

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

VOL. XXVIII.—No. 304.

AUGUST, 1914.

MONTHLY: ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

War and the Aftermath.

The criminals who rule the nations are displaying their Christian love for the people (they are *all* Christians) by entering on a war the end of which cannot be foreseen, and which threatens to destroy the progress of a century. And all this ostensibly for the lives of two persons—one less than our Government is responsible for in Dublin! The “serene conscience” of the Emperor Francis Joseph, in the face of all the dreadful possibilities before the whole of Europe, only proves the criminal callousness of one who if he followed the teachings of his creed—bad enough as it stands—would be satisfied with “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” Again, hardly has the message of war been printed ere the evil schemes of the financier and the profiteer are in full swing. The coming suffering of the people is dreadfully foreshadowed in the immediate rise in the price of necessities, and the fall in credit. If at the end of all these horrors the people could emerge victorious over the ruin of Capitalism, there would at least be some satisfaction for the price paid; and we can but hope that things may turn against the crowned and uncrowned enemies of liberty and progress, and that a social revolution may be the aftermath of the orgy of blood and ruin with which we are threatened.

The Power Behind the Police.

The horror of the cowardly massacre of innocent people in Dublin would be enhanced if the secret forces that are working to produce civil war could be exposed. For there can be no doubt in the minds of those who have watched the tactics of the most reactionary and conservative elements in the governing classes that these enemies of the people are prepared to use every possible means to preserve their feudal and aristocratic privileges against popular demands. When we read of two such black shadows as those of Lord Roberts and the Archbishop of Canterbury haunting Buckingham Palace; when we note the tone of the speeches given forth by Lansdowne, Londonderry, and the Cecils; and last, but not least, when we hear the mouthings of defiance uttered by that Mephistopheles of the Bar, Sir Edward Carson, who is breaking the very law by which he earns his dishonest bread; we can rest assured that no means, however base, and no sum of money, however great, will be spared in their war on the people. For there need be no mistake in coming to this conclusion: they are the deadly enemies of all popular rights. And if the workers in their disgust at the failures of the Liberal Party should imagine their struggles, their rightful claims will receive more sympathy at the hands of these titled robbers, they will be sadly mistaken. No; if wisdom is to prevail, let the clear, clean-cut path of direct action and Labour solidarity be the one that is followed. Even politicians are losing all hope in politics.

Cause and Cure.

Mr. Arnold S. Rowntree has done good work in calling attention to the poverty and life-conditions of a vast section of our working population. In his latest address at Swanwick, on July 25, he returns to this subject, and points out that the increased cost of living has reduced wages even below the margin he had previously given. In other words, the poor are really getting poorer, and the rich richer. It is worth noting also that practically nothing has been gained toward an eight-hour day by political action, since we are told that over 6,000,000 men and 2,500,000 women work more than forty-eight hours per week. So that we may say that poverty, overwork, unemployment, and premature death are as rampant as ever in spite of all our legislation. For it must be remembered that poverty has a greater sting to-day when the poor are more conscious of the

injustice; that hours of labour are a greater strain than in the past, thanks to “speeding-up”; that unemployment takes a more hopeless form as competition increases; and that if panel doctors and sanatoria alleviate suffering and *tend* to prolong life, tens of thousands are dying too soon all the same. All these considerations make us feel impatient with our social reformers when, like Mr. Rowntree, they propose as a cure “the minimum wage, regularity of employment, housing and land reform, health [?] elementary education.” From this one would imagine that Capitalism, instead of being the root-cause of all the trouble, was really a beneficent institution, only a little out of order!

Men and Manners.

Lord Rosebery has been giving us some of his light-hearted platitudes in his address to the prize winners at Epsom College. He advised the scholars to “make their manners worthy of their character, and their character worthy of their manners.” Very trite and stale all this. And if a man who has held such public positions as has Lord Rosebery, who lives on such a princely income, has such a fine library, and is supposed to dip so deeply into the best of books—if such a man has nothing better than this to tell to the rising generation of public school boys, then, in spite of his perfect “manners,” there must be something radically wrong in his outlook on life. Or is it simply that the anomaly of an aristocrat of these latter days trying to maintain the old prestige in face of the rising tide of democracy sounds to us like the vapid and senseless echo of Chesterfield’s advice to his son? However that may be, the one fact about it all is that we shall never have manners in the strict sense of the word till they spring naturally from that deep respect for the human personality which will arise when we have liberty and equality, and not before. The wretched veneer of hypocrisy and conventionality which Lord Rosebery regards as “manners,” but covers all the brutal and ferocious prejudices that are at the bottom of class distinctions. And when the proletariat shall attempt to touch the privileges of these “educated” persons, we shall soon realise how far their “manners” and their “characters” will help them in respecting human justice and human life.

“No Bad Boys.”

One has to pick out the good wherever it may be found. We live in days of social experiments: a sure sign of coming change. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the treatment of children and young people. At Plaistow, we are told, an experiment is being tried which, although probably mixed up with some useless and unnecessary religious influences, still has features of interest for those who seek new departures in developing the energy and initiative of the youth of both sexes. Miss Bolton, who is one of the chief workers in this movement, says “there is no such thing as a bad boy. There are troublesome boys—but that is because the good in them has been wrongly directed.” This sounds like a revival of the Robert Owen spirit; and when one so often reads of the attempt to revive the birch and the cane, it is encouraging to find people working against this rebarbarisation of the young. But better still, the boys and girls in this Plaistow experiment “work together” in gardening enterprise with the best possible results. They are just the rough lads and lassies of the poorest quarters, but they are given an *interest* in something congenial, and “the chivalrous instincts of the boys are stimulated by the need for heavy work in producing beautiful things from rough soil, and they co-operate with the girls admirably.” A very small fact, but very significant. Some day youthful energy, with an ideal before it, freed from authority, and nurtured in health-giving surroundings, will be doing *as a recreation* some of the most useful work of the world.

VOICE OF LABOUR.

WEEKLY, ONE HALFPENNY.

VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.*

By the death of Voltairine de Cleyre in June, 1912, the Anarchist movement lost one of its most brilliant propagandists. She was born on November 17, 1866, in Leslie, Michigan, U.S.A. Her father was French, her mother American, of Puritan descent. She was named after Voltaire, of whom her father, a Freethinker, was a great admirer. Voltairine did not have a happy childhood; her earliest life was embittered by want of the common necessities of life, which her parents, hard as they tried, could not provide. From her earliest days she was an earnest student, and was graduated from the grammar school at the age of twelve. Then came the great tragedy of her early life. Her father, who up to that time had been a Freethinker, recanted his ideas, and returned to the Church of Rome. Evidently as a peace-offering on his part, he decided that his daughter should become a nun; and, in spite of the determined opposition of his wife, Voltairine was sent to a convent in Canada. Here she experienced four years of terrible ordeal, but eventually regained her liberty. In a sketch published in this volume, "The Making of an Anarchist," she tells us of her life in that living tomb:—

"How I pity myself now, when I remember it, poor lonesome little soul, battling solitary in the murk of religious superstition, unable to believe and yet in hourly fear of damnation, hot, savage, and eternal, if I do not instantly confess and profess! How well I recall the bitter energy with which I repelled my teacher's enjoiner, when I told her I did not wish to apologise for an adjudged fault as I could not see that I had been wrong, and could not feel my words. 'It is not necessary,' said she, 'that we should feel what we say, but it is always necessary that we obey our superiors.' 'I will not lie,' I answered hotly, and at the same time trembled lest my disobedience had finally consigned me to torment! I struggled my way out at last, and was a Freethinker when I left the institution three years later, though I had never seen a book or heard a word to help me in my loneliness. It had been like the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and there are white scars on my soul yet, where Ignorance and Superstition burnt me with their hell-fire in those stifling days. Am I blasphemous? It is their word, not mine. Beside that battle of my young days all others have been easy, for whatever was without, within my own Will was supreme. It has owned no allegiance, and never shall; it has moved steadily in one direction, the knowledge and assertion of its own liberty, with all the responsibility falling thereon."

After leaving the convent, she soon became known as a lecturer in the Freethought movement. But her Anarchism dates from the hanging of the five Chicago martyrs in 1887. When the Anarchists were arrested after the explosion in the Haymarket in May, 1886, she exclaimed: "They ought to be hanged!" But the infamy of judge, counsel, and police at the trial opened her eyes; and for years after she reproached herself for what she termed her "ignorant, outrageous, and bloodthirsty sentence." From then onward her work in the Anarchist movement was unceasing. She gained a very precarious livelihood in Philadelphia by teaching English to the Jewish working men and women, to whose "genuine heroism in the cause of education" she paid a high tribute. Though suffering from physical weakness, it was during this time that Voltairine's best work was accomplished. Her pity for the downtrodden and oppressed was equalled only by her hatred of the oppressors, and in this volume her voice rings clearly as a bell, exposing the shams and lies of modern society and heralding a new era of liberty.

Among the better known poems in the book we may mention "The Gods and the People," "The Hurricane," and "Ut Sementem Feceris, ita Metes," which was addressed to the Tsar on the occasion of a female political prisoner being flogged to death in Siberia. At the present moment when Russia shows signs of a new revolutionary upheaval, it is appropriate that we should quote this poem:—

"How many drops must gather to the skies
Before the cloud-burst comes, we may not know;
How hot the fires in under hells must glow
Ere the volcano's scalding lavas rise,
Can none say; but all wot the hour is sure!
Who dreams of vengeance has but to endure!
He may not say how many blows must fall,
How many lives be broken on the wheel,
How many corpses stiffen 'neath the pall,
How many martyrs fix the blood-red seal;
But certain is the harvest time of Hate!
And when weak moans, by an indignant world
Re-echoed, to a throne are backward hurled,
Who listens, hears the mutterings of Fate!"

But it is in her essays that Voltairine de Cleyre shows her truly great character. All of them have been carefully thought out, and are clearly expressed. In her article on "Anarchism," she states the case for the opposing schools with an impartiality and a tolerance which are seldom found. But after comparing Socialism and Communism with Individualism and Mutualism, she says:—

"Personally, while I recognise that liberty would be greatly extended under any of these economies, I frankly confess that none of them satisfies me. Socialism and Communism both demand a degree of joint effort and administration which would beget more regulation than is wholly consistent with ideal Anarchism; Individualism and Mutualism, resting upon property, involve a development of the private policeman not at all compatible with my notions of freedom. My ideal would be a condition in which all natural resources would be forever free to all, and the worker individually able to produce for himself sufficient for all his vital needs, if he so chose, so that he need not govern his working or not working by the times and seasons of his fellows. I think that time may come; but it will only be through the development of the modes of

production and the taste of the people. Meanwhile we all cry with one voice for the freedom to try."

Other noteworthy articles republished here are those on "Crime and Punishment," "Direct Action," and "The Mexican Revolution," and the frank and outspoken essay on "Sex Slavery." At times her words seem to develop a white heat, and the reader is swept along by the force of her arguments. We would like to quote many passages, but space forbids. Our readers should get the book for themselves. From a literary point of view, it is worthy of a place in any library; but it will be most warmly treasured as a memento of the life-work of a tried and true Anarchist comrade.

THE CAUSES OF MEXICO'S REVOLT.*

At last we have a book on the Mexican struggle from the point of view of the native Mexican. Hitherto most writers have shown us how the country has been developed and made prosperous by such "strong" men as Porfirio Diaz, who are portrayed generally as benevolent despots. Statistics are usually given showing how the wealth of the people has increased, and how the country has provided an outlet for the surplus capital of Europe. But the authors of this book show us the other side of the shield. They have given us a popular summary of the history of the country since its conquest by Spain, and we see how from early days the people have had to fight continuously against their exploiters, who could always rely on the assistance of the Church. The latter, in fact, were always against the people, and it was with their assistance that Napoleon III. attempted to foist Maximilian upon Mexico as its Emperor. But this was too much for the Mexicans to bear, and although the French had the support of the reactionaries in Mexico, the people were triumphant, the invader was executed, and the French driven out of the country. But although European intervention was ended, international Capitalism was not defeated, and its leaders bided their time, and later on, as our authors say, "through the medium of Porfirio Diaz, their creature whom they made, supported, petted, and eulogised, they more effectually killed the Constitution of 1857, crushed the Mexican democracy, and worked their will upon Mexican labour and the vast Mexican national resources than they could have done through any successful intervention or series of interventions."

The authors of this book are most radical in their explanations of the science of government, and are under no illusions as to the value of political revolutions. When, in 1821, after a ten years' struggle, Mexico threw off the yoke of Spain, the workers gained nothing. "Thanks to the adroitness of the Church and Iturbide's Spanish mercenaries, the privileged classes were as firmly entrenched in power as before the Revolution." And every political change in Mexico had the same result. For a brief interval, under the enlightened Constitution of Juarez, it seemed as though the people were to be free to work out their own salvation; but four months after his election as President, in 1861, the Governments of France, England, and Spain signed a compact in London pledging themselves to a joint invasion of Mexico to overthrow the Constitutional Government, and to establish in its place a Monarchy, supported by bayonets. This intervention was defeated, as stated above; but, combined with her previous struggles, the effort so weakened the fighting spirit of the Mexicans that when in November, 1876, Porfirio Diaz entered Mexico City at the head of an army, fully equipped and financed by foreign interests, resistance was out of the question.

As soon as Diaz was proclaimed President, the capitalists demanded the reward of their services in placing him in power. Railway concessions and free land, together with construction subsidies, were the first of a long series of grants at the expense of the people. During the reign of Diaz no less than 180,000,000 acres of the best land in Mexico were acquired by land corporations and the personal friends of the Administration, at an actual payment of only £350,000. But the climax was reached when the land speculators, with the aid of Diaz, proceeded to evict a million independent farmers from their holdings, under the pretext that they were trespassing upon these already purchased Government lands. This eviction was carried out by an efficiently organised army and a special body of 15,000 mounted police. During a period of twenty-five years, in district after district, the people were ruthlessly slaughtered—men, women, and children—and their lands given over to individuals or groups of speculators, some of them Americans or English. The peasant farmers fought hard to retain their lands, but the overwhelming force sent against them by Diaz crushed all opposition. In this vile work the Dictator was supported by the Church, which as a reward obtained vast estates. Thus was a nation dispossessed of its lands and brought into slavery.

The authors give full credit to the Mexican Liberal Junta for their revolutionary propaganda by means of their paper, *Regeneracion*. To them was due the success of the fight of Madero against Diaz, who was defeated. But Madero proved as treacherous as Diaz, and the Revolutionists had to continue their fight for the land. Huerta followed Madero, and now Carranza follows Huerta; but the people have entirely lost faith in the politicians, and to-day the workers and peasant farmers of Mexico are steadily and surely regaining their farms and fields from the robber landlords. While the workers of Europe are

* *Selected Works of Voltairine de Cleyre*. Edited by Alexander Berkman. Biographical Sketch by Hippolyte Havel. With Portrait. \$1.00 net. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association.

* *The Mexican People: Their Struggle for Freedom*. By L. Gutierrez de Lara and Edgcomb Pinchon. 1.50 dol. New York: Doubleday, Page and Co.

engaged in slaughtering each other in the interest of their rulers, the Mexican peons are using their rifles to gain their emancipation.

This book throws a flashlight upon Mexican affairs, and no one who reads it will ever have much faith in the institutions of State and Church. Here we see a great nation corrupted by the forces of international Capitalism, working through its own Government. The United States Government cannot escape the charge of complicity in the work of Diaz and other Mexican tyrants.

The writers are in full sympathy with the Revolutionists, and give plenty of evidence for the charges they make. The book is profusely illustrated, and contains photographs of most of the principal actors in the Mexican drama. We hope it will have a wide circulation.

A PRIMER OF ANARCHISM.

V.—LAND AND RENT.

We who strive for a free life know full well that to get it we must have free land; for as land is the source of life, a free life means free land. But what do we mean by free land? We mean land free of rent. And what is rent? There are two forms of rent. First and worst is the rent we have to pay for the mere right to stay on the earth: ground rent and house rent. Now no man can own land but by the aid of the State. The State's might gives a few men the right to own all the land there is, and as these few men do not want all the land for their own use, and the rest of men must use land in some way if they are to live at all, these last must pay those who own the land for the right to live and work on it. So ground rent is a theft by those who own the land from those who live and work on it. If the State, with its force of arms, did not stand by these lords of the land, we may take it that ground rent would not be paid; that is to say, a few men could not thus squeeze vast sums in rent out of those who till the soil.

House rent is a theft in the same way. Few of those who try to live by work have the cash to buy a house. So they have to live in a small brick box, for which they pay one third or so out of their wage. And they pay this house rent all through their lives, yet they do not have the place to call their own, for as soon as they cease to pay the rent they are thrown out on the streets. Now, the State keeps up this kind of thing by brute force, so we who want a life of peace say, "Let us throw down the State so that all men may have a place to live in and work on, and that these rent thieves may no more have a force to help them in their thefts."

There might be some show of fair play in the case of house rent if when the cost of the house had been paid it should be ours to own; but this is not so. Some folks who do not see that the State is the cause of this theft think that we can change it by the vote. Well, the fruit of this thought can be seen in the schemes of the L.C.C. to house the poor. None but the best paid of the poor can live in the flats of the L.C.C., as a rule, for the rent is as high as that which the slum lords made them pay.

We have shown that rent is theft. Then the way to stop this theft is to pay no more rent. Let us preach this thought to those who work: pay no rent! All you who work, join in your full force, and as you strike for more pay, strike as well to pay no more rent.

We now come to a form of rent which is not due to that sole right to own land which the State gives to a class. Some land will be found to yield more to work than the rest. In land, as in most things, there are grades from the best to the worst. This holds good in the land of towns as well as that of farms. The soil on the farm and the site in the town give rise to a great deal of change in the seed that we sow and the trade that we do. We who live in town know why the shop in New Bond Street pays more rent than the shop in Mile End Road. The shop in New Bond Street stands in the midst of a crowd of rich drones, whose chief thought is to spend the cash which they steal from the poor slaves who work for them. There are great gluts of gold in the West End to be spent, and so the shops in New Bond Street pay high rents. Near Mile End Road live the slaves of the West End drones, who, with their poor pay, can buy none but the worst kind of food: such muck as the rich thieves would not give to their dogs. So the trade of the shops in Mile End Road yields much less than that of the shops in New Bond Street, and thus the rent will be much less.

Now, as is seen at a glance, this form of rent does not spring from the sole right to own the land, though, as we will soon show, if men did not pay ground rent and house rent it would tend to fall out of sight. It springs from the fact that, in towns, those who own most of the wealth live near one point, and this point, of course, gets to be the place where more cash is spent than in those spots where the poor live. The streets where the rich folks live are, as a rule, broad and clear, each house is large and well built, and in all ways a more choice place to live in. So more is paid in rent. Out of town, on the farms, some soil will be rich and some poor. That shows why more rent can be got from the best soil than from the worst. But, as in the towns, so on the farms, the best soil will be that which has the most spent on it, both in wealth and work; so that in each case it can be shown that the high rents, both on farms and in towns, stand or fall with the rich drones; and the rich drones rest on the class of poor slaves, from whose toil springs their wealth.

This is why we say, "Strike at the State," as the source of all the theft that makes a rich class of drones and a poor class of slaves. Strike at the State which gives to a few the sole right to own all the

land, the sign of which right is rent; strike at rent in the right way: *Pay no more!* When rent is no more paid, the rich thieves will have that sum less in their thefts from those who work, to make the site in New Bond Street of so much more worth than the site in Mile End. House rent and ground rent make the land thieves rich, and at the same time make the rent rise in those choice spots which they grace by their stay there. The right of all men to life is the right of all men to land, and the right of all men to land means: *Pay no Rent!*

WILLIAM J. ROBINS.

THE RULES.

(With apologies to EDGAR ALLAN POE)

I.

Life is now beset with rules—

Irksome rules

That are framed by different bureaucratic legislative schools.

How they mind us and they bind us

In this regulative age,

How they irritate and grind us

Till it's possible to find us

In an unrestricted rage;

And we curse, curse, curse,

As our wrath grows worse and worse,

At the fiendish machinations of the regulative fools,

With their rules, rules, rules, rules,

Rules, rules, rules—

With their overtaxing, unrelaxing rules!

II.

Then those "good old-fashioned rules,"

Golden rules!

How successfully they've gulled the minds of myriads of fools!

Throughout the many ages,

Tricked by prophets, priests, and sages,

The people have decided

By the rules;

Though some have not abided,

But have risen and derided

All the rules:

Yet the patient willing mules,

Continually chloroformed in churches and in schools,

Still are fools,

And are tools

Of the syndicates and pools,

Of the money-grubbing ghouls,

Whose knavery a slavery

Has fashioned from the rules—

Yes, the rules, rules, rules, rules,

Rules, rules, rules—

The blind-enslaving, mind-depraving rules?

III.

But the last-planned loathsome rules—

Brazen rules!

What fearsome propositions from the modern legal schools!

By their all-invading might

(With its all-pervading blight)

They who never cease to bleed us

Would control the means to breed us,

Through the Law!

In their frantic adoration of the majesty of Law,

In their mad infatuation with the sordid strumpet Law,

They would swamp us in the mire

Of their rule-enforcing ire:

They would pile laws higher, higher,

In their desperate desire

To lead us all through life by Law!

Oh, the rules, rules, rules,

That the grim Eugenic ghouls

Would enact!

The latest wild distortion

Of mind is that abortion,

The abominable "Feeble-Minded Act";

And the motive clearly shows:

For restraining

And detaining

And sequestering all those

Whom the parasites terms fools,

They're erecting

And perfecting

Yet another of their tools

For coercing all who dare to bid defiance to the rules,

To the rules, rules, rules, rules,

Rules, rules, rules—

To those handicapping, overlapping, fit-for-scraping

Rules.

P. E. TANNER.

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Monthly, One Penny; post-free, 1½d.; U.S.A., 3 Cents; France, 15 Centimes.

Annual Subscription, post-free, 1s. 6d.; U.S.A., 40c.; France, 2fr.
Foreign Subscriptions should be sent by International Money Order.

Wholesale price, 1s. 6d. per quire of 26 post-free in the United Kingdom.

All communications, exchanges, &c., to be addressed to

THE MANAGER, 127 Ossulston Street, N.W.

The Editors are not necessarily in agreement with signed articles.

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Money and Postal Orders should be made payable to T. H. Keell.

The Crime of Crimes.

The crime of crimes has been committed, and England is at war. In view of the Government's foreign policy during its whole existence, no one need feel surprise at this. When it was seen that the Imperialists in the Cabinet had the controlling voice, and when later Churchill was made First Lord of the Admiralty, it became a certainty that in the next great struggle of the European powers England would be involved. To discuss the hideous machinations of international diplomacy, however, is worse than useless. The plague of war has infected all the nations, and its breath will spread death and destruction on a scale never seen before.

But a little while ago—a few weeks only—the peasant and the labourer in every land went to his work in peace, with no quarrel in his heart, with no thought of arming against his comrades in other lands. Indeed, it might be said that everywhere the bonds of international solidarity were drawing the proletariat closer together. Now, at the bidding of their rulers, what a scene meets the eye!

What has caused this terrible transformation?

It is this. The war-mongering press—"the foulest birth of time"—has, while fomenting racial hatreds, held before the people the terrors of the "black peril," as in Africa and Egypt, and of the "yellow peril," as in China. By these means the people have been blinded to the real danger at their doors—the "white peril"; the peril from those monstrous growths of Capitalism, the big armanent firms and the great financiers.

What is happening at the present moment is the defeat of civilisation by the modern barbarians. All the beneficial work of social and material progress—such hard-won liberties as we possess—are now endangered, not by invading hordes of the Goths and the Huns, as happened in the past, but by a barbarism which nestles in the very heart of our social life, polished and veneered to look like humanity, but heartless, cruel, and ferocious as any of the tyrannies of old.

And it is this organisation for profit and plunder that modern Governments serve. It is to satiate their monstrous greed for wealth and power that ten millions of men, who ought to be gathering the harvests that their dear ones will never taste, are thrown at each other's throats. For their advantage the cornfields of Europe will become the graveyards of the tens of thousands who are doomed to die for a cause they do not even understand.

This Niagara of blood, this ruin, this devastation is the work of the Governments of the armed States, who, while preaching the great lie of arming for peace, pretend, at the same time, to protect our liberties and our lives. There are Socialists and Radicals who have talked lightly of war, who have ignored the warnings that some amongst us have constantly given. They may now see the fruit of their folly. But the dreadful price in loss of life, in suffering, in the humiliation, the destruction of humanity's noblest ideas, no man can estimate.

CAPITALISM CONDEMNED.

Two important documents have recently been issued. The one is the Annual Return upon Trade Unions presented by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, and the other a Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1913. According to the former, there has been an increase in membership of nearly a quarter of a million during the past year, the major part of this increase being found in the trades scheduled for unemployment insurance under the National Insurance Act. The total Trade Union membership is now over two and a half millions, being an increase of well over a million since 1909. The question that naturally arises is, how far the Trade Unions, with this gigantic membership, have fulfilled their mission of protecting their members. Let us turn to the Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories, a document which in itself is an indictment of our industrial system, despite the legislative efforts of Trade Unionists in Parliament. The statistics show a large increase in industrial accidents. Those ending fatally increased from 1,260 in 1912 to 1,309 in 1913, while non-fatal accidents increased from 154,972 to 176,852.

The whole report goes far to prove that industrial laws do not benefit the workers, that despite all the prosecutions by the Home Office, thousands of employers actually do evade the laws. In Lancashire nearly 50 per cent. of 563 special visits for this purpose resulted in the discovery of illegalities, yet many employers actually keep scouts to give warning of an inspector's approach. The Trade Unionists, with pathetic trust, still continue to hug the delusion that Labour laws are passed for their benefit. The most significant point brought out by the report is the relationship between long hours and accidents, yet nothing of a drastic character has been undertaken by the Unions themselves to ensure safety.

The census figures relating to child labour also give us much food for thought. There are in the textile trade 84,000 boys between the ages of ten and thirteen, whilst 60,000 of the same ages earn a living as messengers and van-boys. Of other boy-workers, there are 576,900 between the ages of thirteen and fifteen, and of girls employed 255,950 between ten and fifteen years of age. There are actually 10·6 per cent. of all male workers under eighteen, and 17·7 of all female workers are below the same age. Children of thirteen may be employed sixty hours a week (exclusive of meal times), and for five hours continuously without a break. For the whole country, one child in every six between the ages of ten and thirteen is employed.

With these figures before us, we may well ask what have the Unions done to abolish child-labour, with all its demoralising influence upon the child's after-life? It was at the Labour Party's Conference at Belfast that Shackleton, with tears in his voice, pleaded with the delegates not to pass any resolution pledging the party to the abolition of the half-timer, because it would embarrass his Union. He, in common with other prominent Labour leaders, failed to grasp the ill-effect child-labour had upon the adult worker, tending to lower wages and worsen conditions—indeed, practically rendering the work of the Unions futile. To-day the Unions have advanced no further, only Shackleton is now a shining light in a Government office, and the agitation for the abolition of child-labour is defunct. So the child continues to blackleg against his father, and the mother is supplanted in her ill-paid job in the factory by the still more scandalously underpaid daughter.

In further proof that neither Trade Unionism nor factory laws have saved the wage-slaves from the vulture employer, we have only to quote from a report of a meeting convened by the National Federation of Women Workers. There we learn that a collar-ironer who arrived five minutes late was fined 3s. 6d., her rate of pay being reduced from 5d. to 4d. a dozen. Her wages totalled something like 3d. an hour, whilst the fine worked out at £5 per hour. Numerous other instances were also quoted as showing the toll levied on the workers by the brigands who run some of our successful industrial concerns.

We join in wishing more power to the girls, who at last are awakening; but the remedy they seek—legislative enactments—cannot cure the evil. The Chief Factory Inspector proves the law to be powerless to stop the frightful loss of life in industry, and no enactments have ever held in check for any length of time an employer bent on profit-making. The workers must learn here and now the stupidity of law-making from their point of view; they must see how the cunning of the captains of industry will always overcome the most seemingly solid and impregnable law ever passed by Parliament. They enter Parliament to frame laws that give a semblance of protection to the toilers, and then hire lawyers in order to evade them. Thus the

play goes on, and the victims themselves endeavour to palliate their lot by sending Labour leaders to assist in the hypocritical game.

In reviewing the whole situation in the Labour world, we are faced with the damning fact that with increasing growth and prosperity the Unions have been depleted of fighting strength. An unwieldy mass of members relegate their affairs to the paid officials; increasing power develops an authoritarian spirit in these "leaders," until they really believe they possess special knowledge, and run the whole business, bamboozling the rank-and-file with political conjuring tricks. In reality, they make reliable sheepdogs for the master-class. When will our industrial martyrs learn to think and act for themselves, and get rid for ever of their fetish of legislation? They need no more Labour enactments, but a little more sound sense, followed by direct action.

SIDELIGHTS ON SOCIAL SUBJECTS.

The brilliance of the Labour Party is suffering eclipse, and their most cherished illusions have vanished. This is shown in their recent attempt at a resolution—not revolution, oh, no!—but a good, solid, no-hanky-panky-about-it resolution, that should make their docile followers sit up, and don their war-paint. It is couched in sonorous terms, as befits this much-abused party. The subject is, of course, Ulster; and a sad, proud, dignified spirit underlies the cryptic phrasing. A great party has been slighted—no representative was summoned to the King's Conference, and so the shining lights become dim, and in sorrow hide their heads beneath their mantles. They resent the interference of the Crown as likely to defeat the purpose of the venerated Parliament Act. How these law-abiding heroes do love constitutional Acts! They put on record their surprise that two of the representatives summoned by the King are practically rebels under arms against *constituted authority*, and regret that in future an organisation of force is to be officially considered to be most effective in industrial as well as political disputes. Poor disillusioned luminaries! 'tis sad, indeed, that their simple faith should thus ruthlessly be destroyed; but it is never too late to learn, and perchance they may emerge with the knowledge strong upon them that rebellion against constituted authority has throughout history always given the vital impetus to progress.

The International Socialist Bureau has been thinking, and as a result has deputed M. Emile Vandervelde, the Belgian leader, to prepare, for submission to the Congress of International Socialists at Vienna, a report on the Socialistic attitude towards the drink traffic; and so it seems that new banners must be ordered, inscribed with the battle-cry, "Down with Alcohol!" an inspiring and ennobling motto, and breathing the fire and fury of the coming revolution. The Congress will be asked to declare that alcohol inflicts immense evils on the workers by ruining physical and moral health, and destroying combative energy; and it will be proposed to direct the attention of the workers to the danger of alcohol by suppressing in clubs under Socialistic or Labour control the sale of all strong drinks, by members practising total abstinence themselves, and assisting to popularise it with workers generally. The report also states that the measures to be taken, from limitation of licences to complete prohibition, will naturally vary in different countries.

To us, it looks very much as though the men responsible for this report had been themselves suffering from intoxication consequent upon a too liberal dose of bourgeois economics. They exhibit a lamentable narrowness of vision, and show an extraordinary superficiality—they merely desire to patch up on top something which is declared to be rotten, instead of trying to undermine the whole present structure of society. They must know that the drink traffic and the drink craze will exist just as long as profit is squeezed out of it on the one hand, and the workers are exploited on the other. Teach the wage-slave to strike at the substructure of society, and the drink problem, in common with other serious evils of the age, will solve themselves.

M. B. HOPE.

THE INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST CONGRESS.

POSTPONEMENT.

In view of the state of affairs in Europe, it has been decided to postpone the Congress.

A Pamphlet for the Times.

READY ON AUGUST 14.

WARS AND CAPITALISM.

By P. KROPOTKIN.

PRICE ONE PENNY. ORDER IT AT ONCE.

THE STRUGGLE IN MEXICO.

We have received a long article entitled "The Agony of the Constitutionalist Party in Mexico," from our comrade Enrique Flores Magon, of the Mexican Liberal Party. He begins by saying that the Mexican Revolution presents now a most favourable opportunity for the workers' cause owing to a split between Carranza and Villa, both of whom consider themselves the best fitted for the Presidency now Huerta has resigned. At a critical juncture in the war against Huerta, Villa withdrew his support from the Constitutionalist general Natera, with the result that in the attack on Zacatecas City the Constitutionals were defeated and 3,000 of them killed. Villa then gathered his own forces and took the much-coveted Zacatecas City. Later on, he annexed a million dollars of Constitutionalist money deposited in Juarez.

Both Carranza and Villa are anxious to obtain favour with international capitalists, who are looking for a man to establish a strong Government in Mexico to guarantee their sacred rights. The ambitions of these two men has caused great disgust to many of their followers, who now see that the cause of the Mexican workers has once more been betrayed. Many of those fighting now in good faith under the Constitutionalist banner will come over to the Mexican Liberal Party side, and will not fight again for a man but for an idea. From now on they will fight sternly and tenaciously to crush all personal ambition and to conquer Land and Liberty.

"A great deal of credit is due to our comrades for the present disintegration of Constitutionalism in Sonora State. It being impossible for them to present battle to the powerful Constitutionalism, they adopted Syndicalist tactics. They volunteered as privates in the ranks of the Constitutionals, and in the same way that they have done in the States of Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, and others where Carranza's men predominated, they carried out a vigorous and tenacious propaganda of our Anarchist Communist ideals in the ranks, succeeding in drawing away from the enemy bodies of men, all well armed, mounted and equipped, who, hoisting the Red Flag of Land and Liberty, are fighting in the very heart of Constitutionalism, so to say, to bring into fact the emancipating principles delineated in our Manifesto of September 23, 1911—that is, the programme of action of the Mexican Liberal Party. All these Liberal guerrillas are the ones referred to by the capitalist press, when they say that in the States of Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, Tamaulipas, etc., 'the Constitutionalist forces are being much annoyed and jeopardised in their actions by numerous bands of bandits.'

"To the same propaganda of the Liberals we owe that the Yaqui Indians—who, by the way, are not savages, as the bourgeois press represent them to be; on the contrary, the Yaqui is very industrious, sober, honest, and intelligent, as a rule—who form a tribe of over 30,000 souls, and whose warriors were fighting the battles of Carranza, deceived by the promise that the land stolen from them during the Diaz régime and given for a song to foreign pirates, chiefly Americans, would be restored to them—are now operating under the Red Flag of Land and Liberty, thanks to the efforts of our comrade Juan F. Montero, and have taken possession of the extensive and rich Yaqui Valley, located in the said State of Sonora, between the Yaqui and Mayo Rivers. In that district the Red Flag of Land and Liberty is now waving over the towns of Bâcum, Pôtam, Cócorit, Tôrin, and many others; everything belongs to everybody, and the land is being worked and its products profited by in common. In fact, our brothers from that region, like those of other parts in the centre and south of the Mexican Republic, are enjoying and living in plain Anarchist Communism. Every able-bodied man may be seen there tilling the land with his gun strapped to his back, ready to protect by armed force what only by armed force may be wrested from the capitalist class—our natural inheritance, the land, the source of all wealth, and whose possession implies Economic Freedom. This lesson should be learned by the international proletarian and persuade him to follow the example set by his Mexican brother to come into his own and be a real man, happy and free. . . .

"The South and the Centre of the Republic are the real home of the revolution. The people there, less spoiled by the contact of 'civilization,' for they are far away from the so-called 'Land of the free and home of the brave,' have taken up more readily the new ideas, or, at least, digest a great deal of them—as Zapata and his followers. Therefore, the 'bandits' predominate in all those States—over fifteen—all of them attacking Authority, Church, and Capital. . . .

"As both Zapatists and Liberals fight for the common people, as they both attack the Church and the capitalists, as they both want the ownership in common of the land and everything therein, and, finally, as they both follow the same practice of expropriation of the land, machinery, means of transportation, etc., they are friendly toward each other and work in perfect harmony. With their frequent contact with the Liberals, and above all because of the tendencies of the race, the Zapatists undoubtedly will become clean-cut Anarchist Communists, and fight for the desired end—the Conquest of Bread."

The receipt of a free copy of this paper is an invitation to subscribe. 1s. 6d. per annum.

WHAT WE WANT.

By JEAN GRAVE.

[Translated from *Les Temps Nouveaux*, September 13, 1913.]

We want complete freedom for each individual.

We want for him the most absolute economic freedom, but as, in order to develop himself, the individual must unite his efforts with others like himself, and as there is only the condition of society which will allow him to develop his faculties, we want a state of society where the will of the dead is no longer permitted to rule.

We want a state of society where the individual, freed from every fetter, having only to fight against natural difficulties, may be able to move at ease, associate according to his needs and his affinities, breaking the association whenever it fetters him, or when it shall have accomplished the work for which it was formed, and to remake other groups, to satisfy fresh needs, and to attain new ends.

But, as the individual is not an entity, nor an abstract being, and as we know that there is not only the "individual," but "individuals," it follows logically for us that, in order to develop one's self freely and sanely, the rights of each should accord with his neighbour's rights, that they should harmonise agreeably, and not be opposed to each other.

It is absurd to speak in the singular of the rights of the individual whilst it is demonstrated that the isolated individual would never have been able to acquire the development which he has reached in the course of centuries, but that, on the other hand, weak and unaided, he would have been incapable of satisfying the first needs of life.

From the beginning, human evolution has been nothing but a fight of opposing interests and appetites, where the strongest, the quickest, and the most favoured, exploiting the necessity for agreement and security which gathered men together, knew how to impose their supremacy on the greater number, and oppressing them in order to assure this exploitation, and in so doing to give an ordered and regular life to society in the strict sense of the word, thus creating interests antagonistic to the interests of the individuals who constituted its existence; in such manner that the society created for each in its relations one with the other, although it found therein greater well-being, more liberty, a greater amount of pleasure at a smaller expenditure of effort, only served a minority of parasites who, under pretext of assuring the life, the well-being, and the liberty of each, of preventing the encroachment of one upon the other, of assuring justice to all, made themselves its masters, confiscating to their own profit all the advantages of the association, leaving only to the majority its maintenance, ignorance, and misery.

Our associations such as they are organised to-day are not free and equal associations of mankind, but of conflicting interests, where those who hold the power and the stored-up wealth of the association, crush without pity those whom they have despoiled; where the words "right," "justice," and "liberty," twisted from their meaning, are only rules to assure to those who have elected themselves masters the possibility of assuring their domination, their exploitation. Instead of being based on agreement, on community of interests, our societies are actually based on the antagonism of interests!

The interest of those governing is to develop their authority in order to ensure the obedience of the governed, whilst the interest of the governed is to restrain day by day the authority of their governors, if they do not wish some day to find themselves completely dominated.

The interest of the masters is to draw from the serfs the greatest possible amount of work in return for the least salary and a greater and greater subordination; whilst the interest of the worker is to obtain the highest possible wage for the least amount of work and a greater liberty in the workshop.

The interest of the merchant is to sell as dearly as possible, to deceive the purchaser as to the quality of his merchandise; the interest of the parasites who work their way as intermediaries in the relations between the consumer and the producer is to make believe in the reality of the service they are reputed to render, and to draw greater profits. There is not even a doctor or druggist who does not desire their little epidemic when business is slack.

In the administrations based upon priest rule the interests of the underlings is the disappearance of their superiors, of whose place they are envious. Even in families, there the interest of heirs is to see themselves realising with the least delay the "hopes" which they count upon in their undertakings, and for the realisation of which they have schemed.

The relations between individuals are not those of mutual aid, but of bartering, where each seeks to best the other.

All this, it is true, is marked by a varnish of conventionalism which transforms the most ferocious desires into buttered words of love, friendship, deference, and sympathy; but the extent to which our law courts are crowded show how thin the varnish is, and often when the "hopes" are too long realising how little they are able to keep them under control.

Our rich societies are the most perfect examples of that extreme individualism which, putting the individual above his proper place, claims for him the most absolute rights without regard to other individuals.

Far too long have societies been turned the wrong road; they must

return to the object for which they were formed: to bring greater well-being, more facility to the development of the individual, greater liberty, and at the same time a lessening of the time now given to the struggle for existence.

To arrive at this society, the result of agreements free of interests, we desire that the land, that which is under the land, factories and buildings, tools, all that which is the product of nature and the labour of ages past, may be taken from those who have appropriated them to themselves unduly and returned to the free disposal of those who will use them, that they may no longer be monopolised by individuals or groups exploiting them to their profit.

Tools, above all, ought to be neither social in the sense of belonging to a society, nor corporative; we desire that they should be at the disposal of whoever wishes to use them, whether it be an individual or group of individuals.

We want, above all, the abolition of wages, since each will have the free disposal of the products of his labour; we wish also the abolition of money or other value of exchange; the division of produce must operate directly between the producers and consumers grouped according to their needs and affinities, where the exchange of products will be nothing more than a mutual exchange of services.

We wish for the disappearance of the State, of all Governments, whatever they may be, centralised or federative, dictatorial or parliamentary, based on a suffrage more or less limited, more or less enlarged by a so-called representation of minorities.

All groups placed over individuals have a fatal tendency to dominate and to develop themselves to the detriment of their liberty.

We want the dispersion of permanent armies, because they have no other objective than the defence of the privileged, because they are schools of debauchery, debasement, and villainy, and a perpetual menace of war between peoples.

We desire groups and individuals holding themselves constantly in touch with one another, regulating affairs among themselves—without suffrages or delegations—questions of general interest as they themselves know best, in the bosom of their groups, and questions of their own private interests.

In short, as the liberation of the individuals will not come to them through any Providence, celestial or parliamentary, as the privileged classes will only renounce their privileges when those they have despoiled know how to wrest their privileges from them—Anarchists recognise that revolt alone can free those who wish to be free from their present fetters, in order to establish a society of justice and liberty on the ruins of the arbitrary and thieving society of to-day.

(To be concluded.)

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Austria.

Our Austrian comrade Pierre Ramus, who edits the Anarchist fortnightly *Wohlstand für Alle* in Vienna, is considered a man of moderate language; but his article against the Austrian Government for its gigantic crime in forcing a war against the Servian people is as full of vigour and outspoken rebellion as it is of convincing logic. No other State in the world could (he says) be so imbecile but the wretched, priest-ridden one of Austria as to make war for such a cause—because two people of Servian race commit murder. Every day there are Austrians who commit murder, and it should be the same whether it is a duke or a worker that is killed. Although (he declares) he is against the Servian State as against all States, yet it must be admitted that the Servian Government had nothing to do with the two murderers. If any individuals of Austrian race were to make an attack against, say, the Italian or Servian tyrant, the Austrian Government would not consider itself responsible. But even had the Servian State organised the crime, it is no reply to declare war against the Servian people, making them responsible for the State, instead of the two Governments settling it between themselves. Why should thousands of Austrian workers lose their lives in the quarrel? The Austrian Government is responsible for thousands of women and children being made unhappy. How can the crime of two fanatical patriots be atoned by an infinitely greater murder or worse crime? If the Austrian Government thinks the Servian Government has gained some advantage from the crime, let the Servian Government "give it satisfaction"; it is pitiful cowardice of the two Governments concerned to try to satisfy their honour by pushing the peoples into the duel.

The Austrian people (continues Pierre Ramus) must protest. They should say loudly: "Sirs, if you want a war with Servia, go and make it yourselves; but we Austrian town workers and peasants do not feel any enmity against our Servian brothers; we love the Servian workers as we love all the workers in the world." It is high time; it may be the last hour before mobilisation. It is folly and treachery for a people in face of war to waste time discussing the tactics of a general strike; every war destroys the lives of hundreds of thousands of workers. Working men have nothing to lose; if you have to die in any case, choose which death it shall be, in war or for freedom.

But (adds Ramus, the article having been written before the actual declaration of war) there is still time to ward off the mischief by a general strike before mobilisation, which is the only way to bring the heads of the State to their senses—a general strike against this

mass-murder of war. The people must firmly declare their will against the rabid bestiality of such a mass-murder.

Russia.

According to the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, there had been a "settlement" of the strike movement by July 29, there being only 45,800 still away among the metal workers and engineering establishments. Foreign correspondents' news in the *Daily Telegraph* is generally fairly accurate, comparatively speaking (though its Paris correspondent has been telling thumping lies about the peace demonstrations in Paris); but light is thrown on the nature of the "settlement" by the news in the *St. Petersburg Retch* of July 25, according to which the Minister of the Interior has ordered the factory inspectors to reassure the bosses that full protection by police and military will be given them against would-be strikers. The comparative laxity during the preceding days was due to the large number of police who had been drafted for special service in connection with the visit of the French President, while all the military garrison of St. Petersburg was camped at Krasnoie Selo for the review. Now, however, "rigorous" protection will be given to the employers. This may be interpreted as meaning that St. Petersburg is under martial law.

The chief cause of the protest strikes has been the exceptionally savage police repression of the strike in Baku, which started on June 12. On June 25 evictions of the strikers began. By July 11 there were 500 evicted. In a letter to the Viceroy of the Caucasus, the Social Democrat Skobelev describes the fiendish treatment the naphtha workers have had. First they are evicted, then the police refuse to let them have their passports, and then there is a decree forbidding anybody to be out of doors after 8 o'clock in the evening, which simply means "get off the earth!" The prisons are horribly crowded, and the prisoners sleep where they can, without linen, and in a foul atmosphere.

Among the towns where there have been protest strikes is Warsaw, where 20,000 left work on July 24 for twenty-four hours.

At Vilna a soldier named Ritvinsky has been sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for *lèse-majesté*.

Switzerland.

At the Congress of Italian-Swiss Anarchists at Zurich on July 11 and 12, the chief things discussed were the coming International Congress in London, Syndicalism, and Anti-militarism. The opinion was expressed that care should be taken to avoid bureaucracy in international organisation; and to keep one's Anarchist personality in joining a syndicate. The suggestion of printing an anti-militarist pamphlet in all languages was approved. There was a discussion as to whether it were better to desert from barracks; but it was agreed that in case of a menace of war, they should put themselves in relation with advanced parties for a general strike against it. Bertoni was asked to be the Swiss delegate at London. A comrade recommended all present to support the Ferrer school at Lausanne.

Spain.

In the latest number of *Solidaridad Obrera*, of Barcelona, is a satirical article about the dispute between the Conservatives, who want to persuade the Brussels authorities to remove the statue of Ferrer, and the Radicals, who want to erect a fresh statue in Barcelona itself. It would be better, says the paper, if the Radicals prevented the reactionaries from closing the Ferrer schools, such as that recently opened at Alayor (Minorca), with the support of Spaniards in America.

The metal workers have formed a new national federation, independent of the Reformist General Union of Workers.

After a struggle lasting more than nine months, the strike of textile workers at Bejar has been settled. The gain of the workers is only slight, a small rise and an allowance of half an hour for breakfast; but there is rejoicing in the town, where the people have been living in a worse condition than in a besieged city. One thousand Rio Tinto workers have come out to secure the reinstatement of a dismissed comrade.

Italy.

A strange kind of campaign has been waged by the Italian capitalist Press, which has been trying to provoke the railwaymen to strike before the latter were ready. The Government, too, has been adopting the most provocative measures it can, in order to make the men do something which would give it an excuse to crush the Union now that it has the troops mobilised. But (says comrade Recchioni) the railwaymen could see the game, and are waiting to move till the proper time comes. When they do move, it will be a better and bigger move than ever before. Meanwhile, among the hundred who have been dismissed and the three hundred degraded, there are many who had nothing to do with the recent strike.

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*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WILL ECONOMIC RENT REMAIN?

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR SIR,—I suppose I may take it for granted that it is agreed that what is known as economic rent is any advantage which one piece of land may have over another, as, for instance, greater fertility or less labour and expense in bringing produce to market or where it is wanted. This economic rent is a sort of natural inequality, and, it is said, would remain and be enjoyed by some whether it was paid away or not. This seems to be regarded as a stumbling-block to the realisation of equal conditions and as requiring some artificial, compulsory and governmental arrangements to secure equality—the Government, it is said, must collect it and use it to defray "public charges." What then becomes of our ideal, society without government? But let us look a little further. There is another law in economics called the Law of Diminishing Returns in Agriculture. According to this law, up to a certain point, an increase in the amount of labour applied to land results in an increased *per capita* return, but beyond this point (which is purely experimental) any increase in the number of labourers will result in a diminished *per capita* return. Now apply this principle to the rent problem. One piece of land or one farming district is more fertile or better situated with respect to markets than another, and the agricultural workers are consequently better off than in the less favoured districts. According to the Single-Taxers, the whole difference must go in rent to the State in order that all should be equal. Nothing of the kind however is necessary. Increase the number of labourers on the more favoured land and you will, according to the law of diminishing returns in agriculture, diminish the *per capita* production until it equals the *per capita* production on the worst land in use, and the desired equality will be realized.

I cannot but think that all this relates to a somewhat distant future; still, it is as well to be convinced that economic rent is no bar to the realisation of equality under freedom and does not require us to forego our ideal—society without government.—Yours, etc.,

C. P.

RENT MUST BE ABOLISHED.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—Our friend John Bagot calls himself "a true Anarchist," and holds, presumably, that in true Anarchy "the community will collect the rent—a community-earned product . . . and so discharge community expenses." If there are any other "true Anarchists" within the sound of the voice of FREEDOM, I should like them to signify their approval in the usual way. I thought that Anarchists were bent upon abolishing "Rent, Interest, Profit, and Taxes"; certainly I have heard it proclaimed often enough. It would be interesting to discover whether Mr. Bagot could, from the whole movement of Anarchism, form a quorum in his favour.—Yours fraternally,

WILLIAM J. ROBINS.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE CONGRESS.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

In the *Bulletin* of the approaching International Congress I note that the Dutch Anarchist Group has put down the following proposition in the "Ordre du Jour":—

"L'anglais seulement devra être la langue du Congrès. Comme l'anglais est parlé par un grand nombre, il y aurait économie de temps si les anarchistes se mettaient à étudier une seule langue internationale."

As I may not be able to attend the Congress myself, I should like to put forth some criticisms on the subject.

It is, of course, admitted that English is spoken by far a greater number of people than any other language, but seeing that it has been decided that *three* languages are to be used at the Congress, it would seem that English has not such an absolutely clear majority, at least amongst Anarchists. I note, also, that the *Bulletin* itself is printed exclusively in French.

It is claimed, however, that English is so easy that it can be learnt in a comparatively short time. This may be true; but supposing there is a language far easier than English? In that case such a language calls for earnest consideration: and such a language is Esperanto. I myself learnt it within a few weeks, and within a year of learning I had translated "Hiawatha" into Esperanto, portions of the translation appearing in an Esperanto periodical. The grammar consists of sixteen rules only, and the vocabulary is readily acquired by persons of average education. Text-books can be had in any idiom.

It is strange that our Dutch comrades should apparently never have heard of this tongue, and stranger still that they should propose English at a time when there is a clamour for a phonetic spelling of English by the English themselves. When one considers how our American cousins have "improved" English, one trembles to think how it would "improve" in the hands of other nations.

To my mind, a *neutral* language would be a far better means of promoting international fraternity than any national language could claim to be. It is not so much a case of one grammar proving easier than another, as the means of expression being simpler. Considering

the elaborate idioms of each tongue, English included, it cannot be said that any one language gives readier expression of thought than another.

At any time, and especially at a Congress, the language chosen must be the one in which the speakers can *think* most readily and freely; and, seeing that Esperanto is absolutely free from the stigma of national idiomatic expression, I cannot see what objection can be put forth against its being used as a common medium. Its extreme simplicity enables it to be learnt in a marvellously short time, and its construction is such that the finer shades of thought find ready expression. It is in such common use that I would wager it is better known amongst Anarchists than is English.

But perhaps our Dutch comrades mean "pidgin English"?

—Yours fraternally,

L. A. MOTLER.

Our comrade W. J. Needs (J. Walters), who has been seriously ill for some time, hopes correspondents will take that as his excuse for not replying to letters at present.

MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(July 3—August 5.)

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FOREST GATE.—All Anarchists are specially invited to meet at Mr. Jones's, 19 Birchdale Road, Forest Gate, every other Friday, 8 to 10. Next meeting April 10.

West London Anarchist Communist Group.—Sunday, 11.30, Putney Bridge (Putney side); 8 p.m., The Grove, Hammersmith. Tuesday, 8.15, Walham Green Church, Fulham.

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