

# Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY. |

## SMOLDERING FIRES.

Are the workers of Europe and America beginning to realise at last the world-wide conspiracy that has been working against them for the past ten years? Do they dimly recognise how their tentative efforts at improving their social wellbeing (and not at founding a Socialist society, for that must always wait for the revolution) have been met by the most formidable combination of opposing forces the world has yet seen? We fear that although the process of awakening may have commenced, the apathy and indifference induced by all the poisonous influences poured out on the people by the reactionaries has numbed the class-conscious spirit which had begun to manifest itself in the labor movement. Especially is this so here in England, where the free Briton's proverbial love of a lord has led to much shouting over the vagaries of the rogues of high degree who rob us and rule us. But the shouting has died down and the present condition of the noble Briton is one of stupefaction at his loss of prestige—a state of mind from which he will emerge with very mixed feelings when he is called upon to pay Chamberlain's little war bill.

Perhaps from this time the people will begin to understand that all this blood and money was poured out that capitalism might be maintained and that Socialism might be crushed; that wages might be kept down and human misery perpetuated whilst infamy in the shape of mad monarchs, bad governments and rabid capitalism should continue to devastate humanity.

But Socialism has not been crushed. And however severe the strain put upon the minority who have held to the cause the principles remain unshaken and propaganda will be revived with redoubled vigor, and let us hope with a clearer conception of the real issues after the trying experiences of the past few years.

Already we begin to see the sparks flying once more from the fires that for so long have only been smouldering. In Russia we see the conflict between oppressors and oppressed assuming interesting and unexpected developments, so that in a week or two the strenuous fighting of the students and their sympathisers has had more effect in checking the power of the fiend Pobiedonostzev and the Holy Synod than all the preaching of passive resistance could accomplish in a lifetime.

Elsewhere signs are not wanting that the friends of progress are arousing themselves from their lethargy. And it is in the natural order of things that this should be so, for while no doubt the heaviest blows of reaction have been aimed at the most advanced revolutionary forces, in reality it is the progressive parties that have suffered the most. This fact is beginning to be felt very keenly by the London County Council and the School Board, both of which bodies find themselves hampered and even checked in their work by the sinister action of the present ministry. They will now find they have an immense task to do in regaining their lost powers and in extricating themselves from the network of legal fetters that has been woven about them. Perhaps some of the more intelligent members on these bodies will begin to appreciate what a beautifully designed obstacle to progress—to all progress, of course—government really is. And they may even conclude that, after all, the Anarchists are not quite so mad as they thought them.

But above all we hope these facts will be noted by the mass of the workers. They have much to learn: they cannot do better than inwardly digest the fact that all reform, all progress is hated by those who wish them to remain their slaves; and that the Anarchists are right when they say that all tampering with social conditions on their present basis will bring them no relief, and that we can save much time, many lives and untold misery by working direct for the Social Revolution.

## THE EIGHTEENTH OF MARCH.

Thirty years have passed since that day, since the 18th of March, 1871. At dawn the tocsin was sounding, and, hardly feeling the ground beneath us, at a quick step we climbed the heights of Montmartre, on the summit of which stood an army ranged in order of battle. Little did we ever expect to return even though all Paris had risen. The soldiers were already putting horses to the cannon which the National Guard held there, having brought them up from Batignolles during the night. And behold! between us and the army the women we had none of us seen climbing, and who now threw themselves upon the guns, the soldiers remaining motionless!

As General Lecomte gave the order to fire upon the crowd, a subaltern (Verdaguerre) stepped from the ranks, and louder than the General's voice rang his cry: "*Butt ends in the air!*" And he it was the soldiers obeyed. The crowd fraternised with them, and the spring sunshine flashing like diamonds seemed to illuminate Liberty—Liberty, the great, the triumphant, and which we thought to keep for ever.

Instead, there followed massacre. More likely a hundred thousand rather than the twenty thousand bodies officially numbered, were buried in all parts—in communal ditches, under the street pavements, in the squares, or were burnt in the casemates or on the Place de la Concorde and elsewhere; those that lie beneath the pavements still reappear; from time to time during excavations whole skeletons are found still wrapped in some red fragment of their National Guard uniform; but the ashes of the burnt have been scattered by the winds throughout the world.

It is thirty years since then, and though today some might say that Liberty is farther off than ever, rather is it near; so near that those who battle against it have only one resource left—that of sowing the seeds of hatred amongst revolutionists, forgetting that one day this very hatred will become the avenger against the common enemy, that monstrous Past which refuses to die and yet agonises, suffocated in the blood of its victims.

It is its crimes that will kill the old Society. Those it commits today become the greater the nearer it finds itself approaching the edge of the abyss. Just as we can no longer be content to return to the conditions of the ancient cave-dwellers, so too will it be impossible for any man born in these days and grown to manhood to live as we now do, surrounded by iniquities and bloodshed. The executions, the pillage, the indiscriminate assassinations that today take place in China in the name of Civilisation and under the cloak of military and clerical legalism would, however, not be permitted in Europe since every nation would rise in horror; nor would any war similar to that in the Transvaal break out here could we see the thousands of dead, English and Boer, that strew the distant mountain gorges of Africa, calling down malediction from every silent height. Never after so horrible an object-lesson could Capitalist cupidity renew such atrocities.

I say it is the end! That is why the Abdul Hamids of the world tremble in the midst of their criminal and sanguinary follies; feeling the earth sinking beneath them they are forced to cease their cruelty.

Man is not made either to be an executioner or to be executed; he is not made for a life of hatred, despair and everlasting misery; these evils only exist because of the universal stupidity and cowardice. The monsters that the legendary heroes of the future will destroy, are they not War, Misery, Oppression and Ignorance? The true ideal appears in a clearer form to us now than it did thirty years ago; and it is for one and all, each fulfilling his appointed task, to build up the first stage of these new times in which though the years may roll along unknown paths it is towards an aim that is no longer unknown and cannot be misunderstood. With our eyes fixed upon this star of Deliverance, let us stride forward without fear; the days of feeble indecision are at an end. Yet we still have much to learn in regard to the vastness, the grandeur, the beauty and the possibilities of the work. But would the gigantic columns that ancient Egypt transported from place to place by the laboring arms of millions of slaves have been impossible to raise had those arms belonged to free men? Is it too hard to create around the cradle of a free humanity the large clear space required for the natural development of justice, truth, science, art and the marvels that a new sense of freedom and truth will give birth to?

The 18th of March which we saw thirty years ago was magnificent; for a moment it aroused every other nation. The new 18th of March will be that of every awakened man, and their number is already immense; that of every noble and elevated spirit, of every brave heart

beating in the breasts of humanity, and these shouting aloud the tocsin of Liberty, must awaken the earth.

On the 18th of March the dawn of the Commune was beautiful, aye, and even more so in May in the grandeur of death. The weaknesses, the follies that Commune committed should be pardoned in view of its fierce contempt for life—always one of the greatest factors in a combat for liberty.

The predominant sentiment after the victory of March 18th was one of joy for deliverance, the glorious happiness of having secured liberties upon which to found a great and noble republic! The Manifesto of the Central Committee ran:

*Citizens: The people of Paris have thrown off the yoke that was being imposed upon them. Calm, impassive in her strength, the city has fearlessly and without provocation awaited the shameless fools who wished to slay the republic. This time our brothers of the army have refused to lay their hands upon the sacred arch of Liberty.*

Alas! too soon the soldiers, stuffed with lies and alcohol, obeyed the orders from Versailles to massacre. This, as always, is the eternal history of Discipline which forces men into ruts and makes of some mills that grind, of others the grain that they crush.

Man, I say, is not made for a life of crime or pain; it is necessary for all to understand this, so that on one side we refuse to torture and on the other to be tortured. We know, we see all round us the evidence of the most hideous crimes; we must refuse to help in their committal—there lies the key of the situation.

Then the 18th of March of the whole world will be like a sun risen to its full glory above virgin summits, and the new, the diviner times will commence.

L. MICHEL.

## SOCIALISM THE REMEDY.

*A Lecture delivered at the Mechanics' Institute, Port Elizabeth, Cape Colony, by Henry Glasse.—(Conclusion)*

Others come forward and say:

"The reason why there is so much distress in the world is that there are too many people, the labor market is glutted; let the poor have fewer children and then there will not be the same competition among working men in the future, wages will go up and there will be a general increase of comfort among the people." The first who publicly announced this remedy was a Church of England clergyman named Malthus, who, by the way, was himself the father of eleven children; he proposed that men should not marry till they were fifty years of age, unless they possessed ample means. Now we need not enquire how a preacher and expounder of the scriptures could venture to advise people to go against the bible command: "Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth," we need only say that if a man does not marry until he is fifty years of age he may as well leave matrimony alone altogether, for he will certainly be well used to do without it. But the present day disciples of Malthus have either a truer understanding of human nature, or else they are less afraid of shocking people; for, while they counsel prudence in the begetting of children and recommend small families, they do not discountenance marriage, on the contrary they advise it together with the use of prudential checks on the birth-rate. Now there is much in Malthusianism that is worthy of attention, and parents of limited means should be careful not to bring into the world more children than they can bring up properly; but this limitation of the family cannot be accepted as a means of curing social ills or eradicating poverty, because if all the poor adopted this method it would lose its efficacy, no one would have the advantage in this respect over others, and wages would inevitably fall because a lower average wage would be required to keep the worker and his family, he could afford to work for less and his employers would see that he did so. The Brazen Law of Wages would come into operation as surely as the Law of Gravitation brings down the apple loosened from the tree. Moreover, the wage-slave even if he has fewer companions remains none the less a wage-slave, he does not thereby acquire a jot more hold on the lands, buildings and industrial appliances owned by his master. The limitation of the family, though a wise precaution on the part of sensible men desirous of doing the best they can for themselves and those immediately about them in the present struggle for existence, is incapable of freeing society at large from the evils under which it groans. We must therefore examine another remedy.

Political rights are often invoked as a means of deliverance; many say: "Let the workers combine to elect representatives who will legislate in their interest and who being heartily in sympathy with their electors will steadily work so as to counteract existing evils by legal and constitutional means, then everything will be all right." Many years ago the remark was made that representative government was on its trial; looking at its results we are justified in adding that it has already been tried and found wanting. The poet Longfellow makes his Miles Standish say: "If you wish a thing to be well done you must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others"; and besides, this theory presupposes that the electors are really free men, free in their minds at least, whereas it is evident that a vast number of men are not mentally free, and that for the workers to be able to obtain a majority of representatives to really champion their interests in the legislature it would be absolutely necessary that this vast number should be earnest and active on their side; experience, however, shows that under existing conditions this is hopeless. The fear men have of injuring their circumstances

by advocating opinions which are abominated by their social superiors, the prejudices inculcated by such education as they have been allowed to receive, the conservative influence brought to bear by the clergy of the various religious bodies, an unwillingness to bother themselves about any thing which does not at once put money into their pockets, a very natural feeling of weariness and disgust with the past results of political action in consequence of their having seen the promises made by candidates forgotten as soon as these are safely in their seats—all these influences and many others keep a very large number of working men back from entering upon politics with a view to asserting their interests and claims. How can one expect men subjected to all these powerful influences and crushed by them into a hopelessly slavish state of mind, to wake up to a sense of real freedom at those rare moments when they are permitted to record their votes? It is not that these people would refuse desirable changes, they would eagerly grasp at any amelioration of their lot, but it would have to be given to them first, they will take it gladly if it comes, but they will not work for it; and, indeed, they do not seriously hope for it. This section of the people which is necessary to give the cause of labor a parliamentary majority will, it is to be feared, never do so. In Germany, in France, and in the United States there is universal suffrage and a large labor party yet there is no prospect of that party obtaining power by parliamentary methods. It is certain also that if the ruling class really saw any immediate danger of its power being overthrown by that of the combined working classes, it would without hesitation make such changes in our political institutions or in the administration of them as would defeat any such attempt. Let us take to heart the bitter lesson taught by History: we have no rights as our social masters fear that they will be used to their detriment; a certain pretence of liberty is granted, liberty of the press, liberty of speech, etc., etc., so long as it leads to no practical results, because as our rulers say, it acts as a safety-valve and lets people blow off steam, and, what is of equal importance, shows exactly the state of public feeling and so enables the authorities to judge when it may be advisable to make some useless or petty concession or else to take vigorous repressive measures for what is called "the public safety." Representative government, the vote, has been called the Grand Mystification of the nineteenth century; shall it go on mystifying us through the twentieth? It is for the enlightened section of the people, the men of intelligence, heart and spirit to decide.

It now remains to state the Socialistic solution. The point on which all Socialists are agreed is that the land with all its natural contents and products, together with all the materials and instruments of labor—all things which are either the free gift of Nature to Man or the creations of labor past or present, and which are now held by the capitalist class and worked by Labor in the interest of Capital—must be appropriated by the whole people willing to co-operate, and be worked in the interest of all. Briefly put, the solution is the socialisation of all the land and of the materials and instruments of labor.

The result of this will be that the distinction of classes will vanish and, likewise, the opposition between Capital and Labor; the worker sharing in the social work of his comrades will be a joint partner with them in the universal human patrimony, the wealth of the world will belong to the people of the world.

How will this public property, this social wealth be used? In other words: What will be the future organisation of labor? The answer to this will depend on the people themselves and upon the varying circumstances of time and place in which they find themselves. Thus it is practically certain that the system will vary in different localities according to the temperament and character of distinct races of men, and according to the prevailing industries of different regions, which will be varied as they now are by circumstances of climate, soil, natural products and geographical position. The watchword of the Social Revolution will be: "Peasant, seize the land; workman, seize the factory!" In some places persons may choose to cultivate each his plot of ground separately and with the aid of his family; there need be no interference with those who choose to do so, only in this case they must themselves use the share of the common property which they hold, they must not let it out to others on rent or hire; that is to say they must not, as is now done, employ it for the purpose of making something out of the labor of others. In other places people may choose to work the land as they will work the factories and other large productive enterprises by combining their labor on large tracts of ground and arranging among themselves all the details of the work and the conditions under which they will live and associate, contriving so as to combine the maximum of production with the minimum of exertion, so as to secure comfort and even affluence without overwork. We cannot foresee what choice people will make under such entirely new and happy conditions as the Social Revolution will of necessity bring us; but we may feel perfectly assured that, as everyone will be free and the interest of all will be the concern of each, experience will correct any defects, and that those who use the more successful methods of working and adopt the best modes of living will by their example teach others, who will have every inducement to imitate where imitation would be to their advantage. That which separates men is inequality of means and competition in the race for wealth; that which will unite them is Communism, which is the essence of Socialism, all the benefits of co-operation and good-fellowship can be realised by it and by it alone. The land, its contents and spontaneous productions belong to all who will use them honestly and not so as to enslave or crush others, and all the rest belongs to the workers by reason of their producing it. All wealth therefore does in justice belong to labour.

But you may ask: How can we get a majority in order to bring about this necessary, this salutary revolution? We have not to wait for any such majority; if we had, then indeed we might despair of the realisation of our desires. What we need is a sufficient and efficient minority, a minority sufficient in numbers and more particularly in energy and resolution. All the great changes of the past have been the result of the action of resolute minorities, the majority comes in afterwards to set the seal of its approval on the changes wrought by earnest men. We must remember that not all men are earnest partisans of any side; there are a certain number of individuals determined to keep things as they are, and there is also another growing number determined to work and fight for better things; but between these two parties there is a very large number of persons who have no enthusiasm either way, these give a certain passive support to the existing state of things because it is the only one they see. They will, however, make no serious effort to maintain it, and when once they see it seriously assailed they will think of altering their position. As has been said before, people belonging to this large category are quite willing to accept any improvement of their lot, provided always they do not have to work for it. It is to men of a different temper that we appeal, and when a sufficient number of such men have been won over to Socialism we shall be ready to use the opportunities which history shows us are never long in presenting themselves to those that desire them.

Camille Desmoulins, a well-known writer and prominent figure in the great French revolution of last century, has said: "There were hardly a dozen of us Republicans in Paris before 1789;" yet a few months after the success of the revolution which began in that year, the armies of republican France were over-running monarchical and feudal Europe. It was not a majority of Republicans which made the great revolution of last century, but it was that revolution which created the Republican majority.

Similarly, the coming Social Revolution will make a Socialist world.

### PARIS SLUM LIFE.

(From *Rome*, by Emile Zola.)

It was then that Pierre knew want and wretchedness—wicked, abominable wretchedness; then that he lived amidst it for two long years. The acquaintance began with the poor little beings whom he picked up on the pavements, or whom kind hearted neighbours brought to him now that the asylum was known in the district—little boys, little girls, tiny mites stranded on the streets whilst their fathers and mothers were toiling, drinking, or dying. The father had often disappeared, the mother had gone wrong, drunkenness and debauchery had followed slack times into the home; and then the brood was swept into the gutter, and the younger ones half perished of cold and hunger on the footways whilst their elder betook themselves to courses of vice and crime. One evening Pierre rescued from the wheels of a stone dray two little nippers, brothers, who could not even give him an address, tell him whence they had come. On another evening he returned to the asylum with a little girl in his arms, a fair-haired little angel, barely three years old, whom he had found on a bench, and who sobbed, saying that her mother had left her there. And by a logical chain of circumstances, after dealing with the fleshless, pitiful fledgelings ousted from their nests, he came to deal with the parents, to enter their hovels, penetrating each day further and further into a hellish sphere, and ultimately acquiring knowledge of all its frightful horror, his heart meantime bleeding, rent by terrified anguish and impotent charity.

Oh! the grievous City of Misery, the bottomless abyss of human suffering and degradation—how frightful were his journeys through it during those two years which distracted his whole being! In that St. Marguerite district of Paris, in the very heart of that Faubourg St. Antoine, so active and so brave for work, however hard, he discovered no end of sordid dwellings, whole lanes and alleys of hovels without light or air, cellar-like in their dampness, and where a multitude of wretches wallowed and suffered as from poison. All the way up the shaky staircases one's feet slipped upon filth. On every story there was the same destitution; dirt, and promiscuity. Many windows were paneless, and in swept the wind howling, and the rain pouring torrentially. Many of the inmates slept on the bare tiled floors, never undressing themselves. There was neither furniture nor linen, the life led there was essentially an animal life, a commingling of either sex and of every age—humanity lapsing into animality through lack of even indispensable things, through indigence of so complete a character that men, women, and children fought even with tooth and nail for the very crumbs swept from the tables of the rich. And the worst of it all was the degradation of the human being; this was no case of the free naked savage, hunting and devouring his prey in the primeval forests; here civilised man was found, sunk into brutishness, with all the stigma of his fall, debased, disfigured, and enfeebled, amidst the luxury and refinement of that city of Paris, which is one of the queens of the world.

In every household Pierre heard the same story. There had been youth and gaiety at the outset, brave acceptance of the law that one must work. Then weariness had come; what was the use of always toiling if one were never to get rich? And so, by way of snatching a share of happiness, the husband turned to drink; the wife neglected her home, also drinking at times, and letting the children grow up as they might. Sordid surroundings, ignorance, and overcrowding did the rest. In the great majority of cases, prolonged lack of work was mostly to blame; for this not only empties the drawers of the savings

hidden away in them, but exhausts human courage, and tends to confirmed habits of idleness. During long weeks the workshops empty, and the arms of the toilers lose strength. In all Paris, so feverishly inclined to action, it is impossible to find the slightest thing to do. And then the husband comes home in the evening with tearful eyes, having vainly offered his arms everywhere, having failed even to get a job at street-sweeping, for that employment is much sought after, and to secure it one needs influence and protectors. Is it not monstrous to see a man seeking work that he may eat, and finding no work and therefore no food in this great city resplendent and resonant with wealth? The wife does not eat, the children do not eat. And then comes black famine, brutishness, and finally revolt and the snapping of all social ties under the frightful injustice meted out to poor beings who by their weakness are condemned to death. And the old workman, he whose limbs have been worn out by half a century of hard toil, without possibility of saving a copper, on what bed of agony, in what dark hole must he not sink to die? Should he then be finished off with a mallet, like a crippled beast of burden, on the day when ceasing to work he also ceases to eat? Almost all pass away in the hospitals, others disappear, unknown, swept off by the muddy flow of the streets. One morning, on some rotten straw in a loathsome hovel, Pierre found a poor devil who had died of hunger and had been forgotten there for a week. The rats had devoured his face. But it was particularly on an evening of the last winter that Pierre's heart had overflowed with pity. Awful in winter times are the sufferings of the poor in their fireless hovels, where the snow penetrates by every chink. The Seine rolls blocks of ice, the soil is frost-bound, in all sorts of callings there is an enforced cessation of work. Bands of urchins, barefooted, scarcely clad, hungry and racked by coughing, wander about the ragpickers' rents, and are carried off by sudden hurricanes of consumption. Pierre found families, women with five and six children, who had not eaten for three days, and who huddled together in heaps to try to keep themselves warm. And on that terrible evening, before anybody else, he went down a dark passage and entered a room of terror, where he found that a mother had just committed suicide with her five little ones—driven to it by despair and hunger—a tragedy of misery which for a few hours would make all Paris shudder! There was not an article of furniture or linen left in the place; it had been necessary to sell everything bit by bit to a neighbouring dealer. There was nothing but the stove where the charcoal was still smoking and a half-emptied paliasse on which the mother had fallen, suckling her last-born, a babe but three months old. And a drop of blood had trickled from the nipple of her breast, towards which the dead infant still protruded its eager lips. Two little girls, three and five years old, two pretty little blondes, were also lying there, sleeping the eternal sleep side by side; whilst of the two boys, who were older, one had succumbed crouching against the wall with his head between his hands, and the other had passed through the last throes on the floor, struggling as though he had sought to crawl on his knees to the window in order to open it. Some neighbours, hurrying in, told Pierre the fearful, commonplace story: slow ruin, the father unable to find work, perchance taking to drink, the landlord weary of waiting, threatening the family with expulsion, and the mother losing her head, thirsting for death and prevailing on her little ones to die with her, while her husband, who had been out since the morning, was vainly scouring the streets, just as the Commissary of Police arrived to verify what happened, the poor devil returned, and when he had seen and understood things, he fell to the ground like a stunned ox, and raised a prolonged, plaintive howl, such a poignant cry of death that the whole terrified street wept at it. Both in his ears and in his heart Pierre carried away with him that horrible cry, the plaint of a condemned race expiring amidst abandonment and hunger; and that night he could neither eat nor sleep. Was it possible that such abomination, such absolute destitution, such black misery leading straight to death should exist in the heart of that great city of Paris, brimful of wealth, intoxicated with enjoyment, flinging millions out of the windows for mere pleasure?

What! there should on one side be such colossal fortunes, so many foolish fancies gratified, with lives endowed with every happiness, whilst on the other was found inveterate poverty, lack even of bread, absence of every hope, and mothers killing themselves with their babes, to whom they had nought to offer but the blood of their milkless breasts! And a feeling of revolt stirred Pierre; he was for a moment conscious of the derisive futility of charity. What indeed was the use of doing that which he did—picking up the little ones, succouring the parents, prolonging the sufferings of the aged? The very foundations of the social edifice were rotten; all would soon collapse amid mire and blood. A great act of justice alone could sweep the old world away in order that the new world might be built. And at that moment he realised so keenly how irreparable was the breach, how irremediable the evil, how deathly the cancer of misery, that he understood the actions of the violent, and was himself ready to accept the devastating and purifying whirlwind, the regeneration of the world by flame and steel, even as when in the dim ages Jehovah in his wrath sent fire from heaven to cleanse the accursed cities of the plain.

"OUR OLD NOBILITY," BY HOWARD EVANS. Will any comrade having a perfect copy of the above to part with kindly communicate with *Freedom* office.

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## NOTES.

### GOOD NEWS.

Our comrade Marmol who spoke at "The Enterprise" on April 23rd, gave a most interesting and encouraging account of the movement in France and Spain and of the Anarchist Conference recently held in Brussels. In France, he says, political Socialism is almost dead, and certainly has no influence except for combatting Anti-semitism and Clericalism. In fact, the Socialist deputies have acknowledged that their influence with the workers has gone.

In Spain a revolution was only averted by prompt and extraordinary concessions on the part of the ruling powers, who—through their mouthpiece, butcher Weyler—announced the restoration of constitutional guarantees, freedom of the press, etc. At the same time a curtailment of clerical privileges was commenced. It is worthy of note that in the economic struggle the capitalists for the first time employed the English method of the lock-out. They will not, however, we imagine, try it again; for the houses of those who commenced this campaign were promptly burned, the factories attacked, and finally a victory for the workers.

In regard to the Conference in Brussels, we have only space to mention that important conclusions were come to, and that it was decided to commence the publication of a daily Anarchist paper. We hope to give a full account of Marmol's address in our next issue.

### NEMESIS!

At last the English people, and among them that bawling and bragging host that went "mifficking" just a year ago, understand that wars, besides the other evils they bring, have to be paid for.

The women who went mad over that typical modern hero, Baden-Powell, who was never heard of before and never will be again, this penny toy soldier who stayed in Mafeking because he couldn't get out—will feel the first direct consequence of their folly as they eke out their sugar in their cups of tea. But the evil brood are not all home to roost yet, and the hard lesson will not be completely learned by the effects of the present Budget. But we are at any rate within measurable distance of the time when the thoughtless and deluded masses will begin to give ear to those who, all through, warned them that to neglect the economic struggle is to practically cut their own throats, and to prolong the existence of that vampire class who will continue to exploit them till their teeth are drawn by the Social Revolution.

Meanwhile we have to thank the Boers for having checkmated the most dastardly capitalist plot of modern times, and for having hurled from their high places the most unscrupulous individuals—who, although mere nobodies in capacity, have brought the noble art of thieving to a high governmental function. So away with them all: Bobs the Burner, Chamberlain the Cheat, Rhodes the Rogue, Milner the Mischievous and the rest. We hope never to hear of them again except in the Chamber of Horrors.

### VOLUNTARY EFFORT.

So little account is generally taken of the good work that is constantly being done by voluntary organisations that it is gratifying to find the *Daily News* saying a good word for the Metropolitan Public Gardens Association. The work done by this society includes the laying out of recreation grounds, presenting seats to public and private sites, drawing up directions for the proper care of trees in towns, etc. Now, whatever the County Council may have done in this respect, there is no denying the work done by the above society which was formed some years

before the County Council came into existence and which even now as the *Daily News* says by its enterprise and watchfulness keeps the Council up to its work.

This is only one example out of a hundred that might be given, but probably the very latest advocate of the voluntary spirit is General Buller, who in regard to the army puts the volunteer movement before conscription. Have the Boers taught him a lesson? In any case, voluntarism before coercion is the watchword of Anarchists in all social organisation and if the enemies of mankind can sometimes turn this idea to their own account it only proves how necessary it is for us all to educate the people into a knowledge of their rights and best interests so that they may help themselves instead of their foes.

### A PROTEST ENDORSED.

We observe in the *Vrije Socialist* of April 6, 1901, a protest signed by our comrades Victor Dave, C. Cornelissen, L. Cornelissen-Rupertus, T. del Marmol, M. Nettelau, A. Zibelin, M. Goldsmith, Dr. Pierrot, Leon Remy, against a letter from New York, written by a certain Douwe Boersma, which appeared in the number of March 13, 1901, of the same paper and alludes in outrageous terms to our comrade Emma Goldman. We heartily endorse this protest.

In our opinion it is cowardly to attack a woman in her private life, above all in a language that she neither speaks nor understands. Also we deem it slanderous to accuse another of the misappropriation of funds without giving proofs in support of so cruel a charge.

But what we consider the worst point of all, is Mr. Boersma's public denunciation of our comrade as having been the instigator of a certain revolutionary act.

We cannot close without expressing our surprise and regret that the *Vrije Socialist* should open its columns to a cowardly slanderer and public denunciator of one whose honesty and tireless energy in the cause are so well known.

FREEDOM GROUP.

### KROPOTKIN IN AMERICA.

Kropotkin's triumph in America—for it is nothing less—is a splendid acknowledgment by the New World of the great work he has already accomplished. We quote here a few brief extracts from Boston papers which have reported his meetings; but we hope to give more in our next issue. The following is from the *Boston Transcript*:

When Peter Kropotkin appeared in the hall a storm of applause broke out. The chorus of Italian "comrades" sang the "Marseillaise", the audience applauded again and Kropotkin smiled, shook hands with the people who flocked about him and seemed happy.

"How are you Comrade Kropotkin?"

"Sdravstvuyte!" said the Russian.

"J'ai l'honneur."

"Freut mich sehr."

"Bona sera camarado!"

"Yak mozhe tavarisce!"

And he answered each in his own language and he answered them all in the language that comprehended all.

Then Mr. Simson introduced Comrade Kropotkin. "I need not say how delighted I am to be among you," began Kropotkin. "I do not know whether you are all Anarchists—I hope you are."

Then he spoke of the growth and the gradual spread of the Anarchist movement since twenty-three years ago, when the first Anarchist paper, *La Révolte*, was started in Paris with only a few francs in the possession of the publisher. Now there are many Anarchist publications all over the world. Towards the close of his speech, he said that he could not, in the presence of so many Russians, refrain from mentioning the present troubles in Russia. The present revolutionary movement, he stated, has been prepared by the countless victims who fell in the cause for freedom, and he hoped that the time had come for a great change. He pointed out how the czar himself was the first to break the laws of Russia. He condemned the "rottenness and stupidity" of the Romanoffs (his own family, by the way) and their rule. During his speech he also claimed the two greatest novelists of the world—Tolstoi and Zola—as advanced Anarchists.

The following we take from the *Boston Post*:

He was vociferously applauded again and again and his fervid, long yet interesting, address on "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal," was listened to with the greatest attention by all present.

Mr. Kropotkin began by saying that he was delighted to address such an audience in Boston on a subject that was so near and so dear to his heart; that the comrades in London will be glad to learn that such a meeting was held in Boston, where utterance was given to the ideas that were so dear to them.

Ten years ago such a meeting would not have been possible, he said; the mere word anarchism would have been enough to drive people away from the doors of the hall. All new ideas, he pointed out, and all new presentation of old ideas, are at first bitterly opposed by those who do not work for opinions, but who inherit them.

Then the speaker went into a learned yet lucid and impressive enunciation of anarchism, its literature, its philosophy and ideal, laying particular stress on the difference between State socialism and anarchism or communism. He talked in a strikingly characteristic and fervid manner.

Here was no longer Kropotkin, the lecturer on Russian literature before the Lowell Institute, where he does quite well but is not at home—for literature is not his forte; here was Kropotkin, the enthused and enthusing agitator; the stirring, inspiring champion of his cause, the idealized leader of his movement, who feels and lives every word he utters.

Among other things he severely criticised State Socialism, which means concentration, and would lead to a huge slavery, and in contrast to this, pleaded,

for communism or the free, spontaneous voluntary commune, which would have absolute home rule and the highest individual freedom. Towards the close he made an eloquent defence of the Anarchists who have used violence against the powers that be, describing the countless cruelties and brutalities of kings, rulers and all governments, practised upon the poor, oppressed, starving, defenceless people.

He spoke of the various persecutions of government that he had himself experienced, of how the Spanish tortured the Anarchists, and then said: "It is we who have a right to speak of violence, not they." Governments and rulers, he stated, have caused and are still causing destruction of hundreds and thousands of human beings.

#### PATRIOTISM ON THE DOWN GRADE.

There's a slump in patriotism just now which must make such stalwarts as Kipling sad. Messrs. Harmsworth, organisers-in-chief of jingoism in this country, announced with a flourish of trumpets in the *Daily Mail* and other publications a few weeks back that they were about to publish a life of Victoria, R.I., by the Duke of Argyll. The life was to be in fortnightly parts at 6d. each, and it was to be handsomely bound, printed in colors, etc. And now we are informed by one who knows, that instead of half a million they confidently expected to sell of the first part a miserable two hundred thousand only was called for. Considering the name and position of his Grace the Duke as son-in-law to Victoria, the splendid system of organisation and their ability to advertise free in their thirty odd publications, and the popular price of the "life," two hundred thousand copies is ridiculous. And this—after all the cant and humbug about the sobbing aloud in the streets and the universal sorrow at the death of the late queen. How the mighty have fallen! Poor queen! Poor duke! When is the coronation!

H. M. K.

### PARIS CONGRESS REPORTS.

*Report on the necessity of establishing a permanent understanding between groups of Anarchists and Revolutionary Communists.*

Before commencing this report, which aims at demonstrating the necessity for some understanding and union between revolutionary forces, we must say that we do not mean any kind of centralised organisation or administrative authority. We wish simply to convince comrades of the necessity for forming a union in which the various groups would lose none of their autonomy nor be obliged to change in any way their interior organisation; whether these groups have any sort of administrative organisation or none at all, whether the tie which binds their members together is strict or loose, whether they follow a special line of action or have a particular declaration of principles or not affects little the end we have in view. That which in our opinion is necessary is to know one another, to have addresses available, to be able to correspond with each other and meet together when necessary more easily than can be done now. It means therefore the establishment of something that might be called, if it were thought desirable, a "correspondence bureau", or by any other name whatever, but which through the constant growth of correspondence would enable comrades to support each other more effectually, than is possible at present. But it will be said, in order to establish this understanding, it must in any case, however free it may be, rest on some sort of basis. We do not in any way deny this, any more than we should think of disputing the fact that it has been necessary to find a common basis in order to constitute the group which has undertaken the organisation of the Worker's Revolutionary Congress. But we think this basis, this bond of union can easily be found, it exists in our ideas, in our principles themselves. In reality we all aim at the establishment of a communist society based on the community of goods; we all aim at the abolition of private property, we also wish to guarantee to the individual within this society the largest possible amount of Freedom, and the Social Revolution and its preparation seem to us the only effective methods of reaching this. These three points are common to all of us, and are sufficient for the establishment of a common understanding, whatever may be the differences in matter of detail. Comrades will understand without difficulty, we hope, the reason which make us desire some understanding and union amongst us, in spite of all practical difficulties and the theoretical objections that can be brought against it. The events of the last few years both in France and other countries have shown that revolutionists found themselves scattered and their forces divided in face of the forces of reaction. In these recent times of sharp strife against reaction we have not been able to undertake anything serious, and in critical moments it has happened that we were obliged to apply to bourgeois newspapers in order to summon comrades. We had to witness some unpleasant scenes. Sometimes it would be Anarchists who, invited by bourgeois journals, went to cheer the President of the bourgeois republic, and take part in demonstrations in which they often figured less as conscious revolutionists than as men more or less courageous and resolute, to whom the other parties applied when there was too much danger to be run to suit peaceful Republicans. If the revolutionists of France, and especially those of Paris, had been more united amongst themselves, if it had been possible for them to understand one another easily, many mistakes might have been avoided; and there would have been at least the possibility of discussion before action. In other countries petty quarrels between comrades, and the lack of union between

local groups that were hardly acquainted with each other, have sometimes resulted in the complete decay of the movement. Another important question in our opinion is that of our journals. At present our propagandist journals depend exclusively upon those who have them in their hands; and their connection with the various groups is altogether accidental. A great many inconveniences result from this. If the comrade who issues a journal happen to leave, to quit the movement, or is obliged to temporarily concern himself with other matter, the journal disappears with him, and we thus lose one important instrument of propaganda. It will be objected that there exists a material difficulty in the lack of means. That is true, but if the journals were no longer considered as the property of this or that person (who may or may not happen to be liked by many comrades) but as the property of all the groups, of the comrades generally, much greater efforts would be made to sustain them, and they would not be left to the care of the few friends who manage them. It would not happen then, as has already occurred, that a journal is abandoned because there are connected with it some individuals not generally liked, or because it seems to be edited in a way that is not very interesting. But while the journals would receive an advantage, the groups would equally profit by this union. What can comrades do now if a journal does not seem to them to serve the interests of the propaganda, or becomes too exclusively the organ of some individuality?

Before the editors of these journals or reviews our groups are as powerless as they are before the capitalist press. If the comrade who issues a periodical does not care to take into account the opinions of the groups upon any particular question, he has only to close his columns to all questions of which he dislikes the discussion. There are times when very important questions arise during which it is desirable and useful to call meetings of comrades scattered throughout a city, a country, or even several countries, in order to know their opinions. But what can be done if it is not possible to give expression to this opinion? It will be said perhaps that this would be encroaching on the individual liberty of these editors of journals or reviews. We would remark here that we too are defending individual liberty—that of the individuals who compose our groups, and who do not possess the privilege of having a journal in their hands. We think that they have a perfect right to see their opinion expressed, and to discuss if this or that publication deserves to be supported by them. If we bring forward these considerations here, it is because it has already occurred that we Revolutionists of Paris have wanted to express our opinions (during the Dreyfus affair for instance) and have not been able to find any organ in which to do it. In the same way it has already happened that we have had to deplore the lack of union and agreement amongst us. In other countries also the situation differs little from our own. We know, for instance, that the journal "Freedom", edited by a group of English comrades, is kept going with much difficulty. Why is this? Above all because the burden is too heavy for the small group who are bearing it. Whilst if all the Anarchist and Revolutionary Communist groups which exist amongst English speaking peoples were acquainted with each other, they would be able without difficulty to publish a journal of this kind regularly. But this is not all. We have already said how important it is that we should be able to call meetings at certain critical moments, in order to come to an understanding about possible revolutionary demonstrations. In order to do that we ought not to be obliged to depend upon a bourgeois press, half Socialist or Social Democratic, which might possibly publish our announcements (for the few weekly Anarchist journals are not always sufficient). What we want, in a word, is something that would enable us to get into touch with one another, some means of communication between the quarters of a large city like Paris, between the different villages of a country, or even between the comrades of different countries, whenever it is necessary; whether this is called agreement, alliance, union, federation, or correspondence bureau, matters little to us. But this we shall perhaps be told would still be the beginning of an organisation, and this organisation may end later on in centralisation. We think not, comrades, because we feel sure our Anarchist principles would always prevent it from degenerating into centralisation, into a power for which we all have the same repugnance. We think, on the contrary, that there is nothing in common between the free understanding that we propose, and a centralised organisation, the one being the opposite of the other. We wish that besides the discussion of theoretical questions, this congress should do some practical work, that we should not limit ourselves to discussion, but should also act. We have too rarely the opportunity of meeting one another and being able to talk together about the interests of our movement. As a conclusion to these considerations we propose, then, that all those who share our ideas on this subject should meet after the deliberations of the Congress, in order to come to an understanding as to the possibility of an immediate agreement, and the form it might take. So far as we are concerned, we shall propose in the first place that the Paris groups which have taken the initiative in convening this Workmen's International Revolutionary Congress should remain united and continue to maintain the connections which have been created (by meetings, correspondence, or in any other way). It would be well afterwards that they should put themselves into communication with those provincial groups which share our ideas on this matter, and that continuous relations should be maintained with them. Finally if the same ideas spread in other countries regular connections might be created between the groups and comrades of different countries. If this idea, the international alliance of all revolutionary forces, could be advanced a stage, we consider the Congress will have accomplished a

great practical work. We repeat once more, this alliance is necessary to enable us on the one side to fight the forces of reaction, and on the other to counteract the tendency of Social Democrats to become more and more mere reformers. One word more, to prevent any possible misunderstanding. We hope comrades will understand our meaning, our proposal for an understanding between the groups is only addressed to those who agree with it; we do not wish in any way to bind those amongst us who are opposed to all permanent agreements between groups. We ask for nothing better than to hear our arguments criticised, and if after all we still prefer our first idea, if some groups or some comrades follow us, we think that cannot hinder in any way comrades who may be of a contrary opinion; and we hope that they will not endeavour to put any obstacles in the way of carrying out our scheme.

CHRISTIAN CORNELISSEN.

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Bresci has lately been removed from his prison of the past few months and is now interned, presumably for life, in the island fortress of Portolongone. *L'Italia del Popolo*, a Milanese paper, recently stated that while under Milanese jurisdiction Bresci was watched night and day; he took exercise twice daily in the prison yard, handcuffed and guarded by eight warders, under a tent 26 feet by 10, erected purposely to prevent his being seen by other prisoners. His food is bread, butter, and cooked apples, meat being rarely given. As to his (supposed) accomplices he remains silent. Prison discipline as instituted by the Italian government has never been noted for its tender mercies towards the unfortunate men and women who fall within its clutches. Acts of official brutality done within the strong and silent prison walls occasionally come to light—how many never reach the ears of the outside world! Only this winter the inmate of a South Italian jail was beaten to death by the warders, the prison doctor trying to hush up the murder by certifying death as due to disease. Looking into a file of the *Illustrated London News* of the 'sixties, we there see a picture representing "the application of the tourniquet in an Italian prison"; the victim is seen strapped to a chair while a warder tightens the tourniquet round his head; other officials look on and the Governor with eager eye and notebook in hand stands ready to jot down such information as pain will wring from obstinate lips. The tourniquet was a favorite instrument of torture in the days of the Inquisition, sometimes being applied so mercilessly as to force the eyes out of the head. Torture is no longer legalised in Italian jails; but there is no prison in the world in which acts of brutality, corporal or mental, do not occur and are never heard of. When the victim reaches the outer air and complains, the world shrugs its shoulders or laughs. Either the man is a lunatic or his story is based on spite. As soon tell the well-fed middle class, the smug tradesman, the oily politician that in every town throughout Great Britain at this moment there are thousands of men, women and children starving or on the brink of it for lack of work. Will they believe you? Try it. For them—"all's well—God save the King—and Chamberlain!" Nevertheless the leaven is working, else why should the London correspondent of one of the American dailies write: "There must be some under current of subversive ideas at work among the democracies to account for the apparent impotence of representative assemblies to carry out programs of reform, to control executives. . . . We Londoners live on the edge of a volcano." No doubt the Londoners do, and not they only; when the fire reaches the upper crust we may look to see some dancing, but the music of the fiddler Revolution is known to most countries as the Dance of Death.

Merlino's name is now on the list of the parliamentary section of the Neapolitan Socialists, and the fact has renewed the bitterness of some of his old-time friends at the defection of so able a speaker and worker from the Anarchist ranks. However much his defection may be deplored, others who know him will believe that only some honest principle or scruple lies at bottom of it; that it is not merely due to a "mania for posing as a deputy." Merlino is a ready speaker, an energetic and active-minded man; at the present moment (and there is no use shutting our eyes to the fact) Anarchists are not united on the subject of organization; Merlino, as happens to all but the very few, may have lost the enthusiasm of his early revolutionary opinions with his youth; in his own country Anarchists are banned, except in secret there is no possibility of holding meetings that shall result in combined action to some particular end. Other revolutionary bodies while ready to work together refuse co-operation with Anarchist groups, less from want of sympathy with their aims than because the laws against Anarchists are so Draconian that Socialists lack the courage to face them. To an observer the silent conviction steals home that in Italy at least the thoughts of her ablest men lie for the present more in a Socialist than an Anarchist groove. If they can become and remain a majority in parliament they think they will be able to do what the German Socialists once did in their Reichstag—put the government in leading reins and run the machine without (they fondly believe) continuing to crush the workers beneath it. Some day they will learn their folly, and understand how impossible it is for a man who has once tasted power to relinquish it, and so far as one can discern a Socialist is still only a man. A loose rabble can never win a fight or follow up an advantage against an organised force, and while so many Anarchists are content to strive to change things by shaking their fists in the face of the police or calling a Ministry names, one can understand why the Merlinoes of the revo-

lutionary movement join a force that can at least act unitedly for some given purpose or result.

Luccheni, wearied with the monotony of his mere existence, has, it is said, lately showed signs of revolt. Consequently he is being disciplined by replacement in his subterranean cell where there is no daylight, where the sight of a human face or sound is denied him and where his bread and water diet reaches him through a revolving shutter. Such is the meaning of Humanity in Switzerland, whose government (never confound a people with a government) has, by the way, been instrumental in introducing more political police of late throughout Europe than even those in whose countries Anarchists abound.

Certainly the most absorbing topic of the hour in a revolutionary sense is the student crisis in Russia. Since our February issue events have succeeded each other rapidly. Bogolepoff, the Minister of Education, shot by the student Karpowitch two weeks earlier died on March 15th. According to M.me Novikoff, friend and inspirer of William Stead, a lady who is never so happy as when writing false statements concerning revolutionists and panegyrics upon their assailants, Nicholas Bogolepoff was an "exceptionally kind man." Proof? When Karpowitch, officially prevented from continuing his studies at any university, came to the minister's reception to implore the rescinding of a decree that debarred him from every profession in Russia, he was refused the favor of earning a livelihood. No doubt he had shown democratic tendencies—into such the double-headed eagle always plunges its talons; result a shot which sends the "exceptionally kind man" to a ministerial post in Hades where ghosts may haunt but cannot shoot him, and one unit added to the sad army undergoing torture in the Russian penal mines or grim fortress of Schlüsselburg. Bogolepoff is hardly buried when four shots (Mch. 22) are fired through his study window at Old Man of the Mountain Pobiedonostzeff, Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, onetime tutor to Nicholas II and ever close friend and adviser of that young person and his reactionist mother—also, incidentally, another "exceptionally kind man." Those bullets, however, did not find their billet—he lives (for the present) to do some more kindnesses to heretics in general and Tolstoi in particular. What will follow next lies in the hands of Fate. The papers give sensational reports of plots and attempts against the life of the Tsar; these, if they have occurred, are the work of *agents provocateurs* whom Zubatoff, Chief of the Secret Police, has taken care to send by the dozen amongst the students' and workingmen's groups; the ailing and impotent "little father" though he pipe of peace with a knout behind his back is an object of too much contempt to rouse such bloodthirstiness as could once only be appeased by the execution of his grandfather and lifelong terrorism that shadowed his father. Any attempt on the life of Nicholas will have been arranged by Zubatoff and Company in order to arouse public sentiment against the revolutionary element and permit wholesale arrests and deportations. Russian journals are not allowed to chronicle home events but outside it is well known that revolt has been in the air and the streets for months. It is weeks since the following significant phrase was penned in a private letter—"Farewell, I dare not write about the dreadful things that are happening round us; soon one must not even write at all." Every house that holds a student has its police spy lurking in the shadows, while the workers are harried by raids in home and factory. The truth is clear. The Russian government is faced with a perfectly new situation and does not know how to take it. Never before have students, bourgeois and workingmen combined or women of birth and education so braved police and home influences as to openly join the ranks of demonstrations. At the last riot in the capital, 400 of the 800 persons arrested are said to have been lady students. We read that barricades were thrown across the Moscow streets—such a thing has not happened for 200 years. The prisons are full and the police barracks requisitioned to supplement them. But meanwhile, wherever there is a factory, wherever as in famine-struck Southern Russia the people are eating bread made from the midewed straw roofs of their huts, wherever hardship and misery are dire, the red torch of Revolution is dropping its sparks; circulars and leaflets are passing from hand to hand, are read in secret and do their work in mill and shop and hut. Russia is bubbling with an unrest and discontent that never showed so plainly before. The sleeping giant is awakening; where in all Russia is the official who can lull him again to slumber, whether by brute force as in '81 or by drowning home difficulties in a European war? So far he does not appear. Tolstoi writes to the Tsar asking for clemency towards the Doukhobors and investigation of other scandals—the fanatic Pobiedonostzeff, with his master's approval, excommunicates him; Professor Melchow of Petersburg, arrested on suspicion of assisting riotous students though proved innocent, is exiled to a distant province; while the guardianship of every city is left in the tender hands of its military governor and chief of police with their Cossacks, their spies, their knouts and their prisons. Under such circumstances if the men and women who are merely demanding rational treatment by the powers that be are driven to form old-time Central and Secret Committees who but the blind fools who constitute Bureaucracies will wonder at it or its possible outcomes? Happier just now, and we rejoice to think it, the famished moujik gnawing at his straw roof than star-spangled Zubatoff, Muravieff, Pobiedonostzeff and the rest of the bad shepherds misgoverning a brave and most patient people.

A London paper gives the following as a list of killed and wounded during the recent riots: Moscow, 17 killed (including 7 women), 30 wounded; St. Petersburg, 35 killed (3 women), 22 wounded; Kiev, 2 killed.

## FORCE AND FREEDOM.

Armed to overthrow, impatient to enchain,  
 Making the year all winter, how shall ye  
 Persuade the destined bondman he is free,  
 Or with a signal build the summer again?  
 Oh, ye can hold the rivulets of the plain  
 A little while from nuptials with the sea.  
 But the fierce mountain-stream of Liberty  
 Not edicts and not hosts may long restrain.  
 For this is of the heights and of the deeps,  
 Born of the heights and in the deeps conceived.  
 This, 'mid the lofty places of the mind  
 Gushing pellucid, vehemently upheaved,  
 Heart's tears and heart's blood hallow, as it sweeps  
 Invincibly on, co-during with mankind.

WILLIAM WATSON.

### Libertarian Literature.

*L'Università Popolare.* Review, 20 centesimi. Published by Baraldi and Fleischmann, 16 Via S. Martino, Mantova, Italy.

*La Nuova Civiltà.* A. Scopetani, Calle Bolanos, V. Sarsfield, Buenos Aires.

*Palestra Social.* Published at Rua C. Crispiniano 19, int. 10, San Paulo, Brazil.

*Revista Ideei,* edited by P. Musoiu, at No. 10 Strada Epurilor, Bucharest.

*Freiheit.* Published by W. Klink, Beitingheim bei Stuttgart. 10 Pfg. Organ of German Federation of Revolutionary Workmen.

*L'Aube Nouvelle,* fortnightly, edited by Leo Sivasty, at 15 rue Soubrayane, Alais (Gard), France.

*L'Education Libertaire,* monthly review, 50 cmes. Published at 26 rue Titon, Paris.

*L'Action Syndicale et les Anarchists,* by P. Delesalle. 5 cmes. 26 rue Titon, Paris.

*The Challenge,* published by H. G. Wilshire, at 623 S. Hill Street, Los Angeles, Cal. 5c. (Socialist)

*Studies in Socialism,* by G. Pyburn of Sacramento, Cal. Published by J. Wayland, Girard, Kans., U.S.A. 1. *Property*; 2. *Labor*; 3. *Land, Machinery, Inheritance*; 4. *Human Nature, War, etc.* Handy pamphlets in dialogue form.

*Brand* (No. 1). Monthly illustrated Socialist journal; Nils Wessel, Kolgatan 3, Malmö, Sweden. 10 ore.

*L'Internazionale,* new fortnightly paper published by the Socialist-Anarchist colony in London. 418-20 Euston Road, N.W. 1d.

Every success to the paper and its founders.

## WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

"In vain you appeal to me—you say that by an extension of the democratic regime we can eradicate the evils with which we are afflicted." But I do not believe it.

The word, democracy, is derived from *demos* the people and *kratos* the power, and its general interpretation is a condition where the power of the government is supposed to be lodged in the hands of the people. That they, through the so-called representative, can make and unmake laws.

But this is no doubt very soothing to those whose power of enquiry has only reached a certain limit. It may aim at the sovereignty of the individual; but then it falls short of that, because it is enshrouded with ancient traditions, and also because it does not recognise the principles of true liberty.

What has the struggle between the poor and the privileged been the last hundred years? It has been mainly for political enfranchisement. The privileged have yielded, after a desperate conflict, the citizen's right to choose his ruler. But the mere fact of being able to choose one's master is nothing more than a farce, although the privileged feared the concessions they made. But the efficacy of the vote is only a chimera—it has only blinded and deceived the workmen; for this bait so cunningly employed by the classes is the means whereby the attention of the worker is diverted from the real economical causes of his poverty, and his individuality and independence are sacrificed.

The decision of a majority is supposed to be final; it is they who can decide as to the best men to place in power. But what a delusion! Are they the most intelligent? do they think for themselves? They are always in the rear, and their ideas are more suitable for a museum than for modern life. How can they decide such a question? I cannot, for the simple reason that no man can with safety be trusted with power; he becomes tyrannous under its influence, and imagines himself superior to those whom he professes to serve. And he also becomes the victim of temptations in the camp of the enemy; in fact, the atmosphere even of a legislative chamber is sufficient to chill the ardour of those who seek to establish better conditions of life.

The representative system is disease and corruption itself; the meanness and pretentiousness of the politician are well known—his smooth tongue, his profusion of promises and his anxiety to get into power. Even if he has honest desires to improve the workers' condition he is prevented not only by the satellites of privilege, but from the mere fact that the legislative machinery cannot deal with those problems which affect the workman; it does not touch the root of social diseases, but only deals with side issues. And therefore by dealing only with effects instead of causes, it attempts to make wage-slavery appear more respectable and bearable in the eyes of the workman.

Politics have had their day, the veil of deception has been removed by the hand of truth, and the workers are beginning to see through this transparent fraud, that the question at issue is not a matter of placing this or that party in power to spend their time making a nest for themselves and their descendants, but one of an economical nature that can be solved only by the workers themselves. It is they who must work out their emancipation by the development of their reasoning faculties, self-reliance and independence, and contempt for office seekers and their platitudes.

What of contemporary democracies? They do not present a healthy picture. For instance France and America, where, notwithstanding the vote, human liberty is trampled under foot and the power of the capitalist remains unchecked; one need only look at these countries for a sample of this new form of tyranny.

The improvements in the workers' condition have been achieved outside Parliament by their spontaneous action. Therefore, I say, for earnest men to enter the political arena is a hopeless affair, it only helps to strengthen the position of the privileged; for the belief in the power of the vote has a stultifying and dependent effect on the mind of the worker, it banishes inquiry.

Let us keep clear of politics with their lies, deceit and hypocrisy. Our place is among the workmen teaching them the principles of true democracy—that which will relieve humanity not only from the grip of the capitalist but from that of the ruler as well.

The abolition of the State—that alone is true democracy, leaving each individual free, where economic and social affairs can be conducted by the people themselves without the interference of arrogant officials. That is true democracy; all other forms are wretched shams and frauds.

R. C. M.

### REPORTS.

The FREEDOM DISCUSSION GROUP, which has continued to hold its fortnightly meetings regularly for 18 months, had those of Jan. 29th and Feb. 12th opened by the well-known follower of the Tolstoyan non-resistant principles, A. St. John. Mr. St. John, who is also known for his courageous visits to Russia to assist the Doukhobors, the last landing him in a Russian prison, gave his views in general on the subject of Anarchist methods and work today—a topic ever fruitful for discussion and divergence of opinion. Briefly, he is a strong believer in the softening influence of an atmosphere of goodwill. Cultivate this to the extent that when smitten on one cheek you are ready to turn the other to the smiter, and the smiter in the course of evolution will omit to smite. The difficulty (but on this he did not dwell) to those with a touch of the devil still in them, is, that the course of evolution is so profoundly slow; and, meanwhile, what about life, liberty and the joys of peace and fraternity which governments, capitalists and kings are crushing out of the people? He was naturally pained at the folly, indiscretion and mere human passion evinced by acts like Bresci's, and condemned such methods as worse than useless. So do many Anarchists. Most of us would rather drink a glass of sweet milk than a gallon of our enemy's blood; but there is something in the human animal that revolts against the glass of sweet milk if you are asked to drink it across the grave or beside the bodies of kith and kin done to death by the strong hand. As was pointed out in discussion, every single liberty and prerogative of such nations as have a modicum of freedom today, has only been torn from the hand of the armed oppressor by menace or blows. The students, by a late ukase of Tsar Nicholas drafted into the Eastern Russia disciplinary corps for participating in university disturbances, have in many cases refused to take the military oath of allegiance. They have not resisted by force, yet six of them now lie under sentence of death. Marmol, Maatosta and Tchaykovsky dilated on the mischief of any doctrine that would tend to keep the suffering masses in a state of abject submission to the powers that be. By no means did Anarchists, as St. John contended, believe in or adopt the negative side of Anarchism only. They fully sympathised and co-operated with the positive side, in the peaceful extension of every modification and beneficent work that went to the raising of humanity to a higher conception of life. But they maintain that the evolution of all that is noble in man is not only hindered but prohibited by the tyranny of prevailing systems of government, and that the Tolstoyan life of spiritual contemplation and non-resistance helped not to eradicate but to foster those systems. Governments do not want the people either to have or to live a high conception of life, because the higher the conception the more glaring the effects of wrongs and the more determined the revolt and final overthrow of all that stands in the way of progress. Buddhism was already 500 years old when Christianity came into the world to assist in the purification of men's ideals; but the government of the kings of today was fundamentally the same as that of the Neros of that day—consisting as it did and still does in the suppression of the weak by force. If Christianity has been unable so far to modify the love of tyranny and compulsion, how was Tolstoyism to do it?

On March 12th, comrade Glasse who has returned after many years spent in South Africa, gave an interesting talk on the situation there with regard to the labor question and the prospects of Anarchist and Socialist propaganda. Apparently the time has not yet come for either, for the simple reason that the whites are still in a minority, the black population not only outnumbering but actually, in direct contrast to what occurs amongst the Red Indians, the Maric and all other aboriginal tribes who come in contact with civilisation and the white man, increasing and multiplying all the time. Civilisation does not kill the black man of South Africa; but, while he can ape the habits and manners of his masters and learn a smattering of knowledge quickly in the schools, he remains essentially a barbarian, unable to assimilate either knowledge or customs, who reverts back to his primitive type the instant he gets the chance. His morality is absolutely low. Whether dealing with his own people or the whites he sees no shame or cowardice in joining ten or twenty men in an attack on one; he will lie and thief among his own promiscuously, and when Christ-

ianised he naturally becomes (seeing what the Christianity of the day is) a greater liar and thief than ever. This, however, is a well known fact in connection with the proselytising of native races the world over; for a thoroughbred liar and pilferer there is nothing, as every Anglo-Indian tells us, that can beat the converted Hindu, especially if he has a drop of white blood in his composition. Briefly, the great Kaffir race, springing from some North African stock, began to trend southwards three centuries ago, to a great degree displacing the aboriginal yellow-faced Hottentots, whom the Dutch prefer for servants. It is now impossible for white labor to compete with black. The Kaffir, inured to the climate, with far greater staying power than the European, able to nourish himself on a handful of Indian meal and content with 2s. or 3s. a day, is the raw material at hand for exploitation. Today he represents the unskilled labor of the country—tomorrow when Rhodes and the capitalists by means of imported skilled white labor have taught him expertness and finish, he will represent the future skilled labor, and the white mechanic may leave Africa to the capitalists and the blacks. Comrade Glasse is strongly of the opinion general to all whites who have lived long among a coloured population: that close contact between the two in Africa is degrading to the whites and of little benefit to the blacks; he thinks the latter everywhere should be given reservations upon which to live by themselves, as has been done by the Basutos in whose country the English government permits no white to settle. The Boers he considers to be far more consistent in their treatment of the native than the English. The Boers have always refused to look upon the blacks as equals and treat them as inferiors; the Englishman proclaims aloud that every black is free and equal with himself, but he uses him as a slave, permitting neither freedom nor equality. Froude, the Tory historian, says exactly the same in his work on South Africa written years ago. At present libertarian propaganda is hopeless in the colonies. The white workers up to a few years back made money out there; today they do not make money but their wages are high and they are content to take that as the highest ideal of life. Later, comrade Glasse thinks, all this will change. South Africa for the Afrianders as against the Imperialists will become the cry of the land, and, black labor having replaced white, discontent may do what prosperity has failed to do: lead the white workers to think and act, the mining population of Johannesburg being probably the first to move against the Capitalist and Imperial government. Then will come the time for sowing the seed of libertarian propaganda.

## THE PARIS COMMUNE.

The 30th anniversary of the Paris Commune was commemorated on March 19th by a meeting at the Workingmen's Club and Institute, Holborn. Owing to the bad weather the hall was less filled than usual; and the failure of several familiar speakers through absence from town, illness or late working-hours—such as Kropotkin, Marmol, Malatesta, Turner and Kelly—made itself felt. Louise Michel, however, gave one of her most eloquent orations on the evils that be and the coming regeneration of the race through the newly-prevailing sentiment of fraternity. Her speeches, spoken with the clear, beautiful intonation which makes them so easily understood, are at all times untranslatable—you can give the bare bones of the words or subject, it is impossible to give the poetic touch that renders her impromptu addresses so absorbing to listen to. Today she is the High Priestess of Courage and Hope; in every word she writes or utters the refrain is ever: "Strive on, strive on, the dawn is coming!" Just so, Louise, just so—but so many of us will be dead before the sun rises above the mountains!

H. Glasse, L. Withington, Tcherkesov, Needs, Rocker, Kaplan and an English sympathiser who stated it was his first appearance on an Anarchist platform—all rendered a good account of themselves in the storming of the Capitalist and Governmental position; while comrade Mainwaring, fresh from toil, undaunted by weather, and staunch as ever, heartened us up by joining in with a few manly words of protest and encouragement. Chairman Wess did not forget to proclaim the cause of the Russian students. So the curtain dropped. When next it rises on a Commune Meeting much that is unexpected may have happened; hard times are coming to the workers, and while the general public remains apathetic to all the misery and suffering around, the eyes and ears of a handful of despised Anarchists keep watch and ward. They may be pondering quietly over the cruelty and injustice of strong-handed governments—but they are not pondering for nothing even in wet, windy and well bred England.

(Speech by Henry Glasse of South Africa.)

For the past thirty years you or the lovers of Freedom who have gone before you have yearly celebrated the memory of the heroes of the Commune. During the last twenty years of that time, I, in common with the few Socialists in South Africa, have been present with you in spirit though parted from you in body by the space of 7,000 miles. Now, when a section of the South African population is engaged in a desperate struggle against Imperial tyranny, it is my good fortune to be able to stand among you and to bid you render combined honor to the two struggles—that of the past and that of the present.

Unconsciously, but none the less truly, these two struggles both show the same tendency towards the attainment of that perfect liberty which we as Anarchist Communists desire. Unconsciously, I say, because the Commune of Paris, so far from professing Anarchism, included only a minority of Socialists, while the Boers of South Africa would certainly be astonished and perhaps distressed to learn that they were waging war in furtherance of Anarchist aims.

Yet the Commune of Paris fought, as the burghers of South Africa are now fighting, against authority—the authority which claims to be derived from the will of the majority.

In these days, when the wealthy classes, who really rule us, wish to cajole the people, it is to democracy that they appeal; they tell us that the majority are our rulers and that we must bow to their decision. We who look below the surface of things know that this is falsehood, we know that all the majority does—all that it is permitted to do—is to accept and to say "Amen" to its own slavery, and we know that, if it really ruled, it could not be subject to its own servants, as, by an amusing fiction, its representatives and governors are supposed to be.

But granting, for the sake of argument, that the majority does really rule, none the less do we Anarchists repudiate the right of the many to rule the few; and the action of the Paris Commune thirty years ago and of the South African party today supports our repudiation, and, if logically followed up, leads to our Anarchist principle of complete individual liberty. The argumentation is plain: If the people of Paris might justly set at defiance the will of the rural majority in the French republic, and if the people in South Africa may justly assert their independence of a presumed Jingo majority in the British Empire, on what grounds can the majority in a district or town force its will upon the minority constituting groups or sections within it, and how can a group or section presume to dictate to an individual? If 100,000,000 may not justly coerce 1,000,000, why may 100 persons coerce a single unit? What is sauce for the goose is surely sauce for the gander (to use a common English proverb) and I therefore contend that the insurrection of minorities against majorities—as instanced in the Commune of Paris and in the present resistance of the Boers—logically leads to that individual autonomy claimed by Anarchists, and to that free association of affinities which is the only form of society that can satisfy those who like ourselves desire Freedom above all things.

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