

Freedom

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MONTHLY; ONE PENNY.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

WITHIN the past few days this wish has been uttered by thousands and thousands of people to one another; sometimes sincerely, sometimes carelessly, sometimes sarcastically. We also would join in the time-honoured genial custom, and offer to our readers in every part of the globe, and not to them alone, but to all mankind, a happy new year. We have just grounds we think for doing so, for notwithstanding the terrible misery which surrounds us on every hand, notwithstanding the vast number of fellow creatures to whom the word happiness is without meaning, the past year has witnessed great movement among the workers, and has been full of promise for the future. In the most pessimistic quarters, recent events have given birth to new hope. It seems as though the Sun of Truth and Liberty is at length making its appearance on the horizon, the long night of ignorance and suffering is over, and the creatures of darkness are slinking away with the gloom. The day is not yet, however; there is still much to be done, much to endure, before the reign of liberty, equality and fraternity, can really be said to have commenced. The workers are many, but they are not enough; the thought is luminous, but still its light is not sufficiently strong; the masses begin to move, but their motion is as yet but slow. We must renew our efforts, redouble our numbers, intensify the clearness of our ideas, if we would quickly terminate the struggle between the workers and the idlers.

The past year has been fruitful in strikes. It is evident that the practical worker is losing his faith in the programme of the political visionaries who think to transform society by Act of Parliament. It is evident that the strike is a workers' weapon which has a great part to play in the Social Revolution which is so close upon us. As time goes on this weapon will of course be modified and improved as the workers find it desirable. It will become more revolutionary, its imperfections will be remedied, means will be found to stop the supply of blacklegs, the boycott and the force of public opinion will be brought to bear upon the exploiter with far greater force than has yet happened, the interference of the government in support of the capitalists will be rendered impossible, and the strike will become a struggle, conducted on something like equal terms between the monopolist and the wage workers. The day of isolated strikes appears to be over. For the future the workers' revolts will be conducted on the federal principle. Not merely a small group of workers employed in one factory or one mine, but the body of the workers belonging to a trade, assisted by kindred trades, and often by their fellow-workers in other countries, will revolt against the exploiter. These federations will consist of free groups of free men forming a voluntary combination for a common purpose, imbued with the solidarity which is ever and ever increasing its hold upon the toilers. No bond beyond the bond of brotherhood is necessary. The strikers make but small demands to-day, but this is due to the fact that they do not feel sufficiently strong to do more. As they are groping their way forward, as they get to understand better the injustices of which they are the victims, as solidarity grows and their weapons become more perfect, the workers demands will grow also until the claim which to-day consists of a trifling increase of wages and a slight reduction in the hours of work will to-morrow be a demand that the capitalist shall relinquish his position of superiority as well as his exorbitant share of the produce, and that the shareholder shall share in the work if he would share in the results. The workers will submit their own ideas as to profit-sharing schemes then. They will demand a co-operative equalitarian sharing of the profits, and the capitalists will be too scared to advocate the sweater's trick which they call profit-sharing to-day.

The greatest obstacle to successful strikes is doubtless the blackleg. The blackleg is an unemployed man. He is the danger and the safety of the capitalist. Without him strikes must necessarily be successful; with him the capitalist is always in fear of riots and revolution. The blackleg might be a hero, he might with his fellow unemployed destroy the evil system which crushes out men's manhood to-day; but instead he sells himself to the enemy. Yet he is more to be pitied than blamed. He is ignorant and hungry. He is driven into a corner. He reflects probably that the strikers have never thought of him and his misery, why should he think of them? The offer is tempting. Food, shelter, and comparative comfort on the one hand. On the other, perhaps, the prospect of a severe winter, certainly of continued want. When the gas workers went out in the middle of last month, more than twice the number of men needed to fill their places came and offered themselves to the exploiter. Some of them were ready to work a week

for nothing, did not want any railway fare, and pleaded piteously to be set on. They dreaded the prospect of want they had before them far more than the hatred and contempt of their fellows. Their misery had caused them to lose all feeling of solidarity with others. They could only think of themselves and theirs.

It is doubtless quite natural for all who are fighting against the capitalists to look upon the blackleg as an enemy, for such he undoubtedly is. But it is a part of our business as revolutionists to make him a friend. This must be done before the Revolution can be effected. The supply of working men who are ready to take the places vacated by strikers must be stopped. To do this, it is necessary for us to give much more attention to the land question, particularly the agricultural land question, than we have done in the past. Socialists have far too much neglected this important matter, and we owe much to the land nationalisers for the work they have done. It is quite true that land monopoly is a root evil, and that the land question is the bottom question, but it is not Nationalisation but Socialisation of the Land which is the remedy. The land grabbers must be made to loosen their hold, the workers must turn their eyes towards the land. We must show the agricultural labourer that he ought to cultivate the land for himself in common with his fellows, and not for the benefit of an exploiter, whether he calls himself farmer or landlord. The workers on the land must be taught to repudiate the iniquitous claim for rent. We must show them how easy it would be to combine together in a co-operative association and produce from the land the necessaries of life, which they could exchange with their fellow workers of the towns for the machinery, clothing, etc., which they might need. The wretched slavery of the rural workers is of the greatest importance to the town worker, for it is that, coupled with the fact that machinery is displacing labour in the country, which is so largely increasing the army of the unemployed in the towns. To make the agriculturalist a free man, to help him to establish himself upon the land, and also to throw the land open to the unemployed now gathered in the towns, is the most pressing work for us to do. Once the monopoly in land is destroyed, the blackleg will disappear, the cut-throat competition between the workers will cease, there will be a rush back to the pure air and the free life of the country, the big cities will melt away, or at any rate become very much smaller than at present, new centres of thought and activity will spring up, life will take new forms, capitalism will fall to pieces through the action of strikes and similar methods, the government will vanish, the Social Revolution will have been accomplished.

There are Socialists who do not see the importance of the land question, because they see that there are already sufficient food-stuffs produced for all if all could only get at them. It is necessary to remember, however, that in order to get this food the workers have to produce something which they can exchange for it, and it is because the present system of society allows many of them no opportunity of doing this, and others no opportunity of exchanging the articles they have produced, that it is a failure. Whereas if the worker had free access to the land he would always be able to produce the absolute necessaries of life for himself. He would never enter an industrial group, which did not offer him as great or greater advantages than an agricultural group. The standard of comfort would never fall below the agricultural level. Our French co-workers have especially shown that they recognise the importance of the agricultural land question, and quite an extensive propaganda has been made amongst the peasants of France. An Agrarian League based upon the principles of Anarchist Communism has been formed, and active groups are at work at Cuers, Peyriac de Mer, Prades, Izy, La Californie, Saint-Victor Lacoste, Servian, La Palisse, Saint-Florent, Rochambeau, Marsillargues, Hem, Breuilles, Bouglon, Casteljaloux, and many other places. It is scarcely necessary to say that the *Ligue Agraire* is a federation of absolutely free groups, without a central committee, statutes or dogmas. We hope to hear shortly of English comrades following this example, and we are sure that whenever the principles of Anarchist Communism are clearly expounded to the workers in the fields they will meet with hearty acceptance.

At the dawn of a new year, and in wishing that before its term is ended, we may make great progress along the revolutionary path, we have thought it useful to briefly give our ideas of the course events are taking, and how best we may serve the Revolution in that course. As we watch the thought-moulding events which are now following one another so rapidly, we become more and more convinced that the coming revolution will be, can be nothing else than, an Anarchist Revolution, an extension of liberty. As for those Social Democrats, Land Nationalisers, Radicals and others whose faith in freedom is limited, we are sure

that the course of events will force the honest men amongst them to fight on the Anarchist side. The place-hunters will necessarily go over to the governing class whom they desire to emulate. State Socialism is doubtless growing stronger, but it is not the workers' Social Democracy of a year or two back, it is the Government Socialism of the far seeing members of the middle-class, as advocated by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Star*, and other capitalist newspapers, and by politicians belonging to both the Liberal and Conservative parties. These people very clearly see that they would be just as well off as highly salaried officials, in a democratic state of which they would be the rulers, as they are now as private capitalists and members of the middle-class. They would manage the country in just the same way as they now run joint stock companies, with a well paid directorate and officials, do-nothing shareholders and ill-paid workers. It is a grand plan—for them—and they may secure the temporary co-operation of many working class Social Democrats, but they will not succeed. Events are leading in another direction, and if the workers are only true to themselves, if they go on as they have been going during the past few months, our would be national directors will never get an innings.

THE POLITICS OF SOCIALISM.

ALL Socialists are convinced of the absolute and speedy necessity of a Social Revolution, and are determined to bring about a change in the economic relations of men to one another which shall give all who do their best in working to supply the needs of the whole community, an equal chance of supplying their own needs, and render it impossible for a crew of wilful idlers to live in luxury at the cost of their industrious fellows. We all desire to establish a manner of life amongst ourselves that shall tend naturally to keep us all on terms of economic equality, making it more easy for each one to work than to be idle, and to work for the common benefit, than to attempt to make a pile for himself. And we are convinced, we Socialists, that to do this effectually the people, the mass of the workers, must refuse any longer to recognise the right to monopolise property, now claimed by individuals, and assured to them by the armed force of the law. We are convinced that the workers must take possession for the common use of all the wealth now individually monopolised, which has been created by the common labour of all workers, with brains and hand; and that in future the wealth of the community must be held in common by all the members of the community, that we may have no return to the misery and exploitation which result from the monopoly of property to-day; and no doubt we all think that this great change in our relations to one another with regard to wealth, must necessarily bring with it changes as great and as important in all our other social relationships.

First and foremost it will destroy that most grinding of all tyrannies the rule of the poor by the rich. Now the public affairs being no longer administered by a class privileged on account of its riches—how are they to be administered?

We have one and all of us no hesitation in answering, By the people themselves. A beautiful phrase: but what do we mean by it? Democracy or Anarchism? Administration with authority or without it?

We English people are very much given to managing our public and private affairs first, and enquiring (if we ever do enquire) on what principle we did it afterwards, and this has been exactly the case with the politics of English Socialism. Some English Socialists within Socialist society are democratic in their politics, and some Anarchist—and very often the Anarchists are loudest in proclaiming themselves Democrats. And does it matter you may say. So long as we have the thing—what's in a name? Agreed as to the mere name. It does not matter—so long as we get clear about principles, but very often confusion of names means a real absence of clearness in thought.

We all see this very plainly on the economic side of the question. We object for example to the bourgeois confusion of calling all land nationalisers Socialists—because we see very clearly that though the idea of Land Nationalisation has been the thin end of the wedge for the idea of Socialism, and though the common ownership of the soil is a fundamental part of Socialism, mere land nationalisation of the George type by itself would never deliver the mass of the workers from middle-class exploitation and it is a mere confusion of thought to give it that name. A confusion which may be a very real danger for the revolutionary movement, if not cleared up. A red herring across the track which will be skilfully used by the reactionaries to lead the less thoughtful and thorough-going malcontents off the scent. Just exactly in the same way it is a real danger on the political side of the revolutionary movement for us revolutionists not to clear up amongst ourselves the real nature of our convictions and the sort of action into which if we are true to ourselves, our principles must carry us. For every want of clear-sightedness and thoroughness on our part affords an opportunity for the reactionary party, who as the movement grows more formidable are always on the look-out for chances to divert its energies from the straight path, to turn aside our claim for full and complete equality and justice between man and man with a compromise—or an equivocation. There is not only the old, old story of economic justice for the people put off with some juggling bribe of a trifling reform in the machinery of government—not only that which the workers are beginning to see through; but there is the serious danger of mixing up the Socialistic propaganda with schemes of public administration and theories of politics which, while they profess to represent the best aspirations of the new social life, are nothing better than a compromise

with the worst abuses of the past, the evil principle from which those abuses spring.

And then remember the mingling of the idea of a compromise in politics with a new departure in economics does not merely serve to alienate thoughtful minds and weaken action now, but when the revolution breaks out (and none of us know how soon that may happen) a want of definite political ideas amongst Socialists will open a wide door to the numbers of well-meaning reactionaries and self-interested political men of the old society who will join the new movement directly it is successful. They have a principle on which they have been accustomed to believe that public affairs must be managed—the old principle of authority, expressed in the old method of representative government—and if the people are not ready to put in practice some better principle of action and the new methods belonging to it, the political mistakes of the revolution may—nay assuredly will—spoil its economic success. The conscious revolt against property which will shortly take place will fail of its full effect if the revolt against authority that accompanies it is not conscious too. If the political blunders of Socialists should weary the people with Socialism before it is fairly established amongst us and give the property holders a chance to recover some of the lost ground, they will not be slow to take it.

SOCIETY ON THE MORROW OF THE REVOLUTION.

Translated from the French of JEHAN LE VAGRE.

I.—AUTHORITY AND ORGANISATION.

SOME Anarchists allow themselves to be led into confounding these two very different things. In their hatred of authority, they repel all organisation, knowing that the authoritarians disguise under this name the system of oppression which they desire to constitute. Others whilst avoiding falling into this error, go to the other extreme of extolling a thoroughly authoritarian form of organisation, which they style anarchist. There is, however, a fundamental difference to be made clear. That which the authoritarians have baptised with the name of organisation is plainly enough a complete hierarchy, making laws, acting instead of and for all, or causing the mass to act, in the name of some sort of representation. Whereas what we understand by organisation is the agreement which is formed, because of their common interests, between individuals grouped for a certain work. Such are the mutual relations which result from the daily intercourse the members of a society are bound to have one with the other. But this organisation of ours has neither laws nor statutes nor regulations, to which every individual is forced to submit, under penalty of punishment. This organisation has no committee that represents it; the individuals are not attached to it by force, they remain free in their autonomy, free to abandon this organisation, at their own initiative, when they wish to substitute another for it.

We are far from having the pretentious idea of drawing a picture of what society will be in the future, far from having the presumption to wish to build a complete plan of organisation and put it forward as a principle. We merely wish to outline the main features and broad lines which ought to enlighten our propaganda, reply to objections which have been raised to the Anarchist idea, and demonstrate that a society is very well able to organise itself without either power or delegation if it is truly based on justice and social equality.

Yes, we believe that all individuals ought to be left free to seek for, and to group themselves according to, their tendencies and their affinities. To claim to establish a single method of organisation by which everybody will have to be controlled, and which will be established immediately after the Revolution, is utopian, considering the diversity of the temperaments and characters of individuals; and to wish already to prepare a frame, more or less narrow, in which society will be called upon to move, would be to play the part of doctrinaires and conservatives, since nothing assures us that the ideal which fascinates us to-day will respond to-morrow to our wants, and above all to the wants of the whole of society. The powerlessness to sterility, with which all the Socialist schools up to the present time have been stricken, is due precisely to the fact that in the society they wished to establish all was foreseen and regulated in advance, nothing was left to the initiative of individuals; consequently that which responded to the aspirations of some was objectionable to others, and thence the impossibility of creating anything durable.

We have to refute here the affirmation of the reactionaries, who pretend that if Anarchy was triumphant it would be a return to the savage state and the death of all society. Nothing is more false. We recognise that it is association alone which can permit man to employ the machinery which science and industry put at his service; we recognise that it is by associating their efforts that individuals will succeed in increasing their comfort and their freedom. We are, then, partisans of association, but, we repeat it, because we consider it as a means to the well-being of the individual, and not under the abstract form in which it is presented to us even now, which makes of it a sort of divinity by which those who ought to compose it are annihilated.

Then if we do not wish to fall into the same errors and to meet with the same obstacles we ought to guard ourselves against believing that all men are cast in the same mould, and to recognise that what may agree very well with the disposition of one individual may very differently accord with the feelings of all. This, it may be said in passing, applies equally to association in the period of propaganda and

to the future society. If we desire to make a revolution which will come up to our ideal, to prepare this revolution we ought at once to organise ourselves according to our principles, to accustom individuals to act of themselves, and to be careful not to introduce into our organisation the institutions that we attack in the existing society, lest we relapse into the same condition as before. Anarchists ought to be more practical than those they fight against, they ought to learn from the mistakes which are made, so as to avoid them. We ought to appeal to all those who wish to destroy the present society, and, instead of losing our time in discussing the utility of such or such means, to group ourselves for the immediate application of the means we think best, without preoccupying ourselves with those who are not in favour of it; in the same way that those who are in favour of another means should group themselves to put in practice that other means. After all, what we all wish is the destruction of the present society; and it is evident that experience will guide us as to the choice of means. We should do practical work, instead of wasting our time at committee meetings, which are mostly sterile, where each wishes to make his own idea prevail, which very often break up without anything being decided, and which almost always result in the creation of as many dissentient factions as there are ideas put forward—factions which, having become enemies, lose sight of the common enemy, the middle-class society, to war upon each other.

Another advantage resulting from this is, that individuals habituating themselves to join the group which accords best with their own ideas, will accustom themselves to think and to act of their own accord, without any authority among them, without that discipline which consists in destroying the efforts of a group or of isolated individuals because the others are not of their opinion. Yet another advantage which results is, that a revolution made on this basis could not be other than Anarchist, for individuals who had learned to act without any compulsion would not be silly enough to establish a power on the morrow of victory.

For some Socialists the ideal is to gather the workers in a party such as exists in Germany. The chiefs of this party on the day of the revolution would be carried into power, would thus form a new government, who would decree the appropriation of machinery and property, would organise production, regulate consumption, and suppress—that goes without saying—those who were not of their opinion. We Anarchists believe that this is a dream. Decrees to take possession after the struggle will be illusory; it is not by decrees that the appropriation of capital will be accomplished, but by facts at the time of the struggle, by the workers themselves, who will enter into possession of houses and workshops by driving away the present possessors, and by calling the disinherited and saying to them, "This belongs to nobody individually; it is not a property that can belong to the first occupant, and by him be transmitted to his descendants. No, these houses are the product of past generations, the heritage of the present and future generations. Once unoccupied, they are at the free disposition of those who need them. This machinery is put at the free disposition of the producers who wish to use it, but cannot become individual property."

Individuals will be so much the more unable to personally appropriate it, because they will not know what to do with machinery which they cannot utilise by means of wage-slaves. No one will be able to appropriate anything which he cannot work himself; and as the greater part of the present machinery can only be worked by the association of individual forces, it will be by this means that individuals will come to an understanding. Once the appropriation has been made, we see no necessity for it to be sanctioned by any authority whatsoever.

We cannot foresee the consequences of the struggle in which we are engaged. In the first place, do we know how long it will last? what will be the immediate result of a general overthrow of the existing institutions? what will be the immediate wants of the people on the morrow of the revolution? Certainly we do not.

We ought, then, not to waste our time in establishing in our imagination a society the wheels of which will all be prepared in advance, and which will be constructed, so to speak, like one of those boxes of playthings, all the pieces of which are numbered, and which, when placed together, start working directly the mechanism is wound up. All that we can do from the theoretical point of view of organisation will never be other than dreams, more or less complicated, which will invariably prove to be without basis when it is a question of putting them into practice. We certainly have not this ridiculous pretention, but we ought to guard ourselves also from that other mistake common to many revolutionaries, who say: Let us occupy ourselves first of all with destroying, and afterwards we will see what we ought to construct. Between these two ideas there is a hiatus. We certainly cannot say what the future society will be, but we ought to say what it will not be, or at least what we ought to prevent it from being.

We cannot say what will be the mode of organisation of the producing and consuming groups; they alone can be judges of that; moreover, the same methods are not suitable to all. But we can very well say, for instance, what we would do personally if we were in a society in which all the individuals had the opportunity to act freely; what we must do now, in fact, the revolution being only the complement of evolution. We can tell how a society might evolve without the help of those famous "commissions of statistics," "labour-notes," etc., etc., with which the Collectivists wish to gratify us; and we believe it is necessary to say this because it is in the nature of individuals not to wish to engage themselves to follow a certain course of action without knowing where it will take them, and besides, as we have already said, it is the end we ourselves propose to attain that ought to guide us in the employment of means of propaganda.

II.—THE MEDIUM OF EXCHANGE AND THE COMMISSIONS OF STATISTICS.

The belief that we must continue to value the efforts of individuals and permit them to enjoy only according to what they have produced is another prejudice giving rise to the objection that it is impossible to establish a communist society.

How strong is prejudice! People realise all the falsity of the present commercial system; they see that we must abolish competition by destroying money, the medium of exchange which enables the capitalists to deceive the worker so as to obtain in exchange for their money a greater amount of labour force than they pay for. They comprehend that all that must be destroyed, and yet most of those who see thus far quite clearly can find no better remedy than to substitute for the present medium of exchange—money—another exchange medium.

What will this change? What does it matter that the exchange medium is a metal more or less precious? That is not the danger. The danger is that if we establish an exchange of products in the new society it will be to everyone's interest to assess his own productions at a higher value than any others, and then we shall see all the evils of the existing society reproduced. This can only be avoided by the discovery of a basis which will give the exact value of every product. But this basis is lacking as we shall endeavour to show.

Most of the authoritarian Socialists for want of a better have adopted as a measure of value an hour of work! But, as there are some kinds of work which require a very much larger expenditure of labour force than others, we want to know what they will do to make everyone agree? Everybody will be interested in having his hour of work or expenditure of labour force estimated at a higher rate than the average—indeed it is already admitted by many Socialists that more ought to be paid for certain work than for certain other work. We want to know, also, what sort of a dynamometer will enable them to continually measure and compare the expenditure of a man's muscular or brain force? On what basis will they establish their measure of exchange value so as to give to each, as they say, the whole product of his work, and, most important of all, who will set what the value in exchange shall be?

It is in fact impossible to constitute this exchange value. It can only be arranged by friendly agreement amongst all the workers; unless, indeed, it is imposed by the commissions of statistics. But as many collectivists deny that commissions of statistics are governments, we believe this exchange value will be established by a common agreement between the workers. This, however, implies that the workers will have to abandon their exact claims and acquire that self-denial which it is said they cannot have in an Anarchist society.

On the other hand if labour notes are created, how will their accumulation be prevented? It has been said in reply to this question that an accumulation could only be used in the purchase of articles for consumption, and as the land and machinery would be inalienable, the dangers of such accumulations could not be great. Certainly so far as the reconstitution of private property in land and machinery is concerned, such an accumulation could not be dangerous, but it could very easily throw the whole organisation into confusion. We will explain how.

We will suppose these individuals to have bad intentions—this would be very easily imagined by our opponents, let us not forget, if an Anarchist society was in question—we will suppose that they are able to produce more than they need, and thus acquire an accumulation of notes. What is the result? On the one hand they deprive the market of a demand for products, whilst they increase the supply on the other. Thus not only are all the calculations of the commissions of statistics upset, but other persons who have more wants than they have are prevented from producing according to their wants. It has been urged in reply to this objection that accumulations will be prevented by cancelling these famous labour notes at certain periods. But what will prevent anyone from exchanging them for new ones at the time when they become due, for we cannot force people to consume immediately—unless we also insert in the programme Compulsory Consumption. But if we admit that that can be avoided, there will nevertheless be some individuals who will produce more than they will consume and others who will want to consume more than they can produce. Now as each labour note—and we are supposing all the time that these have been made the medium of exchange—will have to be represented in the warehouses by its equivalent in products, we shall have the anomaly of there being in a society calling itself a society of equals, through some individuals for lack of wants having allowed their labour notes to be cancelled at maturity, some goods remaining in the warehouses; whilst other individuals will be unable to satisfy their wants because they could not produce accordingly. We shall thus have arrived at a point where we shall either have to force people to consume or force them to give up their labour notes. Why not re-establish the Poor Law system? As, however, according to the collectivists, these commissions of statistics are not an authority, there will be only one thing left for them to do—to restrict production and thus create some unemployed. Where will be the difference in that society from the society of to-day?

In spite of all the contradictions it is evident that it is here that appears the object of these famous commissions of statistics which will regulate the hours of work by indicating to each individual what he is to do. In other words, the individual in such a society would find himself restricted in all his acts; at each movement he would run up against a prohibitory law. That may be collectivism, but assuredly it is not liberty, still less is it equality.

But beyond all these inconveniences there is still another, more dangerous than all the rest, it is that in instituting commissions of this

and commissions of that, which will be nothing else but a government under another name, we shall simply have made a revolution in order to hasten the concentration of the social wealth which is taking place to-day in the higher capitalist circles, and to succeed in the end in placing the whole of the machinery and social property in the hands of a few.

To-day when the State possesses only a very small part of the public fortune, a crowd of individual interests have sprung up around it which are so many obstacles to our emancipation. What would it be like in a State which was at one and the same time employer and proprietor of all? An all-powerful State, which would be able at will to dispose of the whole social fortune and distribute it so as to best serve its own interests! A State, in short, which would be master not only of the present generation but also of those of the future, as it would undertake the education of the children, and would be able at pleasure either to help humanity along the path of progress by a wide and varied system of education or to hinder its development by a narrow system. We recoil in fear before an authority having such powerful means of action.

We complain because the present society hinders our forward march; we complain because it restrains our aspirations beneath the yoke of its authority. But what would it be like in a society where nothing could be produced unless it was authorised by the State, represented by so-called "commissions of statistics." In such a society, where nothing could be produced except by the will of the State, no new idea would be able to see the light if it did not succeed in obtaining recognition by the State as being of public utility. Now, as all new ideas have to struggle against the ideas that have gone before, this recognition would never be secured as the new idea would be completely crushed out and stifled long before it had any chance of coming before the public. Thus, to take only one example, printing—which up to now has been one of the most effective aids to progress, as it brings human knowledge within the reach of all—would be no longer available for new ideas; for however disinterested those who would form the Collectivist government might be, permit us to doubt that they would carry their self-denial to the point of allowing anything to be printed which attacked their authority; especially as they would only have to give a simple refusal, and they would be able to urge as an excuse that as all the productive forces were fully occupied with the interests of consumption, it would not be right for them to busy themselves with what was not a part of the immediate wants of society.

A LETTER FROM BARCELONA.

(From our Spanish Correspondent).

ALTHOUGH rather late, from causes beyond my power, I wish to speak to you of the 11th of November. This date is in Spain a workers' holy day, and also an occasion for Anarchist demonstrations and propaganda. In all the great cities, and in many country towns, the people commemorate the death of the noble workers, whose martyrdom instead of degrading them, glorified the instrument, at the same time that they view with horror the disgusting and untimely social institutions which now exist. At Barcelona this holy day has had a special solemnity. The great hall of the Palace of Fine Arts, which is estimated to be large enough to contain 12,000 people, was packed with workers and their families, for the announcement of the awards of the jury in the "Certamen Socialista" or Literary Socialist Competition. Such an exhibition of the popularity of the Anarchist idea called forth the surprise of the middle-class and the admiration of the workers, for the middle-class did not believe the enemy to be so numerous and powerful, nor did the workers know that the doctrine by means of which they would be able to raise themselves from the depths of misery and subjection to the heights of their dignity and well-being could show itself to be so strong.

Most enthusiastic and noteworthy meetings have been held also at Madrid, Valencia, Seville, Sabadell, Carme, Capellades, Jativa, Cadiz, Sangervasio de Cassolas, San Martin de Provencals, Gracia, Alcira, Coimbra, etc., etc.

From this it will be seen that Anarchy is very popular in Spain. Perhaps, Spain is the country where it is most popular. In other countries the workers may have shown more revolutionary action, or developed more striking personalities from amongst them, but certainly in no country have the workers shaken off prejudice and tradition so completely as in Spain, in no country have they so thoroughly separated themselves from the middle-class liberal parties. Clerical stupidity has made the only religion here, Catholicism, repugnant to the Spanish workers. In the same way [the effrontery and charlatanism of the politicians, together with the fact that they have all taken part in the government without showing any ability or desire to do anything useful for the people, has disillusionised everybody with the result that the Republican Party is composed almost entirely of chiefs, and is quite apart from the masses of the people. The most radical fraction of the republicans are trying to get their party to adopt a programme, to be carried into effect immediately after the triumph of the Republic, which they think will rally the masses. It consists of the following articles: 1. Disestablishment of the Church. 2. Secular, compulsory and gratuitous education. 3. The State to provide employment for the unemployed worker on Public Works, or to guarantee him a minimum wage sufficient to provide himself and family with necessaries. 4. A law

to protect the worker from the tyranny of capital. A more feeble attempt to get hold of the workers I have never seen. It is an utter waste of time on their part. Political lying promises no longer deceive anyone.

It is certain that monarchy cannot last much longer in Spain, but a capitalist Republic will not be able to succeed it. No, the next movement will be one in which the worker will take part by burning all the title deeds and parliamentary laws and papers, abolishing public offices and officials, and taking possession in a revolutionary sense of all the wealth which the workers have created, so that there will no longer be the possibility of any authoritarian class being constituted. The fact that the bodies of workers who are not Anarchists have no serious and positive ideal contributes to the popularity of Anarchy. The chiefs of these bodies, however, who seek to constitute a workers' State, are stupid nobodies who discredit themselves by their bickerings. For instance, *El Socialista*, the organ of the Marxists of Madrid, and *El Obrero* of Barcelona, which represents the cotton workers of Catalonia, a section of the workers which is always imploring the protection of the middle-class, are now carrying on a most absurd wordy war.

The Anarchist journals of Spain at the present time are *El Productor* of Barcelona, *La Revolucion Social* of Gracia, *El Socialismo* of Cadiz, *La Alarma* of Seville, *La Victima del Trabajo* of Valencia, *El Jornalero* of Alcoy, and *La Voz del Trabajo* of Jativa. Other journals are likely to appear soon.

I salute you fraternally in the name of the Social Revolution and of Anarchy.

NOTES.

Comrade Samuel Pearson writes:—It seems to me that the late strikes have a greater tendency towards Anarchy than, considering the circumstances, might have been expected. The great dock strike was not initiated by any middle-class influence. It started without any previous organisation, a fine example of personal initiative, and, although it ended in a compromise, it taught the workers what determination and courage can do. Strikes are now the order of the day, and in my opinion every revolutionist should encourage them, for they teach the workers to trust to themselves and show up the politicians in their true colours. The Government has plainly shown that in the event of strikes becoming serious, to the extent of damaging trade or interfering with commerce, they would be willing to use the power they possess on the side of the masters. No doubt the workers will be first provoked to use force either against the police or blacklegs, thus turning away public sympathy and giving the police an excuse for batoning the heads of the strikers. Ought we not to point out to the workers that the blacklegs are the product of a bad system? Although social pressure must be used to these men and we are forced to treat them as social lepers unworthy of the companionship of honest men, they are but the tools of our real enemy, private property, and the police are but the hirelings of the Government. Should we not teach the workers if they do use force, to use it only in self-defence? Again attempts are sure to be made by political tricksters to lead the workers away by some political dodge. Already we hear the leaders talking of labour centralisation, labour leagues and parliamentary parties. This is more dangerous to the workers than all the force the Government can use, and it is plainly the duty of every Anarchist to prevent as far as possible these men having anything to do with the workers. The workers have been tricked and fooled so often, that I believe the Anarchist propaganda will soon spread amongst the men. It is evident that strikes are getting more numerous every day, and the workers if left to themselves will soon find they are on the right track. Let us then use what power and energy we have to point out to the workers that it is not by trusting to leaders or looking to parliament, but by trusting to themselves and free organisation without centralisation, that they can hope to conquer the forces arrayed against them.

The West End International Working Men's Progressive Society is the title of an Anarchist group just formed in London, its members consisting of Jewish workers employed in, and living near, Tottenham Court Road. On December 21st this group held an enthusiastic meeting at the Antonomie Club, which was addressed by Tom Pearson (Freedom Group), Wess, Katan, and Feigenbaum.

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