

Freedom

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NOTES.

Feet of Clay.

This miserable business of the Marconi inquiry is, in spite of all the fuss and bother, only a reflection of the corrupt system we live in, which is called "Society." It also shows to us what has been shown many times before—how fallible, how sordid even, are the great ones who are elected to control the lives of the toiling masses. There is something so weak and pitiful to read of a man who is *legislating* against the evils of poverty—who must know what five shillings a week at seventy means at the present cost of living—who ought to understand that if his Insurance Act does a little good in a very poor way, it also does harm in a very insidious way—there is, we say, a bitter irony in such a man pleading publicly as "a comparatively poor man" for the right to speculate and invest out of his salary of £5,000 a year! "Cannot," asks Mr. George, "a man fifty years of age have one house to call his own?" But is not this the question that millions of workers should be putting to Mr. George himself? For by holding the position he does he morally accepts a large responsibility for the life-conditions of those he helps to rule. If that responsibility cannot be discharged—and we *know* it cannot—then he should, if he is sincere, seek for a more radical solution of the problem of poverty. He would then find it necessary to leave politics and attack the economic evils which he sees around him. In that case he might still remain "a comparatively poor man," but at least he would become an absolutely honest one; which is more than can be said for some of those who are attacking him.

An Indictment.

Mr. Chiozza Money has been agitating a good many questions for a number of years, but so far as we can see he does not favour a revolutionary change in society. Yet this is how he describes some of its present conditions:—

"The girl who takes your money at the picture palace, and who has a relatively enormous sum through her hands every week, is frequently hired for no more than 12s. 6d. to 15s. a week. The saucy boy who takes your money at the Tube railway station is paid a wretched pittance, which is a greater disgrace than the recent conviction of one of the boys for plotting with equally underpaid lift attendants to re-issue tickets already sold. The tab on your programme at the theatre, 'See that this seal is unbroken,' is a tribute to the shame of the wages, or no wages, that are paid to the lady-like girl who hands you the programme. The similar seal on the towels at the public lavatories or the railway station is a much-needed tribute to the robbery of labour. The 'cash registers' that now decorate almost every shop are a wise precaution, for what is that that you breed in men and women when at one and the same time you underpay them and flaunt before their eyes so many evidences that the chief sin is to be without money?"

Mr. Money ought to see that it requires a very clean sweep (with a revolutionary broom) to clean these Augean stables from the misery and degradation all this implies. Yet it is only a tiny corner of the picture.

The Epidemic of Brutality.

The policy of the refined and educated gentry who were instrumental in passing the White Slave Bill is having its inevitable effect in exciting brutal-minded persons to follow the Christianlike example of our devout law-makers. The charge of cruelty in the lunacy case now before the public

brings to mind the treatment that, until very recent times, was considered just and proper for the correction of lunatics. Difficult indeed was the task of those who fought for more humane and enlightened treatment of these unfortunates. The dark spirit of revenge, which is really at the bottom of the recent epidemic of legislative brutality, was making a charnel-house of our prisons as well as asylums. Now that flogging and forcible feeding recommend themselves to the delicate feelings of high-class ladies, and to high officials who dare not soil their hands with the dirty work they give others to do, we are returning rapidly to the barbaric punishments of a bygone age. If Mr. McKenna can order his victims to be flogged, why cannot the doctor of an asylum, or the master of a school, adopt the same method with their troublesome charges? It is no use saying the cases are different. Brutality does not discriminate, because to discriminate is to reason, and reason is banished when brute force takes the reins. Does the hangman hang, and the warder flog because the study of criminology has convinced them of the efficacy of these punishments? No. And brutal parents will use the rod more freely with their children because they will read of the flogging sentences inflicted by the law.

Woman's Misery, and the Way Out.

Just recently a poor woman applied to Mr. Fordham at the West London Police Court for advice respecting her husband, who drank and stayed out late at night. After telling her that he could not help her, she said: "I have a very unhappy life with him." This was the magistrate's answer: "I daresay. Many married women are miserable, and all women who are not married are miserable. I can't help you." The cynical truth of this answer involves society in a whole series of tragedies, and these tragedies are not lessened by the fact that an army of devoted but mistaken women are wasting their lives in demanding the vote. They would, we imagine, like to pass a law compelling the man to keep sober and to come home at respectable hours. This, of course, would add immensely to the harmony of the home! Or they might, if we understand them aright, wish for a law that would release the woman from her domestic relations with the man, and compel him to support her out of his earnings. In that case we should see how beautifully the spirit of independence would be cultivated in the woman, and the degenerate man's respect for the opposite sex inculcated by the fact that after his employer had robbed him of two-thirds of his product, the law would rob him again to help keep a home he could not live in. What a mistaken view of the whole situation this implies! And the Suffragettes do not, or will not, see that the freedom, the happiness, and the dignity of their own sex can never be attained till their *economic freedom* is won.

"Peace hath Her Victories."

The heroism of the firemen and sewermen in the recent catastrophe at Westbourne Park only leaves room for one comment. It proves that the spirit of devotion in mutual helpfulness when needed, even at the risk of life, is as sound in the hearts of men and women as ever it was. We can afford to ignore all those blasé outsiders—mostly officials or hack journalists—who are constantly reminding us that after a revolution everyone would be trying to dodge the dangerous and unpleasant work, and trying to eat and drink more than his neighbour, just to get, as it were, "some of his own back." But our shipwrecks, our mining disasters, and such a stupendous calamity as the American cyclone, prove that man can and does rise to the occasion, and that the spirit that animates him in a great cause has in the past and will again be manifested in the work of social reconstruction. This gives the lie to capitalist detractors, and justifies the optimism of the Anarchists.

Woman's Freedom.

By LILY GAIR WILKINSON.

I.

WOMEN IN BONDAGE.

There is much talk and clamour among us because of the "Woman Question." The discussion is obscured for the most part by sex prejudice. Some would have us believe that women form a sort of angelic sisterhood oppressed by the tyrant man; others inform us that women must forever be dependent upon men because of their natural inferiority.

Those feminists who believe in the angelic sisterhood seem always to be singing that old nursery rhyme:—

"What are little girls made of, what are little girls made of?
Sugar and spice, and all that's nice, that's what little girls are made of.

What are little boys made of, what are little boys made of?
Slugs and snails and puppy-dogs' tails, that's what little boys are made of."

And those who proclaim man's natural superiority repeat very much the same sort of nonsense the other way round. It seems as if they sing perpetually:—

"What are little girls made of, what are little girls made of?
Frills and laces and silly faces, that's what little girls are made of.

What are little boys made of, what are little boys made of?
Muscles and mind of superior kind, that's what little boys are made of."

Indeed, this lumping together of the sexes, as if they formed two opposing camps, has no reference to the facts of everyday experience. It is altogether too theoretic. Men and women do not oppose each other like two armies; they live together, and share together the pains and struggles and joys of life. Men as men are not in a superior social position. Women are not in bondage to men; they are not oppressed by men, nor dominated by men.

Go out into the street, and watch the people who pass. Notice the working men with their worn faces, shabby clothes, and all the characteristics by which you know at a glance that they are workmen. Then notice the first "lady" (rich woman, that is) who comes along in motor-car or taxi-cab; observe her soft clothes, her smooth face, her confident manner, and all the other characteristics by which you immediately know her for a rich woman. *That* woman in bondage to *these* men! The idea is only to be laughed at.

There is no sisterhood of women any more than there is a brotherhood of men. A working woman asking for employment from a rich woman does not greet the lady as a sister, and expects no sisterly greeting; she expects, and she receives, much the same sort of treatment from a mistress as from a master. The case is just as bad for her one way as the other.

In fact, while it is true that we find in daily experience of life that human society is really split up very much into two camps (or what Disraeli called "the two nations" of rich and poor), these camps are by no means two armies of opposing sexes, but two armies of opposing classes. Yet it is also true that nearly all women are no better than slaves; that is to say, social restrictions prevent the full, free, and natural development of nearly every woman that is born. Certainly the same is true of nearly every man; but the restraint is greater for women, and the degradation is greater.

How is it, then? If not the tyranny of man, how is it? To understand it we must study various types of women in bondage.

Go out again and watch the women as they pass. Look once more, for instance, at the rich woman in the motor-car, the "lady," as she is called. In the streets, in the parks, in other public places, this "lady" type is to be observed in fine clothes, furs, and jewels of great price. She is arrogant, and does not notice us because we are less expensive mortals than herself; but we may well say to ourselves "Slave!" as she passes. The rich clothes, and the jewels, and the servants, and the carriages, and the motor-cars are all the very signs and tokens of her slavery. This woman has sold herself into bondage, and she is actually owned by the man who owns also the furs and jewels and servants and carriages—the man who signs the cheques. For a rich man's wife is merely his most costly possession.

Lady! What does it mean, this "lady"? It is a name of good repute, and often it is said of a woman as highest praise that she is "a perfect lady." Yet the very type of what is called a lady is generally a pampered, painted, fleshly instrument to some man's pleasure.

Lady! A slave and a bondswoman! She has sold her woman's body for costly accessories and a soft living. She has sold herself into married prostitution. The Christian religion has given to the sale the odour of sanctity, and at the priest's bidding she has promised to love, honour, and obey the man who purchased her body in the marriage market. No matter how

depraved, how diseased, how hideous the man may be who comes to bid in that market, he is sure, if only he bids high enough, of getting a prize for his possession—a beautiful, live, degraded woman's body. Love such a man! What has love to do with selling flesh for gold? Honour! How can honour be given to the sensualist who buys a woman with his riches? Obey! How should a woman swear away her freedom because she is going to live with a man? Love and obedience, moreover, cannot be given together, for love is by its nature free, and obedience is willing slavery.

To be a willing slave. Is that not the most shameful thing possible to a human being? But all the same she is "a perfect lady"! *Lady!* If anyone should compose for me some day an epitaph, I wish it may be written: "At least she was no lady."

And yet, what is a woman to do? What is a girl brought up in a rich family to do? Such a girl is usually entirely dependent upon her parents, whose ideals in life are probably dividends and social power. None dares to speak openly to her of sexual truths, and her own natural sexual dignity is cheated by the false appearance of successful attainment in the marriage bargain. Not only is she dependent upon her parents, but they have accustomed her to luxury, and she has become dependent upon luxuries by force of habit. When the choice comes to her, what is she to do but sell the one thing she has to sell, that one wonderful thing so desired of man—her woman's body?

It does not always happen so; but which of us can be sure that in the same case it would not happen so to us?

Now turn to another type. Most of the women who pass us wherever we go are of this type—it is the type of woman who is poorly born, the working woman. All her life this woman has found herself in a peculiar position. Her father and her brothers and her husband are all slaves—they are not free to work for themselves; they must spend their lives working for others. She also is a slave; either she must do the work of the household to make it possible for the men to work for wages, or she must work for wages herself. But her slavery has a peculiar characteristic. She found it out as a girl when first she sold herself for wages. She might do the same work as her brothers did, but she never received the same pay. She might sell herself as goods in the labour market, but she was always cheaper goods than her brothers.

What was the reason of this? Was she an inferior worker? No, that certainly was not the explanation.

If she, being a high-spirited girl, borrowed her brother's trousers, shirt, coat, and waistcoat, and went to do her brother's work, she would receive her brother's pay; as long as she succeeded in masquerading as her brother there would be no question of inferiority. But if she took the job dressed in her own petticoats, she would receive only about half what she earned for working the same hours and doing the same work in her brother's trousers.

When I go to buy eggs, and see one basket marked "12 a shilling, cooking," and another basket marked "8 a shilling, new-laid," I know that the "cooking" eggs are stale and will not give me the nourishment which I should get from the "new-laid." And so on with other goods. I buy the better goods at a bigger price, and get the better value. But not so with men and women. For doing the same work men's wages are often two or three times as high as women's wages—in tailoring, for instance, men get 30s. or 40s. a week when doing work for which women only receive from 7s. to 16s.

What is the reason of it all?

It is an old story going back to the time when, in primitive societies, physical strength, sheer muscular strength, was the principal factor in human social life. Then women must have been dependent upon men to a very great degree, and the effects of this dependence remain in human relationships long after its cause (mere muscular strength) has ceased to be an important social factor. Brute force is no longer the human criterion in life. A woman can work modern machinery (including machine guns, I do not doubt) just as well as a man can. But the tradition remains that she is socially weaker, or inferior, and therefore as a worker she is reckoned cheaper goods.

Then, again, women are affected by sexual functions which make their labour less regular and dependable than men's labour. That also tends to cheapen women's labour. Again, women very often work merely to earn a wage to help in the family, and are therefore willing to accept less than a living wage.

So from one cause and another women are always being bought as cheap goods in the labour market, and the result is that the struggle to live is even more painful and terrible for women wage-slaves than for men wage-slaves. We are told in cold official figures that forty-five per cent. of the wage-earners of the country are women, and that the average wage of women workers is only about 7s. a week. What unimaginable lives of struggle and suffering are summed up in these figures!

From this we turn naturally to that third type of women in bondage—the prostitute.

It is the fashion of to-day to be politely sentimental about the "White Slave Traffic," but the tales of guileless girls, of

villainous men and women with drugs and snares, are in no way needful to account for prostitution. These statistics giving the conditions of women's employment are explanation enough to anyone who can read the living facts behind the bare statement of the figures. Forty-five per cent. of the wage-earners are women, and they earn on the average 7s. a week!

The bondage of the prostitute is bitter and cruel, and every woman must feel the cruelty of it if she realises that a woman may actually be driven by want, by dread of death from starvation (and perhaps not only dread for herself, but also for her helpless children), to buy food by selling her body to a man. Not one woman only—though human social life will remain a loathsome thing while this is true of only one single woman—not one woman only, but countless numbers of women every day that passes!

These, then, are three types of women in bondage—the lady sold in marriage, the working woman, and the prostitute. The bondage of these three types is different in kind, but the manner of entering bondage is the same in all three cases. All these women enter bondage by selling their bodies; selling them for man's pleasure or selling them for the profit of an employer, but always by selling that sacred thing, a woman's body.

This is the evil and degrading thing which every woman does who enters slavery. It is clear that women are driven to this degradation, not because of the domination of some big abstraction called Man, but because of the domination of those human laws by which both men and women are forbidden the free use and enjoyment of the earth they live upon.

(To be continued.)

LESSONS FROM HISTORY.

GOVERNMENT AND CIVILISATION.

The other opinion to which I have referred is, that the civilisation of Europe is chiefly owing to the ability which has been displayed by the different Governments, and to the sagacity with which the evils of society have been palliated by legislative remedies. To any one who has studied history in its original sources, this notion must appear so extravagant, as to make it difficult to refute it with becoming gravity. Indeed, of all the social theories which have ever been broached, there is none so utterly untenable, and so unsound in all its parts, as this. In the first place, we have the obvious consideration, that the rulers of a country have, under ordinary circumstances, always been the inhabitants of that country; nurtured by its literature, bred to its traditions, and imbibing its prejudices. Such men are, at best, only the creatures of the age, never its creators. Their measures are the result of social progress, not the cause of it. This may be proved, not only by speculative arguments, but also by a practical consideration, which any reader of history can verify for himself.

No great political improvement, no great reform, either legislative or executive, has ever been originated in any country by its rulers. The first suggesters of such steps have invariably been bold and able thinkers, who discern the abuse, denounce it, and point out how it is to be remedied. But long after this is done, even the most enlightened Governments continue to uphold the abuse, and reject the remedy. At length, if circumstances are favourable, the pressure from without becomes so strong, that the Government is obliged to give way; and, the reform being accomplished, the people are expected to admire the wisdom of their rulers, by whom all this has been done. That this is the course of political improvement, must be well known to whoever has studied the law-books of different countries in connection with the previous progress of their knowledge. Full and decisive evidence of this will be brought forward in the present work; but, by way of illustration, I may refer to the abolition of the corn-laws, undoubtedly one of the most remarkable facts in the history of England during this century. The propriety, and, indeed, the necessity, of their abolition, is now admitted by every one of tolerable information; and the question arises as to how it was brought about. Those Englishmen who are little versed in the history of their country will say that the real cause was the wisdom of Parliament; while others, attempting to look a little further, will ascribe it to the activity of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and the consequent pressure put upon Government. But whoever will minutely trace the different stages through which this great question successively passed, will find that the Government, the Legislature, and the League were the unwitting instruments of a power far greater than all other powers put together. They were simply the exponents of that march of public opinion, which on this subject had begun nearly a century before their time. Soon after the middle of the eighteenth century, the absurdity of protective restrictions on trade was so fully demonstrated by the political economists, as to be admitted by every man who understood their arguments, and had mastered the evidence connected with them. From this moment the repeal of the corn-laws became a matter, not of party, nor of expediency, but merely of knowledge. Those who knew the facts, opposed the laws; those who were ignorant of the facts, favoured the laws. It was,

therefore, clear that whenever the diffusion of knowledge reached a certain point, the laws must fall. The merit of the League was, to assist this diffusion; the merit of the Parliament was, to yield to it. It is, however, certain that the members both of League and Legislature could at best only slightly hasten what the progress of knowledge rendered inevitable. If they had lived a century earlier, they would have been altogether powerless, because the age would not have been ripe for their labours. They were the creatures of a movement which began long before any of them were born; and the utmost they could do was to put into operation what others had taught, and repeat, in louder tones, the lessons they had learned from their masters.

I have selected this instance as an illustration, because the facts connected with it are undisputed. . . . For it was not concealed at the time, and posterity ought to know, that this great measure. . . was, like the Reform Bill, extorted from the Legislature by a pressure from without; that it was conceded, not cheerfully, but with fear; and that it was carried by statesmen who had spent their lives in opposing what they now suddenly advocated. Such was the history of these events; and such likewise has been the history of all those improvements which are important enough to rank as epochs in the history of modern legislation.

Besides this, there is another circumstance worthy the attention of those writers who ascribe a large part of European civilisation to measures originated by European Governments. This is, that every great reform which has been effected has consisted, not in doing something new, but in undoing something old. The most valuable additions made to legislation have been enactments destructive of preceding legislation; and the best laws which have been passed have been those by which some former laws were repealed. In the case just mentioned, of the corn-laws, all that was done was to repeal the old laws, and leave trade to its natural freedom. When this great reform was accomplished, the only result was to place things on the same footing as if legislators had never interfered at all. Precisely the same remark is applicable to another leading improvement in modern legislation, namely, the decrease of religious persecution. This is unquestionably an immense boon; though, unfortunately, it is still imperfect, even in the most civilised countries. But it is evident that the concession merely consists in this: that legislators have retraced their own steps, and undone their own work. If we examine the policy of the most humane and enlightened Government, we shall find this to be the course they have pursued. The whole scope and tendency of modern legislation is to restore things to that natural channel from which the ignorance of preceding legislation has driven them. . . . The extent to which the governing classes have interfered, and the mischiefs which that interference has produced, are so remarkable, as to make thoughtful men wonder how civilisation could advance in the face of such repeated obstacles. In some of the European countries, the obstacles have, in fact, proved insuperable, and the national progress is thereby stopped. Even in England. . . there has been inflicted an amount of evil, which, though much smaller than that incurred in other countries, is sufficiently serious to form a melancholy chapter in the history of the human mind. To sum up these evils, would be to write a history of English legislation; for it may be broadly stated that. . . nearly everything which has been done, has been done amiss.—H. T. BUCKLE, *History of Civilisation in England*.

ITALIAN NOTES.

For some time past the Socialist press has been discussing the possibility of a Governmental outbreak of brutality and massacre of workers. A few days ago the Committee of the reformist Socialists in Parliament discussed whether a general strike was advisable in such an eventuality. As might be expected from these gentlemen, they issued a resolution drawn up by the deputies Bissolati and Felice, appealing to the workers not to risk by a general strike the economic advantages they had gained. The resolution asserts that every general strike in Italy has ended in defeat for the proletariat and in strengthening the reaction. These counsellings of the politicians would only arouse scorn if their words were not listened to by those of the organised workers who are affiliated to the Confederazione del Lavoro, of reformist tendencies. The newly-created Unione Sindacale Italiano, which unites the revolutionary workers, is in no danger of being influenced by the resolutions and advice of reformist Socialists, who have become more and more bourgeois Radicals without the honesty to declare themselves as such.

The fifth congress of the *Ferrovieri* (railway men) was held at Milan. The most important decision taken by the Congress was to remain independent and autonomous. Though the majority of the members felt a great sympathy for the Unione Sindacale, with its Revolutionary Syndicalist principles, the railway men thought it better not to affiliate either with the Unione or with the reformist Confederazione, but to maintain their absolute freedom of action. The final resolution expressed its sympathy for the anti-capitalist programme of the Unione Sindacale, but "in view of the present conditions, adherence to the Unione might harm the unity among the Italian railway men, who decide therefore to fight independently for their rights and the emancipation of the proletariat."

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A CALL TO ACTION.

The gathering at Liverpool, if it has done nothing else, has at least given us an opportunity to review our forces, to see what has been accomplished since the Conference at Leeds twelve months ago, and to judge what tasks we are fit to undertake in the immediate future.

A general view of the country to-day certainly gives more satisfaction than it did at the time of the earlier gathering, but much still remains to be done before it can be said that the Anarchists have responded to the actual demand for Anarchism which the workers are making in all parts. Glasgow was the only town in Scotland from which any comrades visited Liverpool, and yet perhaps there are more sympathisers and actually declared Anarchists in Edinburgh than in any other town in Britain, with the possible exception of London. We may surely hope that steps will be taken for the formation of an active group there in the very near future by some of our comrades.

With the possible exception of Scotland—and it cannot remain an exception for long—progress has been made in almost every part. The Newcastle district is doing good work, and will soon be doing much better. Leeds, of course, is—Leeds, and the Manchester people are still wondering why no one does anything there, always forgetting that they are the people who should do it; but, apart from these two towns, there seems to be some hope of a revival in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Birmingham is not doing so well as it might, although the one or two who do anything seem to do all that can be done. South Wales and Bristol are the most active of all perhaps, although there is certainly not the huge possibilities here that there are in the Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Scottish districts.

To see the country as a whole is, of course, the essential business of a conference; it is of secondary importance, no doubt, but is none the less necessary. Social life and activity are the basis and sources of the movement, but these render some sort of general concerted action advisable, and it is in discussing such things that a conference may be really useful. At Liverpool it was decided to have a general propaganda secretary, who should act as a sort of "directory" to the movement, and who would be able to put individuals in touch with groups, or *vice versa*. It will be seen at once that the right man occupying such a position as this could make himself extremely useful to groups in need of help, and could do much to assist groups in linking themselves up with their neighbours, undertaking an interchange of speakers, co-operating to bring out leaflets, or taking any line of action in which they can act better together than singly. That the Conference chose the right man for the position, no one who knows our comrade Plattin and the work he has quietly done can doubt. In addition to this, one man from each district undertook to see that a local secretary should be found who would keep in touch with the general secretary. As about fifteen localities were represented, it must be admitted that we are in a better position for united action than we were before the Liverpool meet.

The other chief subject, closely associated with this one, which was discussed by the Conference was, of course, the restart of the weekly paper. In the first place, the very troublesome question of christening the unborn babe has been settled, apparently to the satisfaction of all those at the Conference. It has been decided to revive the old name, the *Voice of Labour*; and in order to avoid a split in our none-too-plentiful energies, the Freedom Group has undertaken to issue the paper, while the

editorship will remain the same as the *Anarchist*. The change of title does not, of course, indicate any change of policy. In all this those at the Conference were apparently very fully agreed, the only difference of opinion being expressed by those who would have rather seen FREEDOM itself become a weekly.

As to when the *Voice of Labour* will actually raise its voice, this is, and must be, at present a somewhat open question. It was suggested that this paper should appear early in January, but the general opinion seemed to be that this was too distant a date. Such an opinion may be easily backed up by proof, and this was to take the form of really vigorous propaganda and a well-organised movement into which our paper may be received. If all those who would like to see the paper appear earlier than the date suggested will throw their energies into making it possible, then for certain it will be done. In London already some steps have been taken towards future success; a preliminary meeting has been held, and a committee formed to inquire into the present prospects for the paper, and organise the support which it must necessarily have before it is once more launched.

Surely there has never been a period in the Anarchist movement when the lines of action seemed more clear than at present. On the one hand, the great change in the Labour movement has created a demand for Anarchism, for the recent revolts of the rank-and-file, and indeed the whole tendency of the workers' movement during the last year or so, have been the semi-conscious practice of that great philosophy which is summed up in the word "Anarchism." In this great, wide sense our duty as Anarchists is made clear to us; we must respond to this demand. In a smaller way, by means of the Liverpool Conference, it is again made clear to us what has to be done, for our actual method of propaganda is now clear. Surely the inactivity which has so strangely held many districts so far as Anarchism is concerned must be passing away. It has been sad that the workers' movement should have been so long captured and bossed by the politicians, and that so many of our comrades have gone down to the silence of respectability (which is worse than that of the grave) in the struggle; but surely if anything were sad and tragic it would be if the workers, who were fooled by the politicians, should now, in their revolt against their former gods, find that the Anarchists had forgotten them, and were themselves too dead to be able to take their part in this practical work, and help to build up a real Anarchist movement directly out of the experience of the monotony and tragedy of life.

It is strange that as I write—at a station platform—six convicts chained together pass by in the care of two warders. Their faces are hard and brutal, with the exception of one quite young fellow, who is shy before the staring crowd. The warders' faces are two expressionless even to be brutal. What is so tragic, so appallingly dreadful, is not that they are suffering in their desire for freedom, but that they seem at home in their chains. They laugh and talk together. How infinitely powerfully does this passing scene at this moment emphasise the great demand for vigorous thought. What an incentive and a cue to action! And before all that is so hateful, it is Anarchism only that is really powerful and destructive.

G. B.

An Appeal to Our Readers.

Our comrade George Barrett in another column calls attention to the great demand for Anarchism in the Labour movement, and urges us to respond to it by immediate action. Now, the best way to meet this call is to push the sale of Anarchist literature; but unfortunately at this moment there is a danger that the supply will fall short of the demand. Owing to lack of funds, we are unable to reprint some of our best pamphlets, or to issue new ones. Kropotkin's "Anarchism" and "Anarchist Communism," Malatesta's "Anarchy," and Smith's "Direct Action" are practically out of print; and Herbert Spencer's "Right to Ignore the State" is also held back because of the scarcity of funds. Not only in this country, but also in the United States, and more especially in New Zealand, orders for literature are increasing in volume; and it would be an everlasting disgrace if we were not in a position to meet this demand.

Of course, FREEDOM is not self-supporting, and several bad debts have also been a drain on our resources; besides, the publication of "Modern Science and Anarchism" involved heavy expenditure, and has left our cash-box empty. In these circumstances, we feel justified in appealing to our readers for the necessary funds for printing the pamphlets mentioned. We have refrained from doing so for some months, owing to the many calls there have been for other objects; but the need for money now is urgent, and we hope our readers will respond in such a way that we shall once more be in a position to supply all demands.

Contributions to this "Printing Fund" should be sent to the Manager, Freedom Press, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.

THE LIVERPOOL CONFERENCE.

It was at Leeds in 1912 that the Anarchists in England met for the first time, in so far as it concerned the placing of the Anarchist movement on a sounder basis than before. This year the seat of the Conference was Liverpool. The agenda worked out in connection with it showed the spirit of earnestness which the organisers wished to introduce into the proceedings. The Conference was arranged to start on Sunday, March 23; but on Saturday afternoon already a number of comrades met at the Communist Club in a kind of informal gathering, making acquaintance with each other, and starting preliminary discussions on matters concerning the Anarchist and Trade Union movements.

It was quite interesting to scan the faces of the new acquaintances, to meet others whose names only were known, and to talk over matters of common interest; and the evening sped unnoticeably until we found that it was time to separate for the time being, and get ready for the serious business of the next day. Here is a summary of the agenda as handed to the delegates:—

Sunday Morning—General propaganda; reports of movements in various districts.

Sunday Afternoon—Organisation: groups, federation of groups, and details connected with their activities.

Monday Morning—Propaganda by literature and leaflets; future of the Weekly Paper.

Monday Afternoon—Discussion on the Weekly; co-ordination of work of various groups; Ferrer Sunday Schools; antimilitarist propaganda.

Early on Sunday morning the preliminary details connected with the "bureau" of the Conference were satisfactorily settled by having a secretary who would take notes of the Conference, while it was found unnecessary to have a chairman. This latter innovation worked very well, and there was no need to keep anyone "in order," although over sixty delegates attended from all over the country.

After a few changes in the order in which the agenda should be taken, the reports from the movement were read. The following places were represented at the Conference:—Abertillery, Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Gateshead, Glasgow, Halifax, Hanley, Harlech, Huddersfield, Hull, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne, South Shields, and Swansea; while from the following towns letters of regret at inability to attend and of hopes of success were read by the local secretary:—Belfast, Bournemouth, Coventry, Edinburgh, Letchworth, and Sheffield.

The general impression felt on hearing the reports was that the spread of our ideas was unmistakeable; and many hopeful signs were, as a matter of fact, beyond our expectation. The unconscious growth of Anarchist thought was most to be noticed amongst the miners in the Swansea district, and South Wales in general. The anti-leader agitation has taken hold of the most earnest section of the mining industry, and, thanks to this, the propaganda carried on by some of our comrades has been most successful, not only in bringing about a complete change of ideas in the minds of the miners, but also in bringing them closer together by the formation of small propaganda groups. There are at present eight of these groups in the Swansea Valley only, and their activities are spreading out more and more. These "Workers' Freedom Groups," as they are called, have a "declaration of principles" and a "programme" that may be the envy of every Anarchist.

In the afternoon session, the question of organisation took up the whole of the time available until the public meeting in the evening. An interesting discussion on the principle and methods of organisation was entered into, and a lively interchange of opinion took place. A suggestion that paid speakers and secretaries would be desirable for the welfare of the propaganda was indignantly repudiated by most comrades, and the principle of voluntary activity as the driving force of the movement was found to be the only condition of a successful agitation. The necessity of sound groups in all localities was then considered. It was agreed that in this respect it is far better to have a network of small groups—even within one locality—rather than one large one; that these small groups should have a common link within their own districts; and that these districts in their turn should be linked up for the purpose of the more systematic national propaganda. All the comrades present immediately undertook to be the nuclei of Anarchist groups in their respective localities, and thus render more systematic that propaganda which up to the present was of a more or less spasmodic character.

It was decided that a leaflet embodying the principles and method of organisation as laid down by the Conference be immediately issued and be distributed broadcast, so as to stimulate the activities of the comrades, not only in those districts that were represented at the Conference, but more so in the localities which, although possessing active individuals, were not represented. It was also proposed that a propaganda secretary be chosen from among those present for the purpose of serving as a reference directory as to the groups, speakers, etc., in each locality, and to whom all inquiries concerning these should be addressed. Comrade Plattin (of Bristol) has consented to act as such, and all present were requested to hand their addresses to him, and to put down the activities for which they felt most suited. Thus, the Conference prepared the first step to the linking up of the different groups, and paved the way to a steadier and more fertile propaganda.

In the evening a public meeting took place in the Alexandra Hall,

where a most appreciative audience listened to the speakers, who dealt with different aspects of Anarchist thought. Comrades Woollen, Pollock, Greensmith, Bessie Ward, and Barrett spoke, the last-named giving an address which was a wonder of beauty and logic, his peroration being greeted with rounds of applause. The sale of literature was very good.

Monday was entirely given up to the written propaganda, and to the means of improving this. The morning session began with a report on the circulation of FREEDOM and of the pamphlets published by the Freedom Group. The circulation of the latter increased from 4,000 pamphlets and 300 books in 1904 to 15,000 pamphlets and 1,100 books in 1910, and the figures are still increasing; whilst in the last three years no less than 200,000 leaflets have been printed and distributed.

As to the sale of FREEDOM itself, it showed a slight decline during 1912, but is now increasing again steadily. The financial position of FREEDOM was reported to be unsatisfactory, the worst part being a lack of funds for reprinting pamphlets and issuing fresh ones.

The Glasgow Group then presented its report on the work of the *Anarchist*, and showed the almost insuperable difficulties it had to overcome from the first. Unfortunately, the support it expected from the movement in general was not forthcoming, and it was found necessary to stop its publication because of that lack of support. A general discussion on the merits, etc., of the *Anarchist*, as well as of FREEDOM, was then entered upon by most of the comrades present. Some were of the opinion that it would be desirable to change FREEDOM into a weekly; but it was found necessary to keep within the movement an organ like FREEDOM that would be the academic and philosophical exponent of Anarchism for those who, being already Anarchists, felt the necessity of theoretical expositions of the present state of Anarchist thought.

It was ultimately agreed that the monthly and weekly organs of the movement be kept separate, but that it would be a great mistake to rush again the appearance of the new weekly. It was decided to postpone this to January, 1914; but that meanwhile all efforts be concentrated on FREEDOM, which it is hoped to enlarge. The progress made in the next few months as regards the monthly will be an excellent criterion as to the support that may be expected for the weekly, which will be issued from London.

The discussion was interrupted by the lunch interval. On returning to the Club rooms, it was continued with reference to the name of the new weekly, as it was found that in a great many localities the bold name of the *Anarchist* was frightening away individual buyers as well as newsagents. It was at last agreed to call the new venture the *Voice of Labour*, the proposition being most enthusiastically endorsed by all present.

The next item on the agenda was the appointment of district secretaries and the question of pamphlet propaganda. It was felt that it was not the business of the Conference to appoint district secretaries, but to leave this to the groups concerned. As to the propaganda by pamphlet, the following plan was agreed upon:—That the local secretaries should canvas for monthly subscribers of 1s., with the ultimate aim of obtaining a total number of, say, 150 regular subscribers. It would then be possible to publish monthly a 5,000 edition of a penny pamphlet. The subscribers would then get their money back in the shape of pamphlets, which they could either distribute or sell, leaving over 3,000 copies for sale as well as for free distribution, if necessary. A list of those willing to undertake the canvassing in their respective localities was taken down by our comrade A. Plattin (address for correspondence, 19 Haymarket, Bristol), who is to receive the money and forward it to the publication department in London.

A few minutes only were left to discuss Ferrer Sunday Schools and Antimilitarism. The latter could not be reached at all. As to the Ferrer Schools, the Conference had the pleasure of hearing our comrade L. Portet say a few words with respect to the Modern School movement; but unfortunately the lack of time did not allow any one to discuss the matter at all.

This brought to an end what was, for all intents and purposes, a Conference of practical propositions for the furthering of Anarchist propaganda. It was decided to meet next Easter at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and the hope was expressed that the plan for a systematic propaganda entered upon in Liverpool will bear palpable fruit by the time the comrades meet again next year.

ANTIMILITARIST DEMONSTRATION.

A committee has been formed for the purpose of arranging a demonstration in Trafalgar Square on the third or fourth Sunday in May, to protest against Militarism in all its forms. Comrades or sympathisers wishing to participate in the organisation of this protest are invited to attend on Thursday, April 10, at 9 p.m., at 9 Manette Street, Charing Cross Road, W.C. Those unable to attend are requested to send a subscription to the secretary, W. Ponder, 22 Longfield Avenue, Walthamstow, N.E. Comrades, let us make an effective protest on this occasion. First intimation.

Back Numbers of "Freedom."

1911 and 1912 ... 1s. 6d. per year; two years for 2s. 6d.
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ANARCHISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE.

(Conclusion.)

The majority of people will say that to theorise about all these great changes in society is all very well; that, looked at in the abstract, they make a very pretty picture; but that, introduced into practical, everyday life, they would simply produce chaos and worse. They would never work. Now, I daresay most of us have met with that kind of person who will tell you that nothing will work that is going to alter anything that exists to-day. Such people know nothing; they think about nothing, they see nothing, they understand nothing, but they utter their opinions with an air of importance that well-informed persons would never assume. With his rugged scorn, Walt Whitman has described them as "the immutable, granitic pudding-heads of the world," and I, for one, do not intend to argue with them. But for those—a vast number, I admit—who in all sincerity see many obstacles to our theories, we have every respect, and are only too pleased to reason things out with them.

How, then, would Anarchism work out in practice? To answer this question, it must be clearly understood that you cannot have Anarchism divorced from an economic revolution. It would be simple stupidity to talk of us all being free, and all equals, while any one man could monopolise any form of private property that would place him in a superior economic position to that of his fellow man. So that we maintain, as I stated before, that Communism is the economic basis that ensures that true equality and certainty of well-being absolutely essential to real liberty, the fullest individual development, and unfettered initiative. Indeed, what we really have to ask is, will men Communise in a Socialist society? I answer, "Yes"; and I say in confirmation of this, that even in the cutthroat state of society we live in to-day the latent spirit of Communism is constantly in evidence; certainly in a very crude and undeveloped form, but that is owing to the multitude of obstacles placed in its way. But the desire for Communism is always to be found where associations of men begin to spring up. Take, for instance, a form most frequently met with, and which is to be found in some shape or other in nearly all ranks of society—I mean the sick fund. Here is an acknowledgment of one of the most obvious facts of our existence: that as the sick man cannot support himself, he needs the help of his fellow men. The same idea of co-operating for mutual benefit can be found in a hundred different forms, altogether apart from the great Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies, which also partake to a certain extent of the idea of mutual aid. I venture to say that nearly any one could give instances of small associations of men organising themselves for their pleasures, their pastimes, their mutual development, or for their more immediate necessities. So I do not think there can be any doubt that the spirit of Communism is alive amongst us, however much it may be crushed and distorted by the curse of a capitalist environment.

But in the event of a social revolution, should we not adopt more and more this brotherly method of adjusting the distribution of necessities on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"? And if to-day men with no very high ideals can organise on these lines, would they not follow this method in a deeper and broader sense when they found their limbs were free from chains, and that they were breathing the air of liberty? We answer emphatically, "Yes"; and we say that they are the Utopians who think that men when they are no longer the slaves of masters will go like sheep to ask the State to organise their labour and apportion their share of bread. If there is one thing more certain than another in social affairs, it is that economic liberty implies political liberty; and however much "bossing" men may stand to-day, we are convinced that there is still enough spirit dormant in the workers to revolt against the curse of officialism, which, if allowed to dominate us under State Socialism, would paralyse all moral and intellectual life.

Let me add that in the Free Commune it is the co-operative principle that would hold in the organisation of labour and all social effort. Roughly speaking, you have only the two principles of co-operation and competition to choose from. Industrial competition has had its day, and a terrible day it has been for the workers. In the new world, which is even now beginning to dawn for us, they will wish to unite as equals and to enjoy a little of that peace and brotherhood which hitherto for them has only been a dream. As to those Individualists who *will* have competition at any price, there will be plenty of room for them to cut each others throats outside the Commune.

There is another direction in which we Anarchists can fairly claim that our theories are used in practice with excellent results for the community. I refer to all those agencies voluntarily organised for the achievement of various social aims more or less useful, and for that reason, of course, neglected by the State. From the long list of such societies it will be enough to mention some of the most prominent, such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, and the National Lifeboat Association. I am not quoting these as examples of societies that would exist under Anarchism, as many of them are formed simply to combat the evils of capitalist society. But what I do affirm is that they prove clearly how the voluntary principle to which Anarchism holds, as opposed to coercion, can work for good social aims even under very bad conditions.

I am in hopes that some day we shall have compiled for us a book wherein it shall be clearly shown—taking, for instance, a period covering the last century, which is the century of unbridled capitalism—to what extent society has benefitted by legislation, and how much by voluntary social organisation. I am perfectly confident as to the outcome of such an inquiry. But as it may be thought this is assuming too much, I will quote a few sentences from a little pamphlet called "The Factory Hell," written by Edward and Eleanor Marx Aveling, who were bitterly opposed to Anarchism and ardent supporters of Parliamentary action for the attainment of Socialism. Here is what they say:—

"Between 1802 and 1830 there were three Factory Acts passed. But there were during those twenty-eight years no reports, for there were no inspectors. And there were no inspectors, because Parliament had voted no money for the carrying out of the provisions of its own Acts. When inspectors were appointed, their number was far too small. It is to-day far too small. The Acts, a dead letter from 1802 to 1830, have been during the fifty odd years since the latter date, and are still, if not exactly a dead letter, at least moribund.

"Whatever reports of whatever year are taken, it is the same sad and hideous story. Evasion of the Acts, recklessness as to the health and life of the workers, diseases and accidents due to the labour conditions and the greed of employers, and unholy alliance of masters, lawyers, and magistrates against the wage-slaves—these run with a melancholy persistency through all the report. Things are scarcely any better to-day with the actual workers than they were fifty years ago."

This is not only an admission of the failure of Government to protect the workers from the ravages of the exploiter, it is also an admission that by its own officials, the lawyers and the magistrates, its own Acts have been nullified. And to-day it is the same story. The Adulteration Acts fail to protect the food of the workers; and the Workmen's Compensation Act, as we know, is a stupid and cruel farce. And yet after a century of such experience we find the so-called leaders of the workers preaching in favour of Parliamentary action, and asking to be returned to an assembly which is one of the greatest frauds of a fraudulent age. What will happen to them when they get there we all know from past experience.*

On the other hand, voluntary organisation has accomplished an immense work for the benefit of the people. The Trade Unions have raised wages and shortened hours; the Co-operative Societies have done much to educate the people how to combine for their mutual advantage; thousands of children have been rescued from the cruelty and neglect of parents; and since the institution of our lifeboat system over 40,000 lives have been saved by its heroic work. And all this time Government has done nothing for the workers; but it has fulfilled its true mission by wasting our wealth by hundreds of millions, and sacrificing lives by hundreds of thousands.

I hope I have succeeded in making it clear that Anarchist Communism is no mere dream of a sect of idealists who have no conception of the actual realities of life. We have an ideal, it is true; and remember that without an ideal no progress is possible; but to suppose that Anarchism has no concern with the problems of our daily lives is to ignore the causes that are operating against our happiness and well-being, and to misconceive the relation in which Anarchism stands towards those causes. Many regard the abolition of Government and the assertion of individual liberty as dangerous to our social welfare. But that is because, as a rule, the majority of people are so ready to take on trust all the statements made by those who are interested in keeping them in slavery. We ask all men and women, and even children, to think for themselves. Do not accept statements that cannot be verified either by experience or by reason. The ruin of the people is that they trust too much—trust the priest, trust the politician, trust the press. Do not be afraid to rebel against anybody's authority. Ingersoll says that man has been saved by disobedience, and he is right. The slave-spirit has always been a curse to mankind; and it is those who would not submit to the lash, who would not bow to the tyrant, who would assert the dignity of their own natures even at the cost of their own lives—it is they who, bad as things are, have made life at all possible on this earth. And yet men fear to trust the path these pioneers have trod! They are like those who think swimming is an excellent thing, but have not the courage to trust themselves in the water.

But events are compelling the workers to look more deeply into the causes of their misery, and we find in various directions a lessening faith in the politician who promises so much and performs so little. The brave Russian workers are educating the people in new methods that are being put to the test for the first time—direct action and the general strike. The results are splendid, and must have immense results for the Labour movement. How grand compared to the fruitless efforts of the political Labour movement, with its jealousies, intrigues, petty ambitions, and huge disappointments.

If the English workers wish to be abreast of the times they will have to give up sneering at Anarchism, and try to understand it. They will have to throw off the curse of respectability, and cultivate the courage of true manhood. Times are rapidly ripening for great social changes. If we are to create a new world, a real world of liberty, equality, and fraternity, we shall have to leave behind the worn-out formulas of the past. Surely the misery, the injustice we see around us to-day are enough to urge us on to take our place in the struggle,

* This was written before the formation of the Labour Party.

otherwise we shall be less than men. And no matter how we may be denounced by the pillars of the present society for our so called foolish ideals, let us strive for the fullest liberty, the highest welfare of the oppressed, and as Morris has told us—

"We who once were fools and dreamers
Then shall be the just and brave."

LIBERTARIAN.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

Face to face with the growing danger of militarism, and return to the three years' service and increased armaments, the advanced elements in France have rallied and clearly demonstrated their determination to resist the reactionaries. A large protest meeting was held in the Latin Quarter of Paris, where professors of the Sorbonne denied the necessity of increased burdens of militarism, and exposed the baseless warning of the Government that France was in danger. The audience of 3,000 students enthusiastically supported the speakers, especially after the Royalists, who had tried to break up the meeting, had been thrown out.

The real sufferers by the proposed Army Bill, the workers, gave an overwhelming proof of their hatred of militarism on Sunday, March 30, when in Pré-St.-Gervais, the North-Eastern open space just outside Paris, a huge demonstration was held, organised by the Confederation of Labour. Not only workers' unions, but revolutionary, humanitarian and social organisations were represented, and the field was covered by an enormous crowd of 200,000 people. From numerous platforms speakers from Paris and the provinces voiced the determination of the French people not to be dragged further into the insane race of armaments, which fills the pockets of the capitalists, and enslaves the people more and more. If a war should be manufactured by the politicians, the French workers are determined to declare a general strike, and paralyse the mobilisation of troops.

The militarists have tried the old cry of "Alsace-Lorraine" to stir up warlike sentiments in the breasts of the people, but, to their chagrin, they have received not only the refusal of the proletariat to be a pawn in the war game, but even a rebuff from Alsace-Lorraine, where meetings were held to declare that no war was wanted on its behalf. This is a bitter pill for the scaremongers, who have relied on the readiness of the conquered provinces to be "liberated," this blessed word with which ambitious politicians and military men now cover their work of massacre and plunder. Nevertheless, in spite of the protests of the more thoughtful and conscious part of the French people, the Government continues to press for its programme. Though the Briand Cabinet has fallen, a new one has arisen, the same Ministers of War and Navy have been retained, with the same claims of the three years' service and higher war budgets. It remains to be seen if they will dare to go against the will of the people, so clearly and formidably demonstrated all over the country, and especially by the monster meeting of Pré-St.-Gervais.

Russia.

During the last three years the Imperial family and official Russia have been systematically preparing public opinion for the celebration of the Romanoff tercentenary. As usual in Russia, except State officials, the high clergy, and some hundred thousands of "patriots" in Government pay, the population, without distinction of class and nationality, only participate in the festivities, decorating and illuminating their houses, because they have to. A houseowner who had not hung out a flag or illuminations would find himself very soon in conflict with the political police and fined by the Governor. This accounts for the "rejoicings" at the recent Romanoff celebration.

During the three centuries of the Romanoff reign, only two Emperors, Peter the Great and Alexander II., gave any reforms to the country. The others were continually fighting with their people to keep them in ignorance and misery. Most distinguished in this work of oppression were the mad Emperor Paul, Nicolas I., that crowned corporal, and Alexander III. They opposed with all their might the spread of science and literature; and if they had not feared the ridicule of Europe, they would have willingly made a bonfire of all books in their empire.

The record of the Romanoffs in history is one of oppression and economic ruin. The Russian peasantry of a hundred million souls has been reduced to poverty and starvation. Famine has become a regular phenomenon, and every year five to twenty millions are more or less starving.

It must be noted that the first Romanoff was elected by a sort of States-General, and during his reign some elective Legislative Council existed, but was soon abolished; whilst a true Byzantine autocracy, combined with Tartar despotism, was restored. But during the last thirty years regenerated young Russia, by incessant revolutionary struggle and by the final triumphant general strike of 1905, succeeded in wresting a Constitutional representative Government from the present Tsar.

As is usual on such occasions as a tercentenary, an Imperial manifesto of pardons and favours was issued. Thousands of innocent political martyrs deported by administrative order, without a trial, to remote corners of Russia and Siberia, as well as the ruined peasantry long in arrears with their taxes, had hoped for a full pardon and a

complete remission of duties. Official circles had set rumours going to this effect. And indeed, all these points are mentioned in the manifesto, but in such a mean, rascally, double-faced way that none among the deported, not to speak of the condemned politicals, can return without the permission of those governors who were responsible for the deportation! We read in to-day's (March 30) St. Petersburg papers, for instance, that those administratively exiled from the Caucasus to the Don province (for trivial offence, because not far distant) have not yet received authorisation from the local administration to return to the Caucasus. By intermediary of a Deputy, the Government was asked for an explanation, and replied that permission for their return must be obtained from the Viceroy of the Caucasus who had sent them to deportation! So much for the value of the amnesty! The manifesto benefitted only those who were condemned for press offences. Among them was M. Morozoff, a revolutionist, who spent twenty-nine years of his life in prison, and yet has retained his intellectual and moral vigour. As for the hundreds and thousands of political prisoners, including "Babushka," their barred and locked cells remain unopened, and nothing but a renewed revolutionary movement will break their chains, and lead them forth to sunshine and liberty.

Hungary and Belgium.

For many months the Parliamentary Socialist parties in Hungary, as well as in Belgium, have been busily organising a general strike in order to force the Governments of the respective countries to grant universal suffrage. The strike was to be peaceful, at least from the side of the strikers, so the political leaders pointed out; and as it was for a political purpose, the idea of the general strike was grudgingly admitted to be perhaps a more effective weapon than Parliamentary efforts to convince a reactionary and clerical Government. The fact that the Parliamentary Socialists found it necessary to have recourse to the despised Anarchist methods speaks volumes for the growing popularity of direct action and the general strike. Whether the political Socialists in the course of the preparation for the strike saw the impossibility of keeping it "peaceful and orderly," or whether their courage failed before the responsibility when the date was approaching, at any rate on March 4 the Hungarian Social Democratic Party announced that the general strike had been postponed to a more propitious moment. "Without the Parliamentary support of the whole Opposition the strike would not succeed," the Executive Committee declared, as "the Government would drown the movement in blood." After the long and costly work of organisation for the strike, and the arousing of the workers' enthusiasm, this cool announcement of the leaders has caused the deepest resentment among the people; whilst, on the other hand, the Government has not failed to ascribe this sudden retreat to the weakness of the Social Democratic Party, and is now less disposed than ever to concede universal suffrage.

Two days after the Hungarian Socialists had announced their decision, the Belgian Strike Committee stated that it had reconsidered its advice to declare a general strike on April 14 for the purpose of extorting a Universal Suffrage Bill from the Government. The rank-and-file of the Belgian Labour Party had, however, made up their mind that the time for action had arrived. At the Easter Congress, held in Brussels, all the 1,350 delegates, with the exception of thirty, in spite of the warning of Anseele and other politicians, voted in favour of the general strike being declared on April 14. The evident reluctance of the political leaders to rouse the workers to the efficacy of the economic struggle, though for a political aim, may yet cause the failure of the movement, and later on create division and suspicion in the ranks of the workers.

Norway.

The more the workers are showing signs of awakening to the value of direct action, the more the Governments bestir themselves in forging legal chains to paralyse their efforts of liberation. The Norwegian Government has laid before Parliament a Bill for the introduction of compulsory arbitration. This project is energetically opposed by the workers, who are quite aware of the danger of this legal trap to smother their aspirations.

Another fact showing the intention of the workers to be free to fight for their rights when the opportunity seems favourable is the diminution of the number of collective contracts. The *International Bulletin of the Syndicalist Movement* states that in 1909 the number of such contracts had decreased by 600, involving 64,000 men; in 1910 by 148 contracts for 24,000 men; in 1911 again 141 contracts less, involving 21,833 workers. At the end of 1911 there were still 1,476 collective contracts in force between employers and workmen, the latter numbering 22,792.

The next Congress of the Norwegian Trade Unions, to be held on June 22 in Christiania, will have a special importance, as it is to discuss and decide on the principles and tactics of Revolutionary Syndicalism. In Norway, as elsewhere in Scandinavian countries, Revolutionary Syndicalism has been making great progress within the old Trade Unions, and has become the burning question in the Labour movement.

ANARCHY.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal.—*Century Dictionary*.

PROPAGANDA NOTES.

[Reports of the Movement are specially invited, and should be sent in not later than the 25th of each month.]

EAST LONDON ANARCHIST GROUP.—We have held a series of indoor meetings at the Triangle Coffee Rooms, 72B Mare Street, Hackney, opposite Morley Hall. On Sunday, March 9, Mr. Finch, a Tolstoyan Anarchist, opened a very interesting discussion on the utility of Passive Resistance. On the 16th we held a meeting to celebrate the anniversary of the Commune of Paris, 1871. Although the weather was miserable and wet, we had a record attendance, which listened attentively to the revolutionary speeches that were delivered by our comrades F. Kitz, H. Baron, W. Ponder, M. Kavanagh, and others. Comrade Kitz, who spoke for about forty minutes, gave an interesting account of how the Versailles army surrounded Paris and murdered 32,000 innocent men, women, and children; and he said that the capitalist class here at home would be prepared to crush any revolt on the part of the workers by the same methods, and that they attempted to do so last year at Liverpool. On the 23rd we were fortunate in again getting the services of our old comrade Frank Kitz, who spoke on "Thirty Years' Reminiscences of the Socialist Movement." Although the audience was very small—perhaps on account of it being Easter Sunday—I should like to say to those comrades who did not turn up that it was about the best lecture we have had.

We have formed a library, and comrades and sympathisers wishing to become members are requested to give their names to the secretary or to any member of the group. For lectures in April, see below. D. F.

INTERNATIONAL MODERN SUNDAY SCHOOL (East London).—The school is steadily progressing and has after these few months become a real necessity in the East End of London. The kiddies themselves take a great interest in all arrangements, and are becoming most independent in their demands. They are now forming various sports and physical exercise groups, which are to play a great part during the coming summer. While I was away at Liverpool, it happened that no teacher turned up that Sunday; but the kiddies afterwards informed me that they carried on quite a heated discussion among themselves on the question of "Charity," while one of the elder girls spoke to the younger class. Our appeal for teachers still stands, but the kiddies are learning to give more of their time to debates and discussions. We are still greatly in need of financial help. Received this month—Greenberg 6d. N. P.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(March 7—April 3.)

FREEDOM Guarantee Fund.—J. Bedford 2s 6d, S. Corio 1s 6d, H. Glasse 5s 3d, Two Comrades at Liverpool Conference 18s.

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