

Freedom

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THE COMMUNE OF PARIS.

Translated from P. Kropotkin's "Words of a Rebel."

THE Commune of 1871 could be nothing but a first attempt. Beginning at the end of a great war, hemmed in between two armies ready to join hands and crush the people, it dared not unhesitatingly set forth upon the path of economic revolution. It neither boldly declared itself Socialist nor proceeded to the expropriation of capital or the organisation of labour. It did not even take stock of the general resources of the city.

Nor did it break with the tradition of the state, of representative government. It did not seek to effect *within* the Commune that very organisation from the simple to the complex which it inaugurated *without* by proclaiming the independence and free federation of communes.

Yet it is certain that if the Commune of Paris had had a few months longer it would inevitably have been driven, by the very nature of things, towards both these revolutions. Let us not forget that the French middle class spent altogether four years in revolutionary action before they changed the constitutional monarchy into a middle-class republic. We ought not to be astonished to see that the people of Paris did not cross with one bound the space dividing Anarchist Communism from the government of the Spoilers. But be assured that the next revolution, which in France and doubtless also in Spain and elsewhere, will be Communistic, will take up the work of the Commune of Paris where it was interrupted by the massacres of Versailles.

Overthrown but not conquered, the Commune revives to-day. It is no longer a dream of the vanquished, caressing in imagination the lovely mirage of hope; No, the "Commune" to-day is becoming the visible and definite aim of the Revolution rumbling beneath our feet. The idea is sinking deep into the masses, it is giving them a rallying cry. We count on the present generation to bring about the social revolution *within* the Commune, to put an end to the ignoble system of middle-class exploitation, to rid the peoples of the tutelage of the State, to inaugurate a new era of liberty, equality, solidarity in the evolution of the human race.

ANARCHY AND LAISSER FAIRE.

A Brief Study on the Use and Abuse of Political Terms.

THE radical error of the whole Collectivist position may, perhaps, be most clearly exhibited by an exposure of the misunderstanding by its supporters of one of the terms most frequently employed in political and social philosophy, and their misapplication of another. The word and the phrase referred to are *anarchy* and "*laissez faire*." Collectivists are never weary of telling us (*vide* Fabian Essays, *passim*) that the state of society at the beginning of this century, when the abuse of the power of property was most unrestricted, was a state of "anarchy," and that we now exist in a condition of modified anarchy. Now what is the meaning of Anarchy? It means absence of rule or restraint. How absurd to say there was no rule or restraint then, and that there is little now! Why, every wage-earner was then under the cruel, complete control of his paymaster, and if things are better now it is only because there is in some respects a diminution of the power of restraint exercised by man over man. But the whole of our society was then, and is still, based upon coercion; every man, from the bottom to the top of the social ladder, is, theoretically at least, under the control of someone else; and with those at the bottom this restraint is no fiction, but a very concrete fact. If, then, the word Anarchy be used in its proper sense of no government, all that the Collectivist can mean is that one class (the propertied class) escapes being actually governed, and that that which is distinctively called the Government does not really govern this class. It is a wonder that this sublime discovery did not suggest further reflections on the nature of all government, and a suspicion at least of the truth that individuals and classes may *organise, regulate, and direct* themselves, but generally prefer to *govern* somebody else. However, I suspect that most Collectivists do not trouble themselves much about derivations, or, indeed, definitions, being mostly persons of not very precise habits of thought, and that they mean nothing more by the word Anarchy than disorganisation or confusion; and of this it may be

readily acknowledged there is plenty, both in the society of to-day and in the ideas of its Collectivist critics. Perhaps, however, this is taking too charitable a view of the case, as the employment of the word now in one sense and now in another, always according to convenience, by certain writers, would seem at the second glance to be less suggestive of simplicity than of something else.

This leads one to the next term, "*laissez faire*." Here it is not a misunderstanding of the word that misleads our friends the Social Democrats (or, at any rate, misleads their hearers and readers), but a misapplication due to the misunderstanding of another term, or rather of the thing itself which the other term signifies. What can be more absurd than to say that we are too much let alone? From the cradle to the grave we are never let alone. If, when starving, you steal a loaf of bread—nay, if you throw up your work in certain industries without a week's notice, you are put in prison. The fact is that while a struggle is going on between two opposing classes, the *haves* and the *have-nots*, the Government interferes usually now, and interfered always a hundred years ago, against the one, and not against the other. There is (or was) no "*laissez faire*" when a poor man commits an offence against property, only when a rich man commits an offence against labour.

Thus the phrase "*laissez faire*" is misused, and the misuse is due to a misunderstanding of what government is. Government is supposed to be something exalted above all partiality, a kind of God Almighty of human affairs (if even God Almighty, at least in the opinion of those whose profession it is to know most about him and his political prejudices, can be said to be strictly impartial in a dispute between a rich man and one who does not wear a good coat). Now occasionally, *very occasionally*, a dictator or even an hereditary king or emperor, may be thus exalted, a David, a Marcus Aurelius, or to some extent a Frederick the Great. But a class Government *never*. It is merely the committee of its class, and its activity is confined, naturally enough, to interfering in its own interests and against those of outsiders. Obviously, then, "*laissez faire*" means that the class Government lets its class alone, and interferes only with those who offend against that class.

But why, then, this growth (an undeniable fact) of interference on behalf of the poor against the rich? Nothing can be more simple. The electorate has been extending, the majority changing, and what was once a purely class Government, and represented only the privileged class, has now become an anomalous and self-destructive thing, a mixed Government, representing a mixed electorate. Poor Government! It does not know now whom or what it represents, or, indeed, whether it is a Government at all. The rich have put it there to govern the poor, and the poor have put it there to govern the rich. Let us here pause, as we can well afford to do, to shed one passing tear of pity for the perplexities of "statesmen" and the infirmities of the poor old decrepit thing which, in its vigorous youth, we knew and loved or hated more or less, under the name of Government! It is a venerable old fraud; may it die easy—and soon—and sleep soundly in the tomb.

Meanwhile, what can it do? Not knowing any longer whom it represents, it has begun to interfere in a muddle-headed way on both sides! What? A dock strike! Upwards of 20,000 men out! Here is a clear case for interference on behalf of our poorer masters and electors! But too much of this won't do; we are becoming unpopular with our wealthier supporters, and we are—save the mark!—a Conservative Government, though we did create the County Councils. A god-send! A gas strike! Only a comparatively small number of men out, and popular opinion clearly against those few! Here is our chance to strike a blow for our wealthier supporters. No pickets allowed!

Poor Government! You are getting old, and you did well to *make your will* and appoint your successor and heir—the County Councils. And it will be for us Anarchists to see that they, in their turn, display the same dialectic process of self-destruction as soon as possible, for it is only a matter of time.

To sum up, the present writer at least believes that the Collectivists have seen part of the truth; the fact of the immediate future will no doubt be the increase of the *functions* of moribund government (on the part, most likely, of the County Councils). But Government, in increasing its functions, will destroy its centralised power, and ultimately its very existence. It will be like a man who commits suicide by excessive labour. The last stage of its evolution will be accompanied by a corresponding devolution; and, like all partial and imperfect things, having once displayed its many self-contradictions, it will go to pieces, and make place for the fuller and wider conception destined to destroy and at the same time to absorb it—the Freedom of Man.

JOHN EVELYN BARLAS.

THE LADY FROM THE SEA.

A FIFTH play by the great Anarchist poet Henrik Ibsen, is before the English public. "The Lady from the Sea" * was published in Norwegian in 1888, and this Christmas appeared in English, translated by Mrs. Eleanor Marx-Aveling.

In this, as in the other prose dramas as yet translated, Ibsen stands forth as the uncompromising champion of freedom, the fearless enemy of the spirit of domination in every shape and form. His plays deal with varied aspects of life, bring a succession of different moral problems before his readers: they are masterly character studies, masterly realistic pictures of special social phases and special psychological conditions. Yet running through all this artistic diversity, underlying all this deep sympathetic understanding of the many-sidedness of human nature, the inextricable complexity of existence, there is a unity of purpose in all Ibsen writes—a clearly-defined moral attitude which is the very essence of all he has created.

This poet, who during a long life has suffered the indifference and neglect, the misunderstanding and contempt with which the world greets its original thinkers; this master of irony, with his keen perception of human folly, his profound insight into human weakness, stands forth, pre-eminent in an age of scepticism for his reverence for Man, his ardent faith in the moral sanity of human nature. In his eyes the coercion of a human soul is sacrilege, the one unpardonable sin which nature never ceases to avenge. We have been occupied in the past—many of us are still occupied—and with good cause—in warring against oppressive forms and institutions, against the open tyranny of despots and ruling classes. Ibsen leads the vanguard of those who go deeper and carry the same warfare into the subtle region of the spirit. He has devoted himself to tracing out and gibbeting before the world the secret evils wrought by moral pressure, the disastrous effects of the shackles imposed on the healthy spontaneous impulses of the mind by the tyranny of the "compact majority," by public opinion, by the dead weight of custom, the ghosts of outworn conventions and unreal relationships; in a word by conventional morality and the rule of the crowd. No writer of our time realises more intensely the solidarity of mankind, the great truth that no action, no thought, no feeling is isolated or self-regarding. And yet, whatever the difficulty of the situation, however serious the decision, Ibsen never shrinks from his faith that the road to moral health, to the only true association, lies through absolute freedom. Not, of course, the absurd "unconditioned freedom" of schoolboy fancy, the individual acting in a vacuum. But the individual thinking and acting in his own natural medium, limited only by the inevitable conditions of nature, not by the arbitrary interference of other people deliberately seizing upon or pressing upon his life in the attempt to fashion it after their nature not his. The desire for such freedom, for such reverence from its fellows, is the inmost yearning of every human soul. In proportion as such freedom is denied, the soul is unhealthy, therefore hurtful. All attempts to solve the difficulties and complexities of life together by moral coercion, whether it is exercised by individual selfishness or in the name of social welfare, can only end in producing conflict, mental distortion, the death of the soul. With the loss of a sense of personal, individual responsibility, founded on a sense of personal individual freedom, all is lost. From this point of view, "The Lady from the Sea," is the most interesting, because the most daring, of Ibsen's translated dramas. In it he has not scrupled to create a situation where every social envelope is stripped off and to carry his principle without compromise into the innermost sanctuary of the most delicate personal relations; and this in the case of an abnormal undeveloped individual, in an overstrained and morbid mental condition, an "irresponsible person," whom the world in general would consider entirely unfit to think or act for herself.

Ellida, the lighthouse-keeper's daughter, born and nurtured amid the play of the roaring waves, is a creature of the ocean, a child of the elemental forces of nature. Her impulses come and go like the ebb and flow of the tide. She does not reason; she feels and sees mental pictures, which take hold on her as abstract ideas upon a more developed intellect. When she is transplanted by her marriage to the conventional society of an inland town her whole nature sickens, her feelings assume a morbid intensity, her mental pictures become torturing visions. Her husband is Dr. Wrangel the town physician. Two years after the death of his first wife, his fancy had been caught by Ellida's strange charm; carried away by the emotional excitement of a strong attraction of the senses, he told himself that it was highly desirable to provide his girls with a second mother, and Ellida, helpless, bewildered, utterly alone in the lighthouse after her father's death, accepted his offer to provide for her. "You came out there and bought me," she told him six years after. "Oh, I was not a bit better than you. I accepted the bargain. Sold myself to you!"

It is with the close of these six years that the play opens. During all this time Ellida has dwelt apart in her husband's house as a creature of another species. His elder daughter regards her with cold dislike; the lively Hilde with a romantic devotion, piqued by her stepmother's gentle indifference into an affectation of hoydenish rudeness. Since the birth of her baby, who lived but a few months, Ellida has broken off all marriage relations with her husband and sunk into a state of nervous excitability, incomprehensible to him and every one else. Wrangel is generous, unworldly, intelligent; a man of weak character, but kind-hearted and affectionate. He can learn by experience, admit himself in

the wrong and ignore Mrs. Grundy. Ellida's strange suffering and continual need for forbearance and tender consideration, so far from alienating him, have gradually changed his selfish passion into a devoted love. He is ready to do anything to help her. In despair of relieving her growing distress, and remorseful for his thoughtless selfishness in transplanting her to a life for which she is unfit, he proposes to give up everything and take her to live on the sea shore and sends for a man whom he fancies she has once loved, thinking that perhaps she still cares for him and that to see him may do her good.

But when at last Ellida speaks out Wrangel learns that once long ago she had betrothed herself, not to the commonplace, good-natured Arnholm but to an unknown Finnish sailor, a creature of the sea like herself, whose wild magnetic personality had completely fascinated her imagination. To her this stranger seemed a living embodiment of the terror and attraction of the sea. Whilst she was with him she felt herself one with him and her native element; when he was gone, she realised that she had absolutely no human love for him. She wrote to break her betrothal, he ignored her desire and still wrote to her as to a wife. For a long time she has heard nothing of him, but he still retains his magnetic grasp of her imagination. For three years she has continually seen him as if standing before her and—most terrible of all—the baby boy she lost seemed to her to have the strange changing eyes of the Finn.

Whilst Wrangel is still shocked by the discovery of the full extent of Ellida's mental disorder, the Finn reappears, and calmly ignoring her legal marriage of which he has been aware for three years, claims her as his promised bride; she must decide whether she will go with him when his ship sails to-morrow night, but if she goes it must be "freely."

"Freely"; in this word Ellida at last finds a key to the vague misery which is torturing her soul. Now she knows what she needs and can explain her suffering. Their marriage, she tells Wrangel, is no marriage, never has been from the beginning; it was a bargain and she demands to be loosed from it. Is it a legal divorce then that she wishes, asks poor Wrangel in extreme distress. No, "such outer things matter little, I think," she tells him. "What I want is that we should of our own free will release each other." "Cry off the bargain?" says Wrangel bitterly. "Exactly," returns Ellida and she wishes to cry it off at once, to-day, before the Finn returns. She must decide between the two courses open to her in perfect freedom; she will not hide behind the fact of her marriage. Wrangel desperately resists this infatuation. She is not mentally fit to decide the fate of her whole life in this mad fashion. She confesses the terrible attraction "the man who is like the sea" still exercises, an attraction which is a horror to herself. "I dare not set you free and release you to-day," he says, "I have no right to. No right for your own sake. I exercise my right and my duty to protect you."

Ellida: "Protect? What is there to protect me from? I am not threatened by any outward power. The terror lies deeper, Wrangel. The terror is—the attraction in my own mind. And what can you do against that?" And again, when her strange lover returns and Wrangel attempts to drive him away, she bursts out:

"Wrangel, let me tell you this—tell it you so that he may hear it. You can indeed keep me here! You have the means and the power to do it. And you intend to do it. But my mind—all my thoughts, all the longings and desires of my soul—these you cannot bind! These will rush and press out into the unknown that I was created for, and that you have kept from me!"

In the agony of the crisis Wrangel rises to his true self; the last traces of selfish passion melt from his soul, he sees nothing but Ellida in her utmost need and that he himself with his personal claims, is standing in the way of her possible deliverance. He sees that the instinctive mental struggle against arbitrary restraint which is going on within her is absorbing all her faculties, darkening her understanding, clouding her judgment, just when she needs her whole mental and moral force to decide the matter before her upon its own intrinsic merits. Probably she does not love this Finn; possibly it is only the reaction from the unnatural constraint of her daily life which makes the proposal to go away with him into the unknown attractive. Once free from the mental shackles and gnawing irritation of her enforced relation to himself, her own instincts, her own moral sense will be her guide; whether she goes or not, she will decide according to needs of her own nature. And it is of her only that he thinks. All the hopes and dreams of years, of their life together, of her aid and influence in the training of his girls, are banished for ever. She must feel herself entirely free to make a fresh start in life on her own initiative. Hardly he permits himself the hope that she will still let him be her friend and helper.

"No other deliverance is possible for you," he exclaims. "I at least can see no other. And so I cry off the bargain at once. Now you can choose your own path in perfect—perfect freedom."

Ellida: "Is it true—true what you say? Do you mean that—mean it with all your heart?"

Wrangel: "Yes—with all my sorrowing heart—I mean it."

Ellida: "And can you do it? Can you let it be so?"

Wrangel: "Yes, I can. Because I love you so dearly."

Ellida: "And have I come so near—so close to you?"

Wrangel: "The years and the living together have done that."

Ellida: "And I—who so little understood this!"

Wrangel: "Your thoughts went elsewhere. And now—now you are completely free of me and mine—and—mine. Now your true life may resume its real bent again, for now you can choose in freedom, and on your own responsibility, Ellida."

* "The Lady from the Sea," by Henrik Ibsen; translated by E. Marx-Aveling. Cameo Series. Fisher Unwin. 3s. 6d.

Ellida: "In freedom, and on my own responsibility! Responsibility, too? That changes everything."

Wrangel's self-devotion is rewarded. He has the unutterable satisfaction of seeing *Ellida's* mind regain its balance when the disturbing pressure is removed, like a spring that has been tied down and is liberated. Thrown upon her own responsibility, she looks into her own soul for guidance. True to her deepest instincts, she dismisses once and for all the lover whom she does not truly love; the morbid charm of the life he offered is broken and gone. "I begin to understand little by little," says Wrangel, afterwards. "You think and conceive in pictures, in visible figures. Your longing and aching for the sea, your attraction towards this strange man, these were the expression of an awakening and growing desire for freedom; nothing else."

Ellida is herself again; more than her old girlish self; she is now a woman with developed mind and feeling. She has gradually learnt to trust Wrangel, to lean on him as a friend during their unhappy past; his generous and unselfish conduct in the crisis of her fate rouses her admiration, her gratitude, her enthusiasm; to his boundless surprise and joy he sees that her heart is opening to him and to his children as never before, that it is himself whom she will love, his life that she will choose to share.

Such in barest outline is the central situation of "The Lady from the Sea," but in a work where every line is rich with meaning and every character full of reality and life, such a faint sketch is but an injustice. For the rest we refer our readers to Ibsen himself.

NOTES.

The Failure of Laws.

Few people, we suppose, trouble much to watch the working of Acts of Parliament; yet, if a list could be kept to record their failures, it would perhaps damp the ardour for political action of some of our Democratic comrades. Here are two instances taken from the *Daily News* of January 9th:—

"The West Riding County Council have virtually confessed themselves baffled in their efforts to get to the bottom of the mystery of lead poisoning at Mirfield and adjacent districts."

"Mr. Helmer, Inspector of Food and Drugs for South Derbyshire, has grave doubts whether the Margarine Act affords any protection against the adulteration of butter. Unfortunately, his reasons are only too cogent."

It would be in vain to ask the price these failures have cost the country. However, we must remember that, were Acts of Parliament successful, the occupation of Government would be gone.

Solidarity amongst the Workers.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for November, 1886, the Rev. Samuel S. Barnett, after remarking that it is a mystery how the poor manage to live at all, continues:—

"One solution is that there exists among these irregular workers a kind of Communism. They prefer to occupy the same neighbourhoods, and make long journeys to work rather than go to live among strangers. They easily borrow and easily lend. The women spend much time in gossiping, know intimately one another's affairs, and in times of trouble help willingly. One couple, whose united earnings have never reached 15s. a week, whose home has never been more than one small room, has brought up in succession three orphans."

What Socialists Want.

A member of a North London Radical Club, in taking part in a discussion following a Socialist lecture, defined the Socialist programme after this fashion:—"These Socialists want to annihilate everything, and then hand it over to the Anarchists." We imagine this gentleman must be a leader-writer on the *Globe*.

Nevertheless, leaving inclinations out of the question, he may have been nearer the truth than he imagined. Is not Social Democracy actually engaged in driving the wedge of destruction into the present order of things that Communist Anarchism may have a chance to build up a better?

RUSSIA.

THE horrible massacre of political prisoners in Siberia, which we mentioned last month, has been followed by still more ghastly atrocities on the part of the officials of the Russian Government.

Our Russian correspondent writes: A letter has arrived from Kara, Eastern Siberia, stating the main facts of an occurrence in the convict prison there. The information is so far very scanty, but authentic.

In November last Nadyezhda Sigida, one of the female political convicts, struck a prison official in the face; under what provocation is not yet known. As a punishment Madame Sigida was stripped and flogged by the soldiers. After this she and one of her fellow-prisoners, Madame Marya Kovalyevsky, committed suicide by poisoning themselves. It is reported that five or six of the female prisoners have poisoned themselves, but this is not yet positively known, though there is reason to believe it.

The other prisoners then revolted and a message was sent to Tschita, the chief town of the province, asking the governor to come. He at first sent off a body of gendarmerie, saying that they were competent to reduce the prisoners to submission, but afterwards set out for Kara in person.

Nothing more is known as yet, but further details are expected soon. This is the first time in the history of the Nihilist movement that a woman has been flogged.

Comment is superfluous.

It seems that the wholesale robbery which every year deprives the Russian peasants of their winter provisions and even of their seed corn to pay the exorbitant taxes laid on each Commune by the Central Government, has produced more disastrous results than usual this season. Already there is a famine in the Volga district and the villagers are wandering over the country in starving bands, begging for morsels to keep body and soul together. The Government, after reducing the peasants to this condition by taking from them all they possess, has sent a paltry relief fund of £40,000; a mere drop in the bucket, even if it ever arrives in the hungry districts; but probably most of it has stuck on the way, to the hands of officials and contractors, and a few sacks of mouldy grain will be all that will reach the destitute men, women and children.

Since the American journalist and traveller, George Kennan, has described in the *Century* magazine the results of his careful and detailed explanation of Siberian convict prisons and the life of the political exiles sent by hundreds to that desolate country without even the pretence of a trial, a society has been formed in America to protest in the name of humanity against the barbarous treatment of political prisoners and exiles by the Russian Government. The society proposes "to circulate intelligence on the subject" and thus to bring the public opinion of the civilised world to bear on the authors of these atrocities. Such deeds of darkness cannot for very shame be performed in the broad glare of publicity.

A similar society, called "The Friends of Russian Freedom," has just been started in England. A circular describing its aims has been issued by Dr. Spence Watson of Gateshead-on-Tyne, Thomas Burt, and W. P. Byles; also two pamphlets giving accurate details of the massacre at Yakutsk and of the flogging of political prisoners on the island of Saghalien. Some of these circulars and pamphlets have been forwarded to us for distribution and will be sent *gratis* to any one who writes for them to *Freedom*, Labour Press, 57 Chancery Lane, W.C.

INDIVIDUAL OR COMMON PROPERTY.

A DISCUSSION.

COMMON property is advocated only by those who believe the present evil condition of society is due to individual property. If, therefore, it can be shown that individual property is compatible with universal prosperity, that the present condition of society is not the result of private ownership *per se*, but of monopoly, and that if monopoly is destroyed the ideal society of both Individualists and Communists will be attained, then there is no longer any reason why common property should be advocated as a cure for the miseries of the human race.

What is Communism? According to one Communist-Anarchist, "the Communists demand that the means of production shall be accessible to all, and that the products shall not be taken from those who produce them" (Malato, "Philosophie de l'Anarchie," page 42). But this is precisely what the Individualist-Anarchists demand. Another Anarchist-Communist, writing in *Freedom* (August) 1888, says: "Communism is the abolition of the idea of property, of ownership altogether." Very well. That is the extreme Communist position. Let us see whither it leads us.

To-day we are in revolt against a thoroughly dishonest system of society. The worker performs certain work, and is robbed of the result by various fraudulent means which we designate generally under the term exploitation. It is this exploitation which especially rouses our indignation against the present system. If the idlers were starving and miserable, we should doubtless feel very sorry for them, and strive to help them; yet we should recognise that they alone were to blame. But it is because it is the industrious who are in this position we feel it is so unjust that we desire with all our hearts to destroy such a corrupt, dishonest system. But what does Communism propose? Evidently that the same dishonest system should be maintained, but in another form, that the idlers should live upon the workers precisely as at present, but that it should be a different idler. It may be said that such a definition of Communism is incorrect; but if it is not correct, what becomes of the distinction between the ideal of Communist and Individualist Anarchism? It is simply a confusion in the use of language. If Communism means an exchange of services, it is practically the same thing as an exchange of products. If Communism means that the producer shall only share his produce with those who share their produce with him, it is only Individualism under another name. If he is to share with those who do not produce as well as those who do produce, it is the exploitation of the producers by the non-producers—the very thing we most strongly object to in the society of the present.

It is said you cannot tell exactly how much of a product is due to one man's effort, and, therefore, you cannot tell what is his fair share. Of course not. Absolute exactitude in dividing the results of labour is an impossibility; but this precision has never been proposed. It is only desired to be approximately just. To quote the words of Jehan Le Vagre (*Freedom*, January, 1890), "it can only be arranged by friendly agreement amongst all the workers."

We are Free Communists, says Tom Pearson. But what does he mean by Free Communism? "I detest Communism," says Bakounine, "because it is the negation of liberty." Now, if Communism means that I have a perfect right to take to my own use the product of another man's labour, or that another man has an equal right to appropriate the product of my labour because he fancies he is more in want of it than I am, it is emphatically "the negation of liberty"; it is certainly not "free." Does Pearson mean Communism in this latter sense, or does he simply mean that a number of persons may agree to live together in a Communist group and share their possessions? If the latter, certainly no Individualist-Anarchist would object; but even in this Communist group it is hardly likely that the idler would be welcomed as a member, so that it resolves itself into an association in which exactitude in the division of products is not practised, and probably after the revolution very many associations will be managed in this way. But this is not at all Communism in the sense the mass of the people understand it—the sense in which it arouses the opposition of those we Anarchists seek to bring over to our side, and to help us in effecting the Revolution. As confidence in each other increases amongst the people, exactitude in exchange will gradually die out without the slightest necessity for our urging its advantages. It is so much easier to be inexact than exact; it saves the labour of computation and bargaining, and is in every way superior to the precise system when you have confidence in your fellows. Men and women will gradually fall into it unthinkingly, until that genuine Communism which really means service for service will be in full swing. But this ideal state of society can only be the result of a gradual growth. In the beginning it will only be within the groups, and afterwards it will extend until the whole society is leavened. In some districts it will be more advanced than in others, and it will always, at bottom, be an exchange of services, and not something for nothing. And, as Malato points out on page 51 of his work, the articles of personal use will remain private property; it will always be possible to say "my" comb and brush, "my" pencil, "my" newspaper.

But how about the sick and helpless, it may be said; they cannot give an exchange of services, what will become of them? Is it necessary to ask? Can we imagine that in the future state of society they will not be considered and their wants supplied by virtue of their helplessness? It is scarcely probable that even the idle will be allowed to want. But let us clearly understand that there is something of the nature of charity in supplying these wants, and that it is optional with the worker whether he supplies them or not; that the product is his by virtue of his labour, theirs through his will. And this must inevitably be true, whatever we may call our future system of society.

Admitting that this inexact exchange of services which I have called Communism is the highest form of human society, it appears to me a mistake to advocate it now, because it must come of itself; it cannot be forced, and an attempt to establish Communism right away would be to force the matter. The work of the rebel against the present order is to demand the full fruits of his labour for the worker, and to throw light upon the iniquitous processes which prevent the worker from obtaining his product.

The coming Social Revolution will not be the establishment of Communism, which must be a gradual process, but the knocking off of the chains from the workers, the destruction of monopoly and tyranny. It will be the expropriation of the rich, because the rich have no just title to the wealth they monopolise. Tarn says a watch and chain are his because he possesses them. I cannot recognise that statement as a just claim to possession. Did he work for them, or have them presented to him by one who gave labour in exchange for them? If so I will admit they are his; but if he got them without labour, direct or indirect, they are unpaid labour; it is a dishonest appropriation. I cannot recognise a claim to land, but I can recognise a claim to the potatoes grown upon it, to the house built upon it, etc. I cannot recognise a claim to iron in the earth, but I can recognise the claim of the man who brings it to the surface, or of him who fashions it into a tool. And I think most workers see things something after the same fashion. The other day a worker, treasurer of a new labour union, stole £40 from the men who trusted him, the results of their labour. That, in my eyes, was a crime, a dastardly act. If he had taken the same amount from Carnegie or Vanderbilt, it would simply have been a transfer from one person without right to it to another person also without right to it.

The Social Revolution will be an Anarchist Revolution, and its motto will be, The land to the labourer, the mine to the miner, the tools to the toiler, the produce to the producer. It will be the liquidation of the bourgeois society, and the title to ownership will be work. Pearson says wealth will be plentiful after the Revolution, and he is right. But then why need we trouble to demand that it shall be common property? Kropotkine has said that with things of which there are a plenty people may help themselves, but for the things which are scarce he proposes a system of rationing. But surely this is artificial and unanarchistic. Why not let the producer of the scarce things do what he pleases with them? Surely he has the most right to them.

Socialists have often pointed out that in reality men are very equal in ability, and that if it were not for the artificial hindrances to development, it would be difficult to find men much superior in working ability to their fellows. Then why do we advocate Communism? All we have to do is to remove the artificial hindrances, the stumbling-blocks in men's path, and Communism will establish itself independently of our efforts. Let us take away the support of the State from the landlord, the capitalist, the inventor, the author, etc., and what happens? The people, refusing to recognise the landlord's claim to monopolise land, pay no more rent for the land they require, and the landlord becomes a

worker like the rest; refusing to recognise the monopoly, and consequent tyranny, of capital, they refuse to pay interest, and force the money lord to work for his living; refusing to recognise the claims of inventors and authors to monopolise ideas, whilst leaving to those persons the full result of their labour in the first use of their particular ideas, they no longer allow the inventor to use his ideas to the injury of the general public, as is the case now, or the author to overcharge them for the facts, etc., he has obtained from them. With reference to the author and inventor, it may be noticed that to-day their rights are limited by time; with the death of law they would be limited to first use, which would amply repay them for their trouble.

Doubtless the few remarks I have offered to this discussion would be improved by greater elaboration, but considerations of space compel me to confine myself more to suggesting lines of thought to my fellow-Anarchists than to fully working out the subject. However, I hope to return to the subject again after others have taken part in the discussion. Meanwhile, permit me to sign myself

N'IMPORTE QUI.

ANARCHISM IN NORWAY.

(From our Norwegian correspondent.)

THE social movement has gone rapidly forward. Last autumn the Socialists of Kristiania organised a great strike among the girls in the match factories of that city, and this strike swept our country like a gale of wind, sound and fresh. Money came from every part of the country, and the leaders held meetings at which ten and twenty thousand people were present. Naturally this extensive propaganda made many Socialists. The Socialist leaders of Kristiania are not State Socialists, but they believe that we have to go through a Social Democratic society before we can get into the Anarchist community. Of the same opinion are the Socialists of Bergen. But we Anarchists are making propaganda as much as ever and our paper *Fedrahiemen* is spreading more and more over the country. In Kristiania a revolutionary society bearing the name of *Fram* (Forward) has been started. One of the leaders is now in prison, because he used strong words against the Parliament. In Trondhjem the Anarchists at present are not organised, but there are a good many of them. In Bergen a young lady is doing private propaganda, and your correspondent is now doing his best for our cause at Voss, where on a recent Saturday he made a speech about the Anarchist movement in the Society of the Young Students. Maybe an Anarchist group will be organised soon. The three following weeks we discussed Anarchism and I believe with good results for our cause. In Sweden the movement is only State Socialistic, and the Anarchists there have not yet their own paper, which is the first necessity for doing propaganda. In Denmark the Social-Democratic organisation is so powerful that hardly any one dares oppose it. What we are in need of in Norway is Anarchistic literature. Comrades who may have books and papers to spare, would do good by sending me Anarchist books and pamphlets for translation. My address is: Arne Dybfest, Voss, Norway. Perhaps next month I shall be able to give in *Freedom* a better account of the movement and propaganda done.

THE PROPAGANDA.

WALSALL.—Kropotkine addressed an attentive audience here on the 4th Feb. on "Social Problems." Good sale of *Freedom* and "The Wage System." He also visited the lately started Socialist Club, which is proving a useful centre for the gathering of comrades and friends.

HAMMERSMITH.—Albert Tarn opened a discussion on "Anarchy v. State Socialism" on February 8th, with very satisfactory results.

ATHENÆUM HALL, GOWER STREET.—Walter Neilson gave an excellent lecture on the 9th February, in which he ably advocated an Anarchist Condition of Society, denounced authority in every form, and dealt with the objections brought forward by Lynton, Walker, and other Social Democrats. Our comrade was supported by Tom Pearson in an admirable speech. There are quite a number of Anarchists in this district, and we hope shortly to have to record the formation of a strong St. Pancras Group of Anarchist-Communists.

NOTICES.

Freedom Discussion Meetings.—We hope to resume these this month. Comrade Kropotkine will open the first discussion. Look out for place and date amongst the advertisements in *Justice* and the *Commonweal*.

Want of space compels us to hold over the continuation of "Society on the Morrow of the Revolution," until next month.

Publication Fund.—H. G. 10s.; R. G., 1s. 8d.; A friend, 1s.; Sale of a bedstead, 15s.

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