

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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INTERNATIONAL LIBERTARIAN AND COMMUNIST LABOUR CONGRESS.

COMRADES,—When in 1893 the Socialist Workers' Congress assembled in the *Tonhalle* of Zurich, the more revolutionary elements among the Socialist and Libertarian fractions decided to meet apart and to stand in opposition to the reformist parliamentary current. Several delegates to the General Congress and a number of Anarchists, aware of the object of these revolutionary meetings, came every evening to the *Platten-garten* of Zurich to attend our congress. The Congress of Anarchists, as it was at once named by the press of various countries, had become a *fact*, the significance and success of which were acclaimed with general satisfaction in revolutionary circles.

A second Congress of the same kind, and as on the previous occasion during the session of the Socialist General Congress, was held in London in 1896. And it will be remembered that in London, owing to the decisive exclusion pronounced against the Anarchists by the Socialist Congress, a clean and definite split occurred between the parliamentary Socialists and the revolutionary Communists.

From whence arose the necessity for special common action among the Libertarian, Communist, and revolutionary elements in the Labour movement.

At the time of the International Exhibition of Paris in 1900 preparations were made to hold another International Revolutionary Labour Congress. The Waldeck-Millerand (the Social Democrat Millerand) Ministry prohibited the Congress, but at several secret meetings held in Paris and its precincts the comrades who had arrived from two continents were at least able to discuss certain important questions.

The federations of Libertarian and Communist Labour groups of Holland, Belgium, Germany, Bohemia and London have now decided to convoke a *fourth international Congress*, the arrangements for which have been assumed by Belgium and Holland, and which will be held at Amsterdam during the summer of 1907, on a date to be subsequently fixed.

We intend that this Congress shall be open not only to delegates of Libertarian and Communist groups, but equally to comrades who attend on their own initiative. Although it may perhaps prove desirable to count voices for and against certain propositions, the existence of a *majority* and *minority* will not have the same meaning attached to it as that given by parliamentary bodies and congresses, where minorities are expected to submit to the decisions of the majority. We do not admit decisions of an *obligatory character*, but this does not prevent our *considering it of interest perhaps to know how many groups and comrades hold a given opinion*.

The discussions at our sittings will be of a similar character to those at international scientific congresses. We see no reason why comrades who come individually should not receive as ready a welcome to the Congress as group delegates, provided we know they come in good faith.

Besides Libertarian groups and comrades, all Trade Union delegates and individual Trade Union organisers, all delegates from Communist colonies, etc., will be equally and as heartily welcome. *We address all those whose desire is to work in preparation for a better Society, a Society in which the principles of Liberty and Communism will reign.*

At our Congress we shall call upon you to discuss not merely one side of our principles and Libertarian and Communist propaganda, as, for example, is done at Freethought and Anti-militarist Congresses, but to discuss these principles and this propaganda to their fullest extent, believing that the necessity of reaching a mutual understanding on several essential points in principle and tactics renders our presence at an international reunion as useful as indispensable.

During the last years Libertarian, Communist, and Anarchist principles and tactics have widened their sphere. Without wishing to anticipate the order of the day, to be subsequently fixed by the groups, we would remark that *direct action* has been so forcibly and consciously inaugurated in several countries, precisely through the influence of our comrades, thereby bearing witness to the progress of our ideas in Labour circles, that a discussion of the problems it raises would of itself justify the convocation of an international congress.

But there are other questions as interesting, such as Anti-militarist propaganda, the relation between the Libertarian, Communist, and Anarchist movement on one side, and that of certain religious move-

ments (Tolstoyism, Christian Anarchism) on the other—a point which it was not possible to discuss at the Congress of 1900. Finally, the methods to be adopted so as to assure more direct international relations claim exhaustive discussion. And so on.

The discussions at the Amsterdam Congress will preferably be in French, German, and English. Should it appear desirable to employ another language, this would be done only in the case where the translation would not offer too many difficulties.

As the Congress must be held either in the month of July or August, we ask that all reports required to be read or distributed during the course of the sittings may be sent before the 1st of June to the address of the Secretary of the Libertarian Communist Federation in Holland, Joh. J. Lodewijk, Cornelis Anthoniszstraat No. 49, Amsterdam, Holland.

We also solicit all groups and federations who in the meantime shall decide to send delegates to communicate with us prior to the above date. Attention to these suggestions will greatly facilitate the preparations for the Congress and reception of the comrades.

All money remittances in aid of the congress should be sent to the Treasurer of the Netherland Federation, J. L. Bruijn, No. 170 Keppelerstraat, The Hague, Holland.

Such remittances will be acknowledged in the *Bulletin de l'Internationale Libertaire*, where all subsequent information and communications relative to the Congress will also be published. The address of the *Bulletin* is, Georges Thonar, No. 97 rue Laixneau, Herstal-Liège, Belgium.

The Sunday Rest Demonstration in Paris.

The demonstration of the 20th of January seems to have been a capital lesson in tactics for the French workers. What a strange situation was that of those comrades who shouted "Long live the Law!" whilst in order to protect the shops that were opened in defiance of the law our Government had mobilised large bodies of police, cuirassier squadrons, and troops of the line regiments.

Of course it is not to congratulate the workers for their trust in the law that we take interest in this Sunday rest movement. For all those who desire an organisation free from authority and a society where leisure and pleasure for all human beings are a condition of life like breathing and eating, the Sunday Rest question in itself appears to be a mere trifle. Yet that 20th of January demonstration proved once more we alone are perfectly right and logical in our ideas and action.

Those who waited for a genuine reform from Parliamentary providence have been once more totally deceived. That malicious rascal, Prime Minister Clemenceau, "the first policeman of France," as he calls himself, pretending he had not been advised of the demonstration by the syndicates, took extravagant measures for "the preservation of public order"; and his faithful lieutenant, the ferocious and malicious Lepine, basely ordered his men to crush and kick out the inoffensive groups of workers. Oh! these workers! How forgetful of harm, how soft-hearted they are! For several minutes that wretched brute Lepine was their prisoner! They did not know what to do with that ridiculous and cowardly puppet. They only laughed at him and left him absolutely uninjured.

Notwithstanding, a new era, an era of direct action and self-reliance, seems to have been born. For many years, the French proletariat remained confident in the benevolence of his masters, and he slept. Now he awakens. Last year on the First of May he commenced to act. The 20th of January last was a second step. No doubt there is clumsiness in his tactics. Clemenceau had not been informed officially, and yet he knew everything concerning the programme elaborated by the syndicates, the exact hour of the gathering, the starting-place and the streets where the procession was about to pass. So he had only to unloose his police dogs, who with their long practice of injuring crowds now prove to be most crafty in their art.

Direct action requires secrecy, prudence and boldness, intelligence and striking rapidity. The men must not gather themselves into a mass, to be scattered easily. They must adopt the guerilla mode of fighting in many small parties, independent and acting at their will. Then police and troops, who cannot be everywhere at the same time, become absolutely powerless to repress.

Practice and revolt educate the workers quicker than the best meetings or theories. That is the principal reason why these efforts of the French workers are noticed here.

The 20th of January demonstration has had a good effect. It was necessary to make it clear that the upper classes, however Liberal or democratic they seem to be, are able to do nothing at all for the betterment of our lives. It was also necessary to show the workers that no law ever passed for the workers' sake is effective and useful when applied, and that the only law upon which they should rely in the future is that of their own strength and their own initiative.

A. PR.

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NOTES.

THE GERMAN ELECTIONS.

The defeat of Social Democracy in Germany hardly supports the Marxian formula that Socialism is inevitable in spite of all the opposing tactics of the ruling classes. The voting power of the Social Democrats continues to grow, but how far this helps on the Social Revolution can be judged by the losses just sustained by this party. Reaction, ever ready to use any means to stem the tide of progress, knows how to deal its blows at political opponents just as well as it knows how to use brute force against popular movements. The Socialist who goes into politics need not think he will necessarily escape riot and rebellion. The political *émeute* claims as many victims as the revolution, and the rulers know better how to provoke the former than to avoid the latter. In any case it is the same thing to Kaiser or capitalist—when he scents danger he is prepared to shed blood.

A CONTRAST.

Twenty years ago two men were working side by side in the ranks of the Socialists, fighting the cause of the workers. Many things can happen in twenty years, and strange things have happened in the case of these two individuals, from which, as it seems to us, a moral can be drawn. Tom Mann and John Burns were Revolutionists in 1886, and although political action was in their minds, the fatal step that leads astray had not been taken by either of them. Soon after, as we all know, the latter was elected to Parliament, and commenced that political career that has ended in making his name a by-word in the Socialist movement and something for the governing classes to conjure with. During these years Tom Mann has remained more or less continuously an active propagandist, and whatever may be said for or against him, has never deserted the cause of the workers. And now we read in the pages of the *Socialist* of Melbourne how strenuously he continues the good fight in that city. He, with other comrades, has during the past twelve months created a militant Socialist movement that now rests on a firm basis. Indeed, so well has the work been done that it may fairly be said a new life with Socialist ideals is beginning to animate the people of Australia. In all this Tom Mann has worked simply like an energetic comrade amongst others, speaking, demonstrating, fighting as in the good days at home. And the results are something to be proud of, something that all can see, appreciate and understand. In the struggle for free speech now being carried on in Melbourne he has taken a prominent part, and the news is to hand of his release from prison after serving a term of six weeks. These are the men who make movements, and long may they keep their activities for such good work free from the snares and intrigues of politics. So after twenty years we see the results consequent on the parting of the ways: Tom Mann, still with the people, goes to prison in the cause of free speech; John Burns, a political tool of the classes, dines with the King.

THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF THE STRIKE.

Surely there never was a greater mistake than to suppose that to turn one's back on politics was to paralyse all one's energies for useful propaganda. It is indeed perfectly clear to those who reason on passing events that while all the pettiness and the lies of electioneering breed disgust in decent minds, a strike generally arouses the highest instincts of mankind. In France we have seen a fine example of this in the eagerness with which the workers on all hands have taken the strikers' children to their homes to feed, shelter, and clothe them while their parents fight the hard and never-ending battle for the living wage. Such splendid solidarity has won the admiration of cynical opponents of the strike. Even here, in apathetic London, amongst the music hall artists the strike has aroused a spirit of altruism that was almost unexpected, and will have its influence for good when other and more serious struggles arise.

A CORRECTION.

We very much regret that a misquotation occurred in our December issue when referring to Mr. Hyndman's article in *Justice* of November 24, 1906. Speaking of the Trusts, we quoted him as saying: "While we fight the Trusts on every occasion and in every country, we do so not only to check their development or to break them up," etc. This should have read "not in order to check," a quite different meaning.

Marx and Engels and the International Working Men's Association, 1872 to 1876.

I.

F. A. Sorge, a German refugee of 1849, the chief American correspondent of Marx and Engels in the seventies and eighties, a few months before his death published a volume of letters addressed to him by Marx (1868-1881), Engels (1872-1895), J. Ph. Becker, Dietzgen and others (Stuttgart, 1906, xii., pp. 422, 8vo.) We have already had glimpses of Marx's personal life and doings in F. Lassalle's letters addressed to him during the fifties, in Marx's own letters to Dr. Kugelmann during the sixties, and in his letters to his daughter, Madame Longuet, towards the end of her and his life, etc. This volume, however, abounds with new materials, and although everything has not been published in full, an infinite number of statements and appreciations are here in print before us which unveil the threads of Marxism to an unprecedented extent. I propose to give some extracts relating to the inner history of the International, and let the writer's words speak for themselves, adding some connecting lines of historical notes. The subject is treated at considerable length in the *second* volume of J. Guillaume's *L'Internationale*, leading up to the Hague Congress of 1872, a volume which will shortly be published; the principal writings of Bakunin in 1870 are also being published just now by J. Guillaume in a carefully edited volume (Paris, 1907, *Oeuvres*, tome II.).

Marx was always eager to send information about Bakunin; in 1870 he wrote the famous *Confidential Communication*, published among the Kugelmann letters. To Sorge he writes on November 23, 1871:—

"His (Bakunin's) programme was riff-raff, superficially gathered from right and left—equality of classes (!), abolition of the right of inheritance as the starting point of the social movement (a St. Simonian idiocy), Atheism dictated to the members as a dogma, and the chief dogma (Proudhonist) abstention from politics.

This children's spelling-book met with sympathy (and still maintains it to extent) in Italy and Spain, where the real conditions of a workers' movement are still little developed, and among some vain, ambitious, hollow doctrinaires in French-speaking Switzerland and Belgium.

For Mr. Bakunin this doctrine (his rot begged from Proudhon, St. Simon, etc.) was and is a secondary object—only a means to impose his personality. If he is theoretically a blank, he is at home in intriguing."

When after poisoning people's minds in this way for years and evading any encounter with his opponents at an open Congress, Marx was at last forced to convoke the Hague Congress (September, 1872), he knew the small support he would find among the European International, and in order to dominate the Congress he ordered delegates' credentials from America. The letter showing how it was done is now before us (June 21, 1872):—

"You and at least one or two others must come. Those sections which send no direct delegates may send credentials (delegates' credentials).

The Germans for myself, Fr. Engels, Lochner, Karl Pfaender, Lessner.

The French for G. Rouvier, Auguste Serrailier, Le Moussu, Ed. Vaillant, F. Courmet, Ant. Arnoud.

The Irish for MacDonell, who does very well; or, if they prefer, for one of the forenamed Germans or French."

Twelve credentials for Marxists and Blanquists, who had but to travel from London to Holland—a red herring across the path of genuine delegates, who might have to travel from Spain, Italy or Switzerland. Thus Congresses are made.

The majority thus created expelled Bakunin and Guillaume after an inquiry by a committee to which but one member of the large anti-authoritarian minority of the Congress was admitted. One of the members of that committee, before which the friends of Bakunin were expected to lay their most private revolutionary affairs—they did not, of course—was an unknown person named Walter. His real name was Van Heddeghem, and of him Engels, on May 3, 1873, is forced to admit: "Heddeghem was a spy already at the Hague." Notwithstanding this, Engels is delighted to elaborate the scurrilous pamphlet, *L'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste* (1873), into which all the libels collected about Bakunin were gathered. It appears now that it contains materials—all the Russian parts referring to Bakunin and Netchaev—which the Hague committee never saw (Engels, September 21, October 5, 1872); these will make "a horrible scandal. I never met with such an infamous pack of rogues" (October 5). "The thing will explode like a bomb among the autonomists, and if anybody can be killed at all, Bakunin will be as dead as a doornail. Lafargue and I made it between us, only the conclusions are by Marx and myself" (July 25, 1873). It is known that Bakunin brushed this mud aside with two words, and that the thing fell entirely flat.

The Marxists had at the Hague Congress transferred the General Council of the International from London to New York. The way Engels handles this New York Council is quite farcical, and the life of that body was but the faint shadow of a shadow. The Spanish, Italian, Jurassian, Belgian, and part of the French and English Inter-

nationalists took no notice of it, the Dutch were indifferent, and its own friends, galvanised into life for the purposes of the Hague Congress, did almost exactly the same. Engels does his best first to gather the remains of power into his own hands and those of his London friends, and then to write to Sorge, the secretary of that Council, fantastic reports of the phantom progress of the Marxist International and the usual amount of libels against the Anarchists.

In his report on *Spain* (October 31, 1872) he is forced to admit: "There exist in Spain only two local Federations which openly and thoroughly acknowledge the resolutions of the Hague Congress and the new General Council—the new Federation of Madrid and the Federation of Alcala de Henares," and "the great bulk of the Spanish International are still under the leadership of the Alliance, which predominates in the Federal Councils as well as in the most important Local Councils." He puts his faith in Jose Mesa, calling him "without doubt by far the most superior man we have in Spain, both as to character and talent, and indeed one of the best men we have anywhere." It is curious to note that men of a certain type like Jose Mesa, Mr. Glaser de Willebrord, and Mr. Maltman Barry, were always round Marx and Engels, and enjoyed their greatest confidence. Engels' letters to Mr. Glaser on the eve of the Hague Congress, published elsewhere, and Marx's letter to Sorge (September 27, 1877), saying "Barry is my factotum here," are documentary evidence of this.

Engels thinks it possible that at the next Spanish Congress "we shall blow up the whole thing and turn the Alliance out. We owe this to the energy of Mesa alone, who *single-handed* had to do everything" (November 16). The Cordova Congress was a splendid manifestation of the Anarchist International, and Engels, forestalling this defeat, records that Mesa wrote to him that "many of our people are just now participating in the insurrection, in prison or with the bands in the mountains" (January 3, 1873). As the unique Mesa could not be ubiquitous, this information is rather puzzling, but Engels no doubt thought that it would do for Sorge! At last he begins to tell the truth (April 15, 1873): "The *Emancipacion* of Madrid is dying, if not dead. We have sent them £15, but as scarcely anybody paid for the copies received [which nobody evidently wanted!] it appears impossible to keep it up." But Mesa is irrepressible; he corresponds with Engels "with regard to another paper to be started" (of which nothing ever came).

With regard to *Italy*, Engels writes (November 2, 1872):—"Bignami [in Lodi, Lombardia] is the only fellow in Italy who took our part, though up to the present not very energetically. . . . He sits amidst the autonomists, and has still to take certain precautions." Bignami published a manifesto of the New York General Council, and that number of his paper, *La Plebe*, was seized, and Bignami and two others were arrested (December 14), six others ran away, and, says Engels (January 4, 1873), "Bignami bombards me with letters for support." Engels appeals for money to America: "It is of the *highest importance* that Lodi be supported from abroad; it is our strongest position in Italy, and now, when nothing more is heard from Turin, the only reliable. . . . If Lodi and the *Plebe* are lost to us, we have no further foothold in Italy, on that you may rely." On March 20: "The section of Lodi has not yet been reconstituted, and that of Turin probably went to pieces." Meanwhile three of the arrested were released after a fortnight, and Bignami after six weeks. They had received from London, Germany and Austria £10, and from New York £8 more was sent, which Engels sent to Bignami, who stated that "he was hiding again in order to avoid being dragged to prison to undergo a sentence of imprisonment, which he prefers doing later or after having been restored to better health" (April 15, 1873); the *Plebe* "appears to be suspended too." Thus the Spanish Marxist International was last seen with the bands in the mountains, the Italian Marxist International was hiding, and in that same letter Engels has the cheek to write: "The arrest of Alliancists at Bologna and Mirandole will not last long, they will soon be liberated; if some of them are now and again arrested by mistake, they never suffer seriously." This is Engel's description of the endless persecutions to which the real International in Italy was exposed, a record of which—a reprint of letters sent to the *Jurassian Bulletin*, with connecting text—is now published in the Geneva *Risveglio* by J. Guillaume and L. Bertoni.

But there is something more mysterious still than these vanishing Spanish and Italian sections. It is the *Polish* International, whose delegate, Wroblewski, voted also for the expulsion of Bakunin at the Hague Congress, though he must have known that Bakunin had risked his liberty more than once and was ready to risk his life for Poland. Marx writes to Sorge (December 21, 1872) that the General Council obtained the participation of Poland in the International under the condition "that he deals *only* with Wroblewski, who communicates what he thinks right or necessary."

"In this case you have no choice. You must give Wroblewski the same unconditional powers as we did, or give up Poland."

And Engels (March 20, 1873): "Wroblewski *cannot* send any report, since in Poland everything is secret, and we never asked him about details,"—to which Sorge adds (1906): "Details have never been asked, but a sign of life."

This *sign of life*, a very modest demand, never came—nor was anything ever heard again from *Denmark*, whose delegate, Pihl, also voted with the majority ("Still not one line," January 4, 1873; "Not a word," March 30; "Nothing heard nor seen," May 3; "Never heard a word from Pihl," July 26).

The *French* Blanquists, who had entered the General Council after the Paris Commune, left after the Hague Congress in full discontent. With all the French refugees in London, Engels wrote on December 7, 1872: "We have none other here [who might receive general powers for France] but Serrailier." Two French agents of the Blanquists and the General Council, Van Heddeghem and D'Entraygues (another member of the Hague majority, called Swarm there) were arrested in France—the former turning out to have been a spy; the latter, "with the usual pedantry, had a mass of useless lists" (of names of Internationalists, March 20, 1873), and "denounced from personal reasons and feebleness some who had given him a hiding before" (May 3). These arrests in Paris and in the South-West of France put an end to the Marxist International in France entrusted to Walter and Swarm!

About the sections in *Germany* and *Austria* neither Engels nor Sorge knew any details (March 20, 1873); Engels had no addresses in *Holland* and *Belgium* (*ib.*) The *Portuguese* paper "will have to suspend its publication for a short time, but will reappear" (April 15); the (London) *International Herald* "also is on its last legs" (*ib.*) When we speak of the pseudo-congress of Geneva (September, 1873), we shall see with what utter contempt Marx and Becher wrote of their allies against Bakunin, the politicians of the Geneva *Fédération romande*. The *English* International had also split, and no epithets are too strong to be used by Marx against Hales, Eccarias, Jung, etc. The American International, which for years had been divided, continued to quarrel. Thus wherever we look we see the most complete breakdown of the structure on which Marx had relied to get a majority at the Hague to expel Bakunin, and later on the Anarchist federations.

To the New York General Council the minute books of the London Council were never sent, and Engels begs of Sorge nearly all the powers he can think of as agents for European countries (November 16, 1872): England and Italy for himself, France for Serrailier, Germany for Marx. They did not seem able to get even the papers published in Europe (February 8, 1873).

All this points to but one conclusion: if the Marxist International after the Hague Congress is proved now by the word of their chiefs themselves to be an almost non-existing thing, did it have any real life at any time whatsoever *before* that Congress? I believe not. Wherever the International existed, it was revolutionary (as in Spain, Italy, etc.) political (a Radical electioneering body as in Geneva), trade unionist, or consisted of small branches for Socialist propaganda. Marxist it never was to any extent, and the Hague majority of members of the General Council, Blanquists and politicians was the momentary creation of intrigue and humbug.

This will further be seen by the way the Geneva Congress of 1873 was fabricated by J. O. L. Becher—not to be confounded with the Geneva Congress of the Marxist Federations of the same month.

Of this and the end of the Marxist International I shall speak in another article, and in a concluding part shall give extracts from the more recent letters of Marx and Engels on the present Socialist movements in England, Germany and the United States.

* *

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

Sunday, January 20, was an interesting day in Paris. The law lately passed empowering factory and shop employes to have one day's rest a week, has been dodged or ignored by many Parisian employers of labour, and the trade unions determined on a demonstration in force to bring the boulevards (the Regent and Bond Street districts of the city) into reconsideration of their ways. The organisers, with a large contingent of unionists, met at the Labour Exchange at an early hour to make final arrangements, and had hardly quitted the building when Clemenceau locked it behind them, and set the twenty thousand police and soldiers he had collected into motion. In the face of such overwhelming odds naturally no procession could be formed. Instead there were many scuffles with police and military, which no doubt the shopkeepers watched gleefully as they picked their after-dinner teeth behind their shopfronts. Nevertheless the result is that compliance with the law is promised, and the unions will see to it that this tardy Government promise is kept. Clemenceau's high-handed treatment of the unionist workers of Paris naturally called for protest from all but the bourgeois element. He knew several days beforehand (through Jaurès) that a great meeting of protest was to be held at the Bourse du Travail, and that after it the demonstrators would march along the rich boulevards. Instead of amicably discussing with the organisers the possible inconvenience to their fellow citizens and disorganisation of traffic if the procession was insisted upon, he said nothing and filled the city with troops, thus becoming the prime mover in the collisions between them and the workers. When reasons were demanded for his action by Vaillant, he replied that Paris was the only city in France that seemed to think it could hold street demonstrations at will. In other places police or mayoral permission had to be demanded, and as for him he would only tolerate street demonstrations on condition that the trade unionists came to an arrangement with him. The common sense in this argument appealed to the Chamber, and a vote of confidence followed. It is clear that there must be regulations when a vast body of men intend to march through densely crowded thoroughfares. The unionists themselves would be open to such reasoning. But it is the arrogant and autocratic attitude that characterises most men when they become Jacks-in-office that irritates the thinking worker, and as a rule French workers are that. The Radical-Socialist Clemenceau has troops behind him. How much more pleasing to ministerial dignity, let alone picturesque, to fill the streets with bayonets than to parley in one's private office with revolutionary discontents. On the other hand, as the *Temps Nouveau* points out, does it not seem ridiculous, since popular manifestations are usually a collective expression of discontent or revolt, for intending demonstrators against a régime to demand of it the right to demonstrate? Clemenceau showed his colours quite clearly when he answered Vaillant in the Chamber: "When deputies, who at least carry electoral responsibility, inform me they wish to organise a peaceful demonstration, into which only prudent friends will be admitted, and to which I am invited, why should

I be unfavourably disposed? But when persons who have plundered shops the night before inform me of their intention to take a little stroll round the boulevards—well, I send them to take their little stroll elsewhere.” That was his facetious way of laying all blame for the trouble on the shop-assistants and their allies. There was complete ignoring of the facts that led to this ebullition of feeling on the part of the overworked men. But as we see, this direct action of theirs, and the threat to resume hostilities against the delinquent employers, have roused the ministers into a distinct promise to redress the grievance and put at law into force which they have also been compelled to admit is defective.

A strike whose final conditions instance the solidarity among the steel-workers of France and their growing independence of trade union leaders, is taking place at Jeumont, near the Belgian frontier. Briefly, the facts are these. Owing to an agitation lately for a rise in their mechanics' wages, the management of one of the large steel works was obliged to grant the concession. The men soon found, however, that it was one in name only, for as the higher wages became due they were gradually thinned out by dismissal and their vacant places filled by men of a lower grade. On this discovery futile representations were made to the management, and the moulders and labourers then joining in the fray a strike was threatened, and began at once when the owners refused to give in to the demands of each section of their employes. The moulders' and mechanics' federations were quickly informed of the strike and each sent down an organiser. At this point the rift within the lute of the revolutionary and “reformist” (English trade unionism) camps showed plain. It was evident that owing to the boom in the steel trade the managers would be forced to yield quickly, yet as soon as the moulders' representative, after conferring with his brother secretary of the “reformist” school, had left for Paris, the latter induced the men to confer with the directors and twenty-four hours later to resume work. The moulders, however, soon became restive when they found the conditions unchanged, and the management thereupon dismissed both sections. Reformist, like English trade union, leaders detest strikes when these mean a run on the funds—but the moulders' organiser hurried back to Jeumont on hearing of the turn affairs had taken and heartened up his men, encouraging such as remained at work to renew the strike. Then the feeling of solidarity spread around. A neighbouring company's employes came out in sympathy, and best of all, those in steel-works across the border—so that Belgian workers made common cause with their French comrades. Under these conditions the strike cannot last long nor end except with victory for the workers and their “revolutionary” adviser.

Germany.

As we write, in a few days more the fate of the Socialists in Parliament will be decided. They left it some eighty strong—the pessimists among them say only thirty-five may return, although the more sanguine seem sure of sixty. In any case they have lost many seats in the recent general election, and their combined vote will be worth little against the consolidated forces of the New Absolutism about to be inaugurated by the reactionary victors. The defeat is patent. The causes that led to it are not quite so clear. Two suggest themselves. For years Social Democracy has, in point of numbers, been a power in the Reichstag, and has left nothing to show for it. Towns which were a stronghold of the Socialist voter went on this occasion only half-heartedly to the polls; in some cases the votes decreased by half, and this in spite of perfect organisation and determined energy on the part of election agents. Perhaps the workers are tired of barren Socialism as portrayed in the persons of their late members. Or, has sentiment once again proved its potency over the affairs of nations? Wise-aces tell us the world is ruled by facts, not sentiment. The truth is exactly the reverse. We are children still, and like to see the rainbow tints on bubbles. The Kaiser and his Chancellor and Colonial Secretary were wise in their generation. They appealed to the Jingo spirit always latent in the middle-class, to the ambitions of the bureaucrat, the petty patriotism of the small shopkeeper. *Hoch! der Vaterland!* wrought the change more likely than not. At any rate thousands who from apathy had not voted at the previous election, swarmed to the polls at this, with results as stated—not Socialism, but the Social Democrat members crushed for a season and a period of coercion and repression foreshadowed. Now Germany will increase its armaments; will harry at will or exterminate the rebellious tribes who once owned its mismanaged colonies, and aim once again at being cock-of-the-walk wherever the heavy Teuton heel can tread. Whether the Marxian Social Democrat leaders will take their check to heart remains to be seen. One fears not. The voters may be fools, but Karl Marx and his bible cannot be wrong. Meanwhile William, of course, is jubilant, so jubilant that he has actually promised to delete some of the lesser clauses in his *lèse-majesté* laws as a sop to Cerberus. And his English admirers may heave a breath of relief. It is reported that the members of London's West-end aristocratic clubs were prophesying that if the Socialists won at the election, as the world expected them to do, Wilhelm would be the last Emperor of Germany. To think that pained them. Their turn might come next!

Russia.

There is little news to give, what there is being merely a repetition of the old. Famine and disease are devastating certain districts; each week sees a batch of young irreconcilables sent to the gods as sweet-will offerings from the Tsar; the money subscribed for or sent *via* Government sources for the use of the starving peasantry or exiles perishing of cold in the Arctic Circle, falls rouble by rouble into the pockets of the officials selected to administer such funds. But in spite of seven months of silence and repression the Democracy begins once again to find its voice. The workers everywhere are returning Progressives for the new Duma, and the same holds good by most of the peasant electors. Stolypin's tampering with the register will have little effect at the polls, and as little the ministerial blandishments. To tempt some from their allegiance to Socialism, an order has been issued authorising the temporary granting of trade licences to Jewish merchants in Moscow, without their having to produce police evidence of their right of residence, and trading; and the person of citizens in their dwellings and their correspondence alike are to be inviolable. People arrested by the police without a Court order are to be released within twenty-four hours or brought before a magistrate; and so forth. Sawdust and blarney! It is rumoured that the dissolution of the late Duma was forced upon the Tsar by the nobility in an ultimatum, they foreseeing that the land agitation spelt ruin to them if the peasants once got the upper hand.

Morris Socialist Club,

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, at 7.30 p.m.

John Turner.

Subject - - - “ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.”

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The Plaistow Group hold meetings at the Green Gate on Sundays, morning and evening.

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