A spirited article headed "At Last!" (*Endlich!*) which Most had written on hearing of the execution of Alexander II. of Russia by the Executive Committee of the *Narodnaya Volya*, served as pretext. Most was arrested and charged with inciting to the murder of kings in general (March, 1881). The indignation of English Radicals and Socialists at this Press persecution will still be remembered. An English paper called *Freiheit* was started (April 4th—June 15th, seven numbers), and our old comrade F. Kitz will, perhaps, give us a more graphic account of those stormy weeks than I could do from hearsay. For an account of the trial the pamphlet, "The 'Freiheit' Prosecution: The Trial of Herr John Most" (London, 1881, 30 pp.), might be read, containing Mr. A. M. Sullivan, M.P.'s, speech for the defence. Lord Coleridge sentenced Most to *eighteen months' hard labour*, and the legend of English free speech and Press, upheld by English juries, was destroyed.

When, at the time of Orsini, Palmerston had Simon Bernard tried, the London jury acquitted him (1858). The most compromised refugees of the Commune were let alone in England. But John Most went to hard labour, a task which never had been imposed on him in his years of prison as a political offender in Austria and Germany. Since that time the trials of the printers of the *Freiheit* in 1882, of Cantwell and Quinn in 1894, of V. Bourtzeff in 1897, and of the Italian comrades of the *Insurrezione* in 1905, did away with the last remnants of the beautiful legend.

M. N.

(To be continued.)

A famous statesman travelled to an unknown country whose inhabitants, divining his character, implored him to give them wise counsel.

"Make your nation a Republic," he said, "and you will have liberty."

"We already have liberty," they replied; "what is a Republic?"

Greatly disconcerted, he left them and went into another land; and there also the people sought advice of his wisdom.

"Make your nation a Republic," he said, as before, "and you will have liberty."

"This," they answered, "has been long a Republic—what is liberty?"—*Cosmopolitan Magazine*.

The Right to Work.

The "Right to Work" demonstration at Queen's Hall on February 21st last was a very tame affair. Socialism was spoken of, but as something far away; and in the meantime it was recommended to trust to the action of Parliament. It was thus pre-supposed that the great Unemployed Problem is one which may be solved by Parliamentary legislation. This is, we believe, one of the greatest mistakes which Labour can be induced to commit. To leave the solution of the Unemployed Problem to a Parliament which necessarily is the representative of the moneyed classes of this country, even though it contains a small group of Labour representatives, is to take precisely the course whereby nothing substantial will be done, and new evils will be substituted for the old ones.

The Unemployed Problem is part of the great Social Problem, and any approach to its solution can only be found by way of a socialised organisation of consumption and production, the first step towards such a socialisation being that the land should revert to its only rightful possessors, the people of this country.

Under the present capitalist system all industries necessarily undergo fluctuations, and periodically throw out of employment considerable numbers of working men. But even now there is one immense industry—agriculture—which is always in want of more hands, either for increasing the bulk of its produce and its variety, or for making permanent improvements in the land. These latter are so much needed that *any* amount of labour can always be spent on them with profit for the community. And in its modern aspects agriculture, with its sister arts of market gardening and horticulture, is an industry in which any amount of unskilled labour could be employed (under intelligent management), so as not to be unpleasant even for the town-bred working man.

It must also be borne in mind that work on the land means more work for the industrial worker as well. Iron and wood implements, glass, chemical manure, agricultural machinery, machinery for co-operative creameries, and so on, are required in considerable quantities, as soon as *intensive* culture is resorted to; to say nothing of the fact that the agricultural labourer who is adequately paid is the best customer for the country's industries. Jersey and Guernsey, the aggregate area of which is only 41,300 acres, *i.e.*, 65 square miles, not only give occupation for a population of 93,570 souls, but also import considerable quantities of manufactured goods for that relatively prosperous population.

But the development of this fundamental, vital industry is prevented by our monstrous laws, which secure for a number of individuals the ownership of immense areas of land, and give them the right to drive away from that land the increment of an increasing population, throwing them into the ranks of the unemployed in the cities.

Therefore, the first step to be taken is for the people of this country to re-enter into possession of their own land, the immense value of which, created by all the nation, is brought now into striking evidence.

However, in speaking of the land, it must be well understood that what is wanted is not one of those vague hybrid schemes which go under the name of "land nationalisation," but are in reality mere schemes of some taxation of land values. What is wanted is a concerted action of the people for getting hold of the land in their urban and village agglomerations, and for organising the socialised culture of the land in accordance with the needs of the population.

Our forebears during the great French Revolution had well realised, when they inscribed in their "Declaration of Human Rights" "The Right to Work," that it would remain a mere word so long as the *Right to the Land* would not be recognised for everyone, and nobody would be allowed to own more land than one family is able to cultivate,—that is, not more than 120 acres.

* *

As to meeting the *immediate demands of the unemployed*, it is not the Government, with its machinery which exists for the maintenance of middle-class rule and middle-class advantages, which the workers have to apply to. The means to meet the *immediate demands of the unemployed* can only be found by the *working men themselves*, if they discuss the matter in every locality, then rediscuss it at a general working men's congress, and then bring their resolutions before the nation, with the expression of their firm will to carry these resolutions through.

Wide experience on the Continent has already proved that each time the working men seriously discussed the problem of how to meet the fluctuations of the industries, they found a variety of partial and temporary solutions which they even did not suspect before they had set earnestly to work. Their common sense and their knowledge of local needs and means proved to be more effective than "Paternal State" legislation.

Both for the clearing of general ideas upon the subject and the immediate results, it would have been, therefore, infinitely better if the workers of England had adopted the plan which used to be carried on in the International Working Men's Association, namely, that of first raising the discussion of the problem in their local branches, and then bringing it, in the shape of elaborate local reports, before a General Congress of Labour. If that had been done since the beginning of last autumn, instead of hopefully trusting the "paternal legislation" of the last Tory Parliament, the proper solutions,

temporary and general, would have been infinitely nearer than they are now, or will be one year hence if the labourers now build their hopes on the new Liberal Parliament.

To talk about "afforestation" in connection with the unemployed seems to be the fashion of the moment. So let us add a word about it. The planting of more trees in this country is certainly desirable, and if it were done by the Corporations on *their* lands, for the protection of water supplies of the large cities, or by local bodies in connection with general schemes for capturing more rainfall, it might be a boon to the country—if it only could be done by these bodies without the usual red-tapeism and local money influences. But the workers ought to be warned that they must be careful. If "afforestation" is going to be done in the way it is talked of in the drawing rooms and the papers, it will simply mean a new gift to the landlords, who will use the cheap and partially State-paid labour of the unemployed for the increase of the value of their estates.

CHRISTOPHER HANSTEEN.

It is with deep regret we have to record the death of Christopher Hansteen, our Norwegian comrade and editor of *Til Frihet*, on March 2nd. More than once we have alluded to his kindly nature, the friendly help he gave *Freedom* when in this country, and to his long illness (consumption), borne with much patience and courage, which by degrees sapped his powers for work and the editing of a paper. The Anarchist movement is still in its early stages in Norway, and Hansteen practically set up and printed *Til Frihet* himself. The labour and courage needed for bringing out a paper under such conditions is known only to those who have tried it, and if it weighs hard on a strong man, what must it be to one dying by inches of the cruelest disease known to humanity? While he could, Hansteen brought out the only Anarchist paper in Norway. It dies with him. To his wife and the two little daughters of whom he would speak so fondly we send our truest sympathy in their sorrow.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

The State employees have decided to agitate for the right to combine and to form Unions. That right has been refused several departments of State already, notably to teachers in State schools and certain grades of postal officials. Now has come the turn of railway platelayers, who on depositing their proposed list of by-laws with the authorities, as required by law, have been denied the liberty to form a Union. The question has been laid before the Chamber, and shelved for a Commission to investigate and decide once and for all whether men employed by the State shall be permitted to combine. The employees themselves contend that they have as good a right to organise as their fellow-workers, and many meetings have been held in Paris and the provinces to discuss the question. The Parliamentarian leaders are, it is said, somewhat stirred by the independent attitude assumed by the men, the inclination being to drop political wirepullers and make a straight fight for themselves, either to win a favourable reply from the Chamber or, failing, to combine without it. The wheels of the Labour chariot would go round a good deal smoother were there fewer "political leaders" ready to drop grit in place of oil upon heated axles.

The calamity at Courrières has aroused an intensely bitter spirit among miners throughout the country, for, in spite of the mine-owners' efforts to keep the fact secret, it is known that the Company's profits and shareholders' dividends were enormous—enormous at the expense of poor material for roof and other fittings, and an absolute disregard of all but pressing repairs. The mine was free from gas, but heat generates this, and directly a fire started in one of the seams, if that section was to be barred off from air in order to smother the flames, the first care of the engineers should have been to leave an outlet for the escape elsewhere of the generating gas, or, if there was a special regard for human life, to close the workings until safety was assured. The engineers bungled their work, and in no case was a suggestion made to close the mine for a few days in order to prevent a catastrophe. It would have meant a fall in dividends and profits. Over and over again the old story is repeated—on one hand, the rapacity of the capitalist or his company; on the other, the supineness of the worker, regardless even of his life in the struggle for daily bread. When the first hours of stupefaction were over, indignation meetings were held in every village in the district, a strike was proclaimed, and riots took place when the mailed fist of Authority showed itself. Partially subsiding, the strike, however, has since been renewed, while outside Courrières excitement continues and is extending. Meanwhile the Chamber has been forced to promise a strict investigation into the causes of the disaster, and if carelessness on the part of the Company is proved, the mines are to revert to the State. That such carelessness existed, and was the direct cause of the loss of over 1,200 lives, seems abundantly clear. Three months before the explosion the miners' delegates reported again and again, both to the mine and Government officials, that in various workings the air was so stagnant and heated that the men suffered horribly, working in a state of semi-suffocation; that through want of proper ventilation gas was accumulating in disused galleries; that in the event of fire the old, dry timber in these workings was a source of great danger, and should be removed. These reports, sent in at regular intervals, were simply pigeon-holed. Proper ventilation costs money. What is the comfort or safety of a worker to the modern shareholder or Government official?

United States.

American industries have long been a byword among European nations for their callous disregard of human life. The wealth of American millionaires—the men who come to Europe to spend their money in orgies at the great hotels, to rent ducal grouse moors in Scotland or baronial halls in England, to entertain kings and princes, to buy up newspaper combines and run the English market, to wed their daughters to impecunious nobles, to rob each land of its most priceless works of art—this wealth is literally ground out in the blood and death-agony of countless workers in the great industrial centres of their own country. And they know it. Roosevelt, ex-policeman and cowboy, knows it; Congress knows it; but the truth is only slowly rousing public interest and opinion, some lately issued insurance figures having at length startled the

general apathy. In one year alone, 1904-5, in the Pittsburg region, nearly 18,000 workers were killed or maimed for life in mine and ironworks. And these only number the insured. Hundreds of the non-insured were crippled or killed and buried without official or public comment. Note, moreover, that this appalling immolation of men's lives and limbs is docketed to one district alone. If men shudder over the loss of life on a battlefield, what is to be said of mill and mine owners who hurry off to Europe in their regal yachts to lord it everywhere with dollars dripping with their fellow-creatures' blood? All hail to those British citizens who refuse libraries offered them by the Carnegies of the United States. Accidents in mill and mine are frequent enough in other countries, but nowhere as in the States is industrial suffering and death treated with such complete apathy and contempt. Repairs cost time; time means loss of dollars. Money first, safety of miner or mill-hand next, or not at all. Dead? No matter—ten ready to take his place. So runs the merry round. The piteous cry of the factory children is only just beginning to be listened to. Women started the crusade on their behalf; but the public conscience is a tough thing in America, never to be reached by a reformer without a political pull. Just now it is the turn of the oyster-man to clutch at the skirts of Mercy and cry aloud. No matter what the trade, the worker when he refuses to *hit back* is maltreated or done to death at the will of the oppressor—the man who holds the money-bag. Hence, a worker may drop into the furnace, be consumed every bone of him, and the case not reported. Officials warn the men not to talk of what goes on around them or they will be discharged. So in the oyster trade, every oyster that graces the feasts of the Fifth Avenue epicures is stained with the labour and blood of the toiler. Perhaps the flavour would not be so delicate without them. Chesapeake Bay is a centre of "shanghaiing," that is, impressing homeless or hungry men into service as dredgers, etc., after the method of the press-gang days, and then starving, ill-treating, and murdering them as they choose for the duration of the oyster season. This thing has been going on for years, is perfectly well known to every dweller in the marble palaces of Baltimore—that beautiful Baltimore, with its sunny sky, its avenues of trees, and glorious bay—but not a priest, a woman, or an official has risen up in wrath and cried shame upon it. It was the death of three "hands" upon a single vessel that led to an investigation and a cry of horror from certain newspapers. For once, the Press did not drop the matter, and the shame of Maryland has been exposed. Baltimore, if a sleepy, is a proud city. Perhaps now she will see to it that her oyster-men die decent deaths, and are not left to the tender mercies of a specially brutalised brand of sea-captain. But the men themselves could have ended their long, slow martyrdom years ago had they only *hit back*. And to do this needs no Union, but a simple tacit understanding among the members of each oyster-boat or workshop to link arms and stand by each other to the death. A master, be he mine-owner or sea-captain, may bully or ill-treat one "hand"; he will think twice before he hits out at six looking him straight in the eye.

The first number of *Mother Earth*, a monthly review published and edited by Comrades Emma Goldman and Max Baginski, has just appeared. The price is 10 cents, and address P.O. Box, Madison Square Station, New York City. All will wish the venture every success, for it is an earnest endeavour to meet a long-felt want in the States, that of a serious review whose pages will be open to every phase of Libertarian thought. The March number contains 64 pages of printed matter, the type and general make-up being excellent. The original title, "The Open Road," proved already in use, so a new one had to be chosen, and "the Earth free for the free individual" is the keynote of the present selection. It is the aspiration which every Anarchist has at heart, and the aim for which he works and is ready to suffer.

Germany.

A comrade at Dusseldorf has been sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for distributing Anarchist literature on the anniversary of Red Sunday. Anarchism is supposed to be undergoing the smothering process in Germany, but evidently the fire is not yet out.

Here and there agonising details are coming to light respecting the misery of the toy-makers, and the slavery of the many children who help in the lighter parts of the industry, the chief scene of which lies in one of the most beautiful regions of the Fatherland, a district in Thuringia where mountains, streams, and forests vie with each other in beauty, as if to cloak the misery of the people. Thousands of families are living there in a state of chronic starvation and consumption. The average wage is three halfpence an hour (15 pf.); the working day 14 hours. Most of the toys are made in the workers' homes, and require considerable skill and an extraordinary patience. Some of the best workmen only get six shillings a week; there are women working from morning to night at four shillings a week, and children at one and sixpence. Most of the work, in consequence of the poverty of the people, is done in the single room which is kitchen, bed, and living room in one. On toys, at least, the tag "Made in Germany" will in future mean for those who read these lines child slavery and skilled workmanship at a starvation wage. H. Nevinson, the traveller and journalist, who through *Harper's Magazine* of New York has been exposing the hideous cruelty of the Portuguese in their West African colonies—cruelty on a par with the Congo atrocities—reports that since his articles were published an American factory owner has stated that he will not manufacture another grain of cocoa imported from the colonies in question. But toys—toys that baby fingers are breaking every hour of the day—how shall we stop their manufacture and importation, though painted with tears and carved in hunger? Thuringia needs the Anarchist spirit, which will suffer untold miseries for years, but which revolts when the limit of injustice and endurance is reached.

REPORT.

The series of Sunday morning lectures in English arranged for by the *Workers' Friend* Group in their new Club and Institute, Jubilee Street, Mile End, came to an end on March 25 with the fifth, as they were not responded to as was hoped by the English workers in the district, the lectures being mainly intended for them. However, the experiment gave pleasure to those concerned, the audiences varying from seventy to twenty; and it is possible a resumption may be held on Mile End Waste as the summer advances. The speakers were Comrades E. Leggatt, J. Turner, F. Kitz, and A. Marsh, who each gave an excellent "talk," in spite of empty chairs and the lack of opposition—that great heartener-up of debate and oratory!

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