

LIBERTY



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Vol. III., No. 7.

July, 1896

ONE PENNY.

W. M. ROME

LONDON

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST WORKERS' AND TRADE UNION CONGRESS.

Anarchist and Anti-Parliamentary Committee.

A Mass Welcome Meeting

Will be held in the Holborn Town Hall,
Gray's Inn Road, W.C., on TUESDAY,
JULY 28th, to which all delegates are invited
to attend.

The following have consented to speak: P. Kropotkin, Elisee Reclus, Amilcare Cipriani, Domela Nieuwenhuis, Pietro Gori, Louise Michel, A. Hamon, Bernard Lazare, Keir Hardie, Tom Mann, Touzeau Parris, J. Tochetti, Frank Kitz, H. H. Duncan, Alfred Barton, T. Caplan, J. C. Kenworthy, G. Landauer, A. Pavlowitch, and C. Cornelissen.

Doors open at 7 p.m., begin at 7.30.

We appeal to all comrades and sympathisers to assist us financially in defraying the expenses incurred for the above meeting. Subscriptions should be sent to J. Perry, 7, Lamb's Conduit Street, Theobald's Road, W.C.

NOTICE.—From July 24th, the COMMUNIST CLUB, 57, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Square, W.C., will be open to all comrades, and more especially to delegates attending the forthcoming International Congress, which place they can make their rendezvous.

"LIBERTY" is a journal of Anarchist-Communism; but articles on all phases of the Revolutionary movement will be freely admitted, provided they are worded in suitable language. No contributions should exceed one column in length. The writer over whose signature the article appears is alone responsible for the opinions expressed, and the Editor in all matters reserves to himself the fullest right to reject any article.

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LIBERTY,
LONDON, JULY, 1896.

ANARCHISTS AT PAST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESSES.

BRUSSELS, 1891; ZURICH, 1893.

The resolutions of the Paris International Congress of 1889 on international labour legislation etc. were destined to be so much waste paper; only the appeal for an annual Mayday demonstration made its way round the world, and, on May 1st 1890, created some stir in almost every country. If we except Austria where large strikes, followed by massacres of strikers, preceded Mayday of 1890 and where on that day, in 1890, the workers struck work nearly in the whole country, in all other countries where social democracy is strongest, the demonstration was restricted to meetings in the evening or on the following Sunday, to deputations sent to representative bodies, etc.: on the other hand, the revolutionary socialists of the old "Socialist League" held the first Mayday meeting in Hyde Park, the Catalonian workers in and round Barcelona, at the instance

of the Anarchists, struck work and maintained for weeks an almost general yet unsuccessful strike for the eight hours' day, and at Paris and in the French provinces anarchists held meetings or published appeals which led to many persecutions and condemnations, e.g., the arrest of Merlino, the exile of Louise Michel, etc.

In 1891, the Mayday demonstrations were diminishing; they took the form of labour festivals or excursions, with the exception of Rome and Italy in general, roused by the anarchist propaganda of Cipriani and many others (arrested at the time and tried many months afterwards at Rome)—and of Paris where the comrades of Clichy boldly stood their ground against the attack of the police (which led to the trial of Decamps, Bardare and Leveille, who were revenged in the year following by Ravachol). The massacre of Fourmies (North of France) must also be mentioned: this was revenged by the election of a genuine son-in-law of Karl Marx, Mr. P. Lafargue, into the French parliament!

After these events, the International Congress met at Brussels on August 16, 1891. This time, the leaders had arranged to exclude anarchists altogether. The delegates of three Brussels groups demanded admission; Jean Volders, the Belgian leader (recently deceased) replied: "All associations and groups which accept the principle of organisation and State interference were invited to the Congress; the Congress shall discuss questions involving political action to which the anarchists are hostile; we form a socialist party which has nothing in common with anarchy." Hence the Belgian delegates proposed the exclusion of Anarchists from the Congress and this resolution was adopted unanimously.

On the day following, Comrade Merlino demanded admission as the delegate of two Italian trade unions. The chairman, Anseele, of Paris fame, refused to admit him because he held Anarchist opinions; still in virtue of his trade union mandates he was admitted.

The next day the Congress reversed the decision to admit Anarchist trade union delegates by refusing the admission of Fernandez Ramos, a Spanish anarchist who held the mandates of 54 Spanish trade unions of about 10,000 members. His admission was combated by P. Iglesias, the Marxist henchman of Spain, a man who grew old in the work of calumny and telling lies; nearly twenty years ago, in 1872, he was one of those who sided with Lafargue when the latter played the role of a traitor against the Anarchist Alliance of Spain, and ever since he has been the chief of what used to be called the "microscopical party" of intriguers against the Spanish Anarchists—the chief of the clique of perpetual candidates for parliament; he is still at that game, but not yet elected; he is, with regard to Spain, about what—according to G. B. Shaw—the Bloomsbury Socialist Society is with regard to England—about the only foothold the Marxist clique managed to get, thanks to all these years of self-advertising and intriguing. Yet German and French Marxists pretend to believe whatever this man says, and at his bidding the Spanish trade unionist had to leave the Congress.

Merlino was also got rid of. Being expelled from Belgium he attended the Congress under another name. These facts were talked about so indiscreetly that the police recognised and arrested him. He had to leave immediately for London.

Under these conditions the Anarchists gave up all connection with this Congress, and held a large public meeting on August 22nd, which was addressed by Pintelon, Wysman, Ramos, etc.

The Congress frittered away the week in talking about what nobody now has any remembrance of, save one point—the military strike, raised by Domela Nieuwenhuis and fiercely combatted by Liebknecht, the big German party of 1,500,000 voters backing out as usual when serious action was expected—like a real 1st of May demonstration, a general strike, propaganda, etc. At that time Bebel used to deliver speeches exalting a Russian war as a mission of civilisation, and voices were heard in the Socialist press hoping, after a victorious war, for the advent of Socialism to power! In that year also the head of "scientific" Socialism, F. Engels, emitted his famous prophecy that in 1898 Socialism would be triumphant. Two months after the Brussels Congress the German Independent

Socialists—who at that time were not Anarchist—were expelled from the party at the Congress of Erfurt.

On the Zurich Congress of 1893 space allows me to say but little, and some comment has been given upon it in G. B. Shaw's article in last month's *LIBERTY*. The "Commonweal" (Nos. 9, 10, 12) and "Freedom" of 1893 should also be consulted; every word of these reports would have to be reprinted here if we were to give but a feeble idea of the amount of trickery, brutality and reactionary tendencies disgracing the official Congress, managed by the permanent Marxist clique, of whom G. B. Shaw then said that "Far from being able to conduct the affairs of a social democratic republic, they had shown themselves incapable of managing a country post-office."

A previous conference held at Brussels had proposed the admission of "all trade societies and of those Socialist parties and groups which recognise the necessity of the organisation of the workers and of political action." The Congress began to discuss this proposition. Most of the French pleaded for omitting the recognition of "political action", supported by the editor of the Berlin "Socialist" and Ch. W. Mowbray; on the other side, Mr. Hunter Watts claimed the repudiation of anarchist delegates who were not trade unionists, and a French Marxist said: "Those who call themselves anarchists to-day are either muddleheads or 'agents provocateurs' (police agents.) Then "Bebel's rule" was proposed, defining political action as "making use of or trying to conquer the political rights and the machinery of legislation for the purpose of advancing the proletariat, and of conquering political power." Bebel made a long speech full of insults against Anarchists and Independent Socialists. After long wranglings, and when nobody seemed to know whether a vote had already been taken or not, this amendment of Bebel's was adopted by the votes of the delegates of Germany (except the Independents), Australia (that is one Italian emigrant, Sceusa, once an Anarchist, a renegade now), Bulgaria (two students, more rabid Marxists than Marx himself ever was), Italy (swarming over with Milanese delegates, where a knot of Marxists exists), Denmark (two delegates, one of the tails of the German party), America (that is Abraham Cahan, Daniel de Leon, and L. Sanial, of New York), Roumania (five Bucharest Socialists), Russia (Mr. Plechanoff alone, the author of the famous refutation of Anarchism), Servia (one delegate from Belgrad), Norway (one from Christiania), Hungary (ten delegates, dependent intellectually on their Austrian leaders)—all these voted unanimously in favour, which unanimity, in the case of the immense countries of Australia and Russia, is a very important fact, (is it not?) were it not seen that they were "represented" by one man each, an Italian and a Russian, both former revolutionists and now turncoats. Of the sixty-five British delegates, only six voted against "Bebel's rule"—Mowbray, Steadman, Cleaves, Byrne, Roland, and Giles; it was further adopted by all Austrians (34) except 3, all Swiss (115) except 2.

It was rejected by the Belgians (17) unanimously, and by the Dutch (4 to 2). The French (41) and the Poles (10) did not vote. The two Spaniards—one of them the inevitable Mr. Iglesias—were absent, so "Spain" did not take part in the vote.

Hence it follows that "Bebel's rule"—which is to be enforced by the organising committee of the forthcoming London Congress—was in reality only voted by the Germans with their tail of non-representative delegates from any number of small or big countries otherwise not represented, and by the large majority of the English delegates who, as Mr. Shaw puts it, acted so, "not really on the ground that the Independent political doctrine was inadmissible, but as a rough and ready expedient for getting rid of a knot of men whom the German Social Democratic leaders asserted to be so hopelessly disorderly, unpractical, and obstructive, that no business could be done until they were removed!"

This shows that nobody but the Germans, their tail of other delegates who follow their lead blindly, and the English led away by misrepresentations and, curiously enough, believing these off and instead of providing for fairplay before all; consequently—to put the matter in a nutshell—only the Germans and their tools and dupes introduced this new law by which they completely control the composition of international congresses and make them subservient to the promotion of their own very narrow and sectarian aims.

Is this farce, so successfully acted at Zurich, to be acted again in London this year?

Karl Marx and his friends once played very same game and tried to boss the old International: the result was the decay and dissolution of their part of that organisation, whilst the Italian, Swiss, Spanish, and—so far as it could manage to keep up against persecution—the French International carried on for years singlehanded the revolutionary propaganda and were the mothers of the modern Anarchist and revolutionary movement in those countries, and, spreading hence, all over the world. The last part of the life of Marx, after his ambitious schemes were frustrated, was spent in a forced retirement and comparative obscurity; now those old schemes are boomed again. Will all the lessons of the past be lost, and is fairplay a mere word only good for oratorical display and sneeringly repudiated by action and life?

We may add that after the resolution of Bebel's was adopted, the word was passed by Singer (German chairman) to Greulich (Swiss, since expelled from the Zurich party for an electoral compromise with a bourgeois party, but, after long scandals, whitewashed again), and Burckly (who ought to have known better) to chuck the German Independents out, which was accordingly done with great brutality, chiefly by the Swiss.

We will not record the further explanations given by some delegates on their votes, nor the protestations against the disgraceful way in which the resolution was put into practice, and will only mention that the Anarchist forthwith began to hold a number of meetings in the Plattengarten, at which all questions dealt with by the official Congress were amply discussed and the results formulated; but space forbids to give any details. As at Paris and Brussels, these meetings passed in a perfectly harmonious way, contrasting once more with many scenes of spiteful jealousy acted at the official Congress between the different cliques eager for domineering each other and the major and minor chiefs in each clique itself.

From the above sketches it will be seen that two facts characterise these three congresses: the increasing intolerance hand in hand with the increasing German preponderance, brought about by international machinations of a narrow and small clique of mutual logrollers, which curb, by misrepresentation, even those under their yoke whom they would never convince by theoretical arguments, or the ephemeral success of their example.

It is for the forthcoming Congress to decide this question. The success of the Anarchist movement is not affected by a decision either way: but the honour and personal dignity of everyone taking part in the Congress are, and to this we wanted to call attention by the above remarks. — * *

NOTE.—In the "Labour Leader", of July 4th, the "interesting and pathetic incident" is told of the Servian labour party's delegate "working his way across Europe—working at his trade in the towns he passes through, so as to pay his travelling expenses." This is all very well, and this man possesses perhaps a very high standard of moral courage and self sacrifice; no word against him. But is everybody aware that the "standing orders" to be accented by the Congress prescribe that "upon such resolutions dealing with fundamental questions of principle the voting shall be by nationalities", hence the vote of this man will, if the case happens, balance the vote of the 230 British delegates? To us, as Anarchists, this may be indifferent. We do not believe in the results of a vote, because the accidental fact that so and-so may vote this way or another way cannot effect the real situation—truth—in any way. Nor, if the vote proved anything, would it be possible to establish a form of voting which would be fair to all. But we mention the fact because it plainly shows that the Zurich tactics are about to be imitated here in London.

See last month's *LIBERTY* for article on the Paris Congress.

There was a printer's error in that article—the name of F. Netlow was inadvertently omitted from the list of those who signed the protest therein referred to.

A considerable number of journals and pamphlets are to hand, for which the senders are thanked. A more detailed acknowledgment will appear next month.

BETWEEN OURSELVES.

Our comrade, William Morris, has returned from Folkestone, but we are sorry to say, not much improved in health, and, at his doctor's advice, is about to start on a voyage to Norway, with a young doctor as companion. Such is the havoc wrought by excess of intellectual work on our comrade's constitution, nothing but a long voyage, away from all work and books, will do him any good. So with a hearty grip of the hand, we wish him a pleasant journey, entertaining the hope that on his return we may see him completely restored to health.

We are glad that our Freethought friends have at last discovered that officialism has a baneful effect on organization, and have in consequence just inaugurated a new society, abolishing the offices of President and Vice-President. One of the speakers contended that an official simply meant a "priest writ large", and all recognised the harmfulness of officialism alike to the individual and to the movement, bringing out as it does the worst part of human nature, and fostering the coercive spirit—with the inevitable result that the best men leave the movement as a protest against official tyranny and incapacity.

The recognition by the Freethinkers that Free Organization at the present time is all important, should bring them within sight of the fact that Freethought to be free must in no way be limited, but must be directed to the root causes of superstition and poverty. The parson today is but the jackal of the capitalist. Ignorance and misery are the inevitable consequence of capitalism and government.

Helen Rossetti has returned from Italy, we are glad to say, quite restored to health, and we trust the recognition of her services to the cause of Anarchism will outweigh any disappointments she may have suffered with regard to them. We can ill afford at the present time to lose so good a comrade.

In the June number of the "Free Review" J. M. Robertson concludes his series of articles on the Revival of Phrenology. We advise our readers to study these articles in order to see how he crushes through the so-called refutations of Phrenology, utterly demolishing them, and that in such a way as to carry conviction as to the truth of Phrenology. Nor does he allow Phrenologists themselves to escape severe criticism at his hands. When he calls attention to their action of "thrusting" an old world theism on the learner, and of praising "the matchless skill of the divine architect", his criticism is forcible and of great value. The teaching of the phrenologists of

that school can only repel the scientific student, who very wisely concludes that if phrenology needs such unscientific and fictitious aids the less time he gives to its study the better.

This reminds us of William Morris's dictum that "Socialism would be realised in spite of the Socialists." We hold a similar opinion with regard to Phrenology. There are today many so-called phrenologists who are nothing more nor less than immense stumbling blocks in the path of the intelligent seeker of phrenological truth. On this ground, and on many others, we strongly recommend the reading of Robertson's articles. Anarchism is allied, directly or indirectly, with all great scientific and economic truths—including the science of Phrenology. Hence our reference to the latter in this column.

It must be obvious to all workers in the advance movement that there is something very like concerted action on the part of the various authorities who are just now doing their utmost to curtail the freedom of public outdoor speaking. Recent events in London, Manchester, Southend, and elsewhere can only be explained in one way. The powers that be have become really alarmed for their own safety, and, as of old, they clutch at the weapon they know how to use—forcible suppression. Hence the revised rules for public meetings in Hyde Park, and the resuscitation of well-nigh lapsed bylaws for the holding of meetings in the Manchester parks. London comrades will, we trust, be sufficiently cute to avoid the trap set for them. As for the Manchester men, we have no doubt as to their ability and willingness to fight the battle to the end, and win it.

A member of the S. D. F. writes: The hostile comments made by our association, as to the admission of Anarchists to the forthcoming Congress, come with a very bad grace from men who some three or four years since hobnobbed with the Prince of Wales. Men who could associate with such a parasite should be the last to talk as they are now talking, and they may be sure that Socialists of every section will not be slow in drawing conclusions—and probably not of a very flattering character.

Comrade Nicoll requests us to say that he has received 5s. from an "anonymous" friend, with instructions to use it as he thinks best.

Nicoll reports that the Yorkshire Federation of the I. L. P. has, on the proposition of J. Clayton, unanimously adopted a resolution in favour of the release of the Walsall Anarchists.

Comrade T. Jones (of the Manchester Anarchist Communist Group) reports a meeting held on the 5th inst., attended by at least 5000 persons, at which a strong protest was made against the action of the Manchester authorities in trying to suppress freedom of speech and the right of meeting in the public parks.

LAW-WORSHIP AND ITS DOWNFALL.

Laws are all that is most arbitrary in the world. They sum up the spirit of a moment, the aspirations of a party, or the average opinion of a nation; but, being made by some men, they are coloured with their passions, their defects, their qualities—if those who made them were sincere. They may indeed satisfy those who partake of the way of looking at things of those who fabricated them, but they chafe upon many more. To obtain unanimous approbation a law would have to be of a perfection not of this world; but then it would have no need of being placed on the statute book—its sanction would be in its very justice. One erects into laws only what meets with resistance on the part of a sufficiently important fraction of the population.

Those who make laws or are charged with applying them have reason not to suffer them to be discussed. Based upon the arbitrary, law is like creed—discussion is its ruin. To wish to discuss it is to commit an act of revolt; it is the beginning of insubordination. An order discussed is only half executed. Not a single law would remain capable of being carried into application from the day when each individual should want to reason upon it according to his own conception.

There is no law which does not, by the fact that it is law, wound someone in his individuality, his sentiment or his autonomy. It is to ask for more than worship from those whom it wounds, to ask them to bow before it even though they recognise it for unjust. It is calling for the "*Credo quia absurdum*" of Saint Augustine—"I believe, because it is absurd!" The weak and the timorous may bend, but the strong and the worthy will always refuse to bow docilely to what their reason reprobates.

Thereupon, all the forces of society have to be made to intervene to assure the sanctity of the laws; which proves we are right in saying that law is only the argument of the stronger.

Certainly, force would not always be sufficient to ensure respect for the law. History gives us numerous examples where it has sufficed for authority to seek to apply some laws, more detested, if not more absurd, than the others, to rouse up public opinion to the point of existence, and contribute to lay low the power which had enacted them. The succour which force brings to the law can only be temporary, like all that rests upon force. The latter has only a relative value, and if sometimes, nearly always up to the present, it is found on the side of the oppressors, it happens also, intermittently, that the oppressed find it on their side, when they resume the consciousness of their dignity and their rights.

Therefore, in order to bring about the acceptance of the law, besides brute force it has been necessary to clothe it with a certain moral force which should make the greater number accept it as a social necessity, sometimes painful, but useful

to the general well-being; and the skill of rulers was in presenting it as such. That explains to us all the theatrical effects with which it was formerly enveloped, all the stage pomp and masquerade, so ridiculous to day to the reflecting, but which rulers are careful to conserve, because mummery has always the power of impressing imbeciles and influencing them.

Formerly, authority was represented to be an emanation from God. The holders of power were the representatives on earth of the divine majesty; their will was to be respected as equal to the decrees of providence. To discuss their orders was a sacrilege. So, in the ages of faith authority was as much respected as feared, without the worst turpitudes that it committed seeming to menace its prestige.

But slowly, imperceptibly, yet surely, human evolution was accomplishing its work of criticism. Divinity was placed under doubt, and at once the legitimacy of authority, as a divine essence, faded beneath review. The result was the fall of the royalty of right divine, and the accession to power of the middle class—the bourgeoisie.

The latter, on installing themselves in power, brought forward to consolidate it a new theory of authority. The god-entity having lost weight, they created the nation-entity, which had later on to be transformed into the society-entity. Law was no longer the divine will, but the national will. To give to the material force which it had just seized the moral force without which there is no permanence, the bourgeoisie invoked the "will of all" to coerce the individual will.

While people believed in the legitimacy of majority rule—in the necessities of "society transcending the necessities of the people as individuals"—the laws that the bourgeoisie used or decreed in their own interests were submitted to by the mass. Were they murmured against when they pressed too hard, they were excused by invoking the "general interests".

But the bourgeoisie had dealt authority its death-wound in working to sap its divine origin. From the day the people commenced to discuss it, obedience was more apparent than real—respect for authority being wounded in the vitals. The dummied-up that the bourgeoisie effected could not much longer deceive anyone.

Physical science teaches us that the fall of a body is accelerated cumulatively in an increasing ratio as it nears the centre of the earth. It is the same with the progress of human evolution. The more points of concordance that a brain possesses between its internal faculties and its external relations, the more it is in a condition to acquire new ones, and the more quickly is this adaptation of these new conquests effected. It took thousands of years to lay low the authority of the sword and that of divine right, which sustained each other. A century has sufficed to shatter the authority of number, as of riches. At the present time the former no longer has respect; even its holders

lack belief in it; the swathing-cloth it has willed to wrap around the individual is bursting all over; its dogmas become worthless in the hands of those who attempt to analyze them. At the present time there is no longer anything but brute force that maintains it; and its definite fall is no more than a question of seconds in the chronology of human revolution.

JEAN GRAVE.

THE FORTHCOMING CONGRESS.

The International Congress is approaching. Shall it be a failure or a success? That is the question.

Shall this congress for the International movement have a similar result to that which the Congress of the Hague, in 1872, had for the old International? If the sectarian spirit of the so-called Marxists (German model) triumphs, the Congress will be a failure.

To understand the question we must have the circumstances described clearly and distinctly. Let us try to do this.

At the Zurich Congress of 1893 the majority adopted the following resolution:

"All Trade Unions shall be admitted to the Congress; also those Socialist parties and organisations which recognise the necessity of the organisation of the workers and of political action. By 'political action' is meant that the working-class organisations seek, as far as possible, to use or conquer political rights and the machinery of legislation for the furthering of the interests of the proletariat, and the conquest of political power."

By this resolution all the anti-parliamentarians were excluded. If this resolution only were to be acted on, we should not think of coming to the congress at London. Everyone has the right to make the conditions on which he invites others, and this condition was strong enough to limit the frontiers.

But what happened after one foregoing was adopted? The following day, the proposers themselves of the resolution made a declaration which, with the consent of the congress, was written in the protocol. This declaration was:

"The addition proposed does not say by any means that everyone who comes to the congress should be obliged to take part in political action under all circumstances and in all details of our definitions. It claims only the acknowledgment of the labourer's right to use the political rights altogether of their country, which, in their opinion, are for the promotion of the interests of the labouring classes, and to constitute themselves as an independent political labour party."

The resolution closed the door: the declaration opened it.

What is now the position of the congress?

Nobody denies the right of those labourers who will use the political rights, if we are not obliged to use them. This declaration gives freedom to both; to those who will use the political rights, and to those who refuse to use them. Therefore we antiparliamentary socialists have the right to be at the congress. We do not ask for a privilege, we ask for no change of the conditions; we come with an appeal to the congress, which has decided for free action. If we are excluded, the congress must put itself on the standpoint of the resolution and annihilate the declarations, but it is dishonest to refuse us, and Bebel himself, as one of the proposers of the addition, must plead our admission.

What will the congress do? Shall it be so narrow-minded as to exclude the libertarian socialists?

It is curious how history repeats itself. Marx remembers how history repeats itself—once as a farce and once as a tragedy—We shall see what is played this time. The old Christians have had the same struggle against heresy; and we

can see how the heresy of to-day will be the dogma of to-morrow. In that time there was a great difference in one single letter. Some said that the son (Jesus) was equal to the father (homousios), and others that the son was uniform with the father (homoiousios). This single "i" was the cause of their fighting and killing each other, and the whole body of Christians was divided into two parties.

Shall the like happen after fifteen centuries? Alas! poor mankind!

Will you make Socialism ridiculous in the eyes of men? Go and exclude other Socialists, who do not think as you, but are as good Socialists as yourselves. On the Sunday before the congress, Hyde Park will contain the spectacle of Socialists who fraternise—who can hold a meeting for promoting the international peace of all the peoples of the world. On the following day, an international dispute will commence as to what Socialists shall be admitted to the sacred temple and who shall be refused. And perhaps there will be a fight between Socialists! And who will laugh? The capitalist class, who will ask, "Is that the outcome of Marx's advice, 'Proletarians of the world, unite?'"

Shame on those who will exclude, who will divide in place of uniting. The world will see a repetition of the struggle between Marx and Bakounine in 1872. It will be another struggle between authority and freedom.

Imagine such men as Kropotkine, Reclus, Malatesta, Tcherkesoff, Cipriani and many others excluded the congress, and you must admit that it is no more a Socialist congress, but only a parliamentary, a reform congress of a set of social democrats—that is, a sectarian congress.

Choose what you will be!—a congress of serious Socialists who discuss all questions, which interest the Socialists, or a congress of sectarians, from which are excluded as heretics so many men who have fought and suffered for the cause of the people.

F. DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS.

THE S. D. F. AND THE CONGRESS.

For hypocrisy organised and tyranny exemplified commend me to the S. D. F. Under the cloak of a belief in political action it is doing its very utmost to exclude those who openly, and, at least consistently, deny the utility of political action. The very mention of Anarchist to the S. D. F. arouses as bitter an antagonism as did that of Socialist to the prefervid Radical a few years back. "Why should the Anarchists want to attend Congress when they do not believe in organisation?" asks the S. D. F. An outsider might possibly recast the question as "Why should the Anarchists wish to mingle with those leaders of Social Democracy who stop at no trick or lie, however vile and false?" I don't know when the lie was first set afloat, but in *Justice*, Dec. 20, 1884, it appears for the first time in that paper, and though it was denied in *Justice*, Jan. 3, 1885, —and when it was pointed out that in the trial of Lyons Anarchists the charge was directed against the attempt to organise, and not any individual action—the S. D. F. has persisted in the lie ever since.

We all know now that the S. D. F. believes in organisation, perfectly constituted action, and an abundance of the vilest abuse, wholesale and retail. Have they not become respectable (and dull) in spite of Hunter Watts' vigorous protests? Force—no indeed! Breathe not its name, except to identify it with Anarchism: for of force has not our own editor, the lugubrious and consistent Quelch—semper eadem—written, "We are prepared to use any means, any weapon, from the ballot-box to the bomb, from organised voting to organised revolt, from parliamentary contests to political assassination. . . . It may be that political methods are not the best. As a matter of fact we ourselves do not think they are, and prefer other and more

speedy if more violent methods." (*Justice* leader, October 31, 1893.)

Coming to Mr. Hyndman as another shining light of constitutionalism, I find a leader in *Justice* of Feb. 28, 1885, written by him, entitled "Obey the Law"! Written by a man of education, a facile penman, a master of irony and sarcasm, every one who reads it must, I think, understand it as the Irishmen did their leader's "Don't put him in the horsepond," whereupon they immediately seized the refractory one and at once proceeded to give him a sound ducking. The article will not bear quoting piecemeal; it requires reading as a whole to well understand its import, but the following few words give a very faint idea—"And if I tell you that every reformer in this country, from the right of combination, to the right of free speech and free voting, has been got by breaking the law, by contemning the law, by kicking down and overthrowing the law, don't believe me." One can now better understand why such apostles of consistency and constitutionalism refuse to join hands with the "ruffianly mob", as they style the Anarchists; and as for organisation which they are so great on, why, it was only the other day that Keir Hardie apostrophised the S. D. F. as a "disorganised rabble". There is one more thing I should just like to touch upon. The leaders of the S. D. F. are never tired of boasting of the age of the organisation, how it has survived when others have fallen and come to grief, boasting that they have the same programme and pursue the same policy now as when they first started. I wish to point out that this is utterly untrue. The objects have constantly been altered, and the programme is ever under revision. The reports of its various conferences prove this. One thing they can boast of—if they dare. They have never placed on their programme the right to freedom of speech. In the August Conference of 1884 it first became the S. D. F., and for its programme it agreed to adopt that of the Labour Emancipation League, which often, by its forward policy, was the means of pushing the S. D. F. on much further than some of its leaders wished to go. I was in the chair myself when the programme was drawn up, and though the S. D. F. adopted it unanimously, No. 5—which says "Perfect liberty of speech, freedom of the press, right of public meeting, and free association"—has never yet appeared on the programme of the S. D. F.

I have just come across the following resolution passed by the S. D. F., in August 1884, and which has never been rescinded: "That no political action should be taken in the way of putting forward candidates at elections, or in any way countenancing the present political system." This resolution was carried without dissent. REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST.

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM IN ITS RELATION TO STATE SOCIALISM.

(Continued from the July number.)

This leads us to the recognition that the word, "government" includes two distinct ideas, the one the exercise of violence, the other, the administration of public affairs. Were the development of the latter to proceed as above described, there would be little ground left for Anarchists to object to "government". Take away the former function, which has been hitherto the predominating one, and the word no longer means that which all Anarchists recognise in it. Consequently, what the Anarchist means when he says: "Anarchy means no government", is, more exactly defined, Anarchy means no despotic government; despotic, being "tyrannical", having "absolute control" over others. (See "Walker's Dictionary")

"But how"? I hear many of my comrades exclaim: even a purely administrative government is not to be heard of under Anarchy! Before answering, I would ask them to allow me first to proceed with Communism.

Communism supposes, to start with, the socialisation of the means of production, in common, with every other form of socialism. Further than this we may say it means such an organisation of production and distribution as would secure to everyone working according to his capacities the full satisfaction of his needs. Such an organisation would evidently necessitate some administration. However autonomously the

groups of workers carried on their various branches of production, it would be necessary, for instance, for every commune to know the number of its inhabitants to be supplied with bread. Agricultural labourers, millers, and bakers—all these having their separate unions, would require to federalise in order to know, in every commune, and again throughout the whole land, what was required to meet the communal and the national demand for their products. To obtain the exchange of foreign products, one country would require to know the total amount of the demand for their exports, and to formulate the demand for their imports, etc. Consequently federal, national, and international administration would result under Communism also. It would all the time be nevertheless Communism for every one to start with, would freely satisfy his needs, and his social as well as his personal interests would induce him to work according to his capacity. Therefore it is correct to say that in relation to government the Anarchist Communist opposes despotic or tyrannic, but not purely administrative, government.

Now let us turn to State Socialism. Government, according to the State Socialist's ideal, cannot be other than administrative government, securing to every one of the community access to the means of production, and also satisfaction of his needs, "according to his work." It must, however, in justice be remembered in regard to the latter phrase that a Socialist government would provide for the full satisfaction of the needs of the old, infirm, incapable, and the young; and as every normally healthy and capable individual could and would in co-operation with others easily produce more than the value of the satisfaction of his own needs, he would practically receive according to his needs. Consequently the difference between Socialistic and Communistic administration amounts almost to nil, both being carried on with a view to the genuine satisfaction of the needs of the community.

Where, then, rests the difference, if both the Anarchist Communist and the State Socialist are intent upon instituting such administration as shall ensure the public good and individual liberty, for liberty is nothing more nor less than the possibility to satisfy one's needs? Simply in this: the State Socialist, while sincerely striving to develop the administrative function of government, does not recognise the evil effect of the compulsory function. He may claim, as said above, that with the development of the former will follow the disuse and consequent decay of the latter function. But this is only true in proportion as the evil of the exercise of physical force, as a means of government, is generally recognised. And this the State Socialist appears not to do, neither theoretically nor practically.

Take for instance the municipalisation of the gas and water supply and tramway service, which has been forced upon certain towns, not through the organised and united effort of all classes of the community, or by a voluntarily instituted cooperative effort, but by an effective minority, generally, of the compulsory governing body, who have seen in these measures an economic advantage to be gained for the ratepayers, which would redound to their own (the governing body's) glory and power. But although their clients, the general public, may have gained some advantages, the labouring class—the employees in these concerns, have been no better off, in some cases even worse, as in the case of the Glasgow tramway men. Thus such Socialistic efforts enforced by the compulsory powers of government are, under the present helpless and disorganised condition of the workers, nothing more than companies or rings, with despotic political power added to the power of wealth—or the control of wealth, which amounts to the same thing. They have, therefore, attached to them the evils of the capitalistic system, with the additional evil of political coercion. Of course it will be said they are public, changeable, dependent upon the vote of the people. But it is idle to imagine that a heavily burdened, overworked, or destitute and unorganised proletariat can have voting power enough to counteract all the bourgeois and despotic governing powers arrayed against him, in their own interests, which are always opposed to those of the labouring class.

To see what little effect this municipal-political Socialism has on the freeing of the proletariat from the tyranny of capitalism and government, we need only take a glance at France, where it is so much more developed than in Britain. There we find Socialist mayors, Socialist town councillors, etc., etc., and a very much more highly developed municipal Socialism than with us;

but we do not find that the workingman is for all that a whit nearer economic emancipation, while he is decidedly behind us in political emancipation, owing largely to the fact that the French constitution is much more despotic and military than ours. The magistrature, too, is a political tool in a way that in Great Britain we do not know. If the State Socialist should take this last admission—that is the more despotic character of the French government—as counteracting my argument against municipal and political Socialism, I ask him what has this Socialism done to counteract this despotism? Absolutely nothing. On the contrary, there is nothing more evident than the absence among the State Socialists of any idea of the irrationality and uselessness of violent compulsion as a means of government to cure social ills. Their organ, “*La Petite République*,” is continually full of the cry to bring this or that culprit to Justice, while at the same time, in certain cases—and they are many—they are quick enough to expose the fact that the so-called Courts of Justice are rather courts of injustice. These are, however, the case where the culprits are Socialists. Never, I find, do they seem to have an inkling that resort to violence is only necessary in a government to protect what is evil, and that no government can be sound or good which rests on other support than the interest of the people.

The most that the French Socialist deputy asks is for a slight reformation of the judicature, making it more conformable to the English system!

We might add that modern history clearly shows that the more democratic a country is, under the present violently maintained social system, the more tyrannical and corrupt the government, as in the United States of America, the Republic of France, and, now every day increasingly, the Republic of Switzerland. And in proportion as Democratic Socialism asserts itself, this tendency seems rather to increase than to decline, judging from the loudly expressed wishes and intentions of its eminent leaders.

But to recognise the danger in our own country of such a one-sided advance we have only to consider what must be (and what I have heard certain enthusiastic Social Democrats affirm will be) the result, so soon as there should be a really effective militant minority of Socialists in Parliament. So soon—which would not be long—as the crucial point arrived which meant evident surrender of the capitalistic or the socialistic interest, both parties believing in recourse to violence, war—civil war—would inevitably be the result. Or, in case the Socialists wisely considering that peace at any price were better, for what is gained by violence can only be maintained by violence, and such violence would fatally interfere with effective administration for the good of all. Then the best they could do would be to hold the ground they had gained, practically remaining stationary, until such time as the public had learnt that Might is not synonymous with Right, and when the cooperative movement, hand in hand with the increased organisation of trade unions, shall have considerably changed the face of economic affairs, then, finally—but not till then—can the State Socialists gather together in a non-compulsory administrative Parliament all the various representatives of the already existing productive and distributive associations, thus facilitating and completing the realisation of a socialistic organisation.

To conclude: the State Socialist, although recognising the necessity of the development of the administrative functions of local and national government, fails to recognise the evil of compulsion by violence in government, which latter evil, unresisted, threatens to turn what would be a useful administration into a tyrannical code. The Anarchist Communist, on the other hand, although recognising that organisation is necessary recognises in government only its compulsory, despotic function, and holds therefore that the organisation of a truly Socialist (or Communistic) society must begin outside government, by the spontaneous efforts of the people themselves.

While the State Socialist only condemns judicial sentences in certain instances, and seems at best to regard judicial powers as a necessary evil, the Anarchist condemns them utterly in the name of reason and justice, and would refuse to make use of them in every instance. Notwithstanding, therefore, that many Anarchists illogically approve of violent acts of rebellion, their propaganda makes for peace, which is the first necessary basis on which equality can arise out of the present inequalities, and fraternity follow the present divisions and animosities.

Let it not, however, for a moment be supposed that this peace is synonymous with passive submission. Quite the contrary. It is that peace alone which arises out of the reasonable understanding of the causes of all social evils, with the consequent insight into the fact that they can only be cured by a process of reformation and of increasing propaganda and passive resistance against the exercise of those compulsory institutions which are the support of the said causes of social evil.

This recognition of the evil of compulsion is the only essential difference between the Anarchist Communist and the State Socialist. So soon as this is admitted by both parties there is little doubt that the State Socialist will quickly acknowledge that “*Right is stronger than Might*,” and that the exercise of might, even by government, to compel right is not only inadmissible but defeats its own end. Consequently they will recognise that the character of government must be changed before it can be made a source of good and not of evil.

While the Anarchist Communist, too, would see that organisation, which they admit to be necessary, is government divested of compulsory or despotic power. Also that, to be logical, it cannot be admitted that violent action in individuals can lead to the abolition of violence in government. Violence in government must necessarily cease when the supporters of the government cease to believe in the necessity or justification for violence. In short all history, as well as common sense, tells us what is obtained by violence has always to be maintained by violence; and certainly no Anarchist Communist could admit that a state or system of society maintained by violence could be Anarchy.

Some may say that this means renunciation of the revolutionary attitude. If revolution meant necessarily violent rebellion, this would be true. But as violent rebellion on behalf of Anarchy would defeat its own end—it would be worse than useless. But revolution means, even more correctly speaking, “*a radical change*,” and has only in a derivative sense come to be applied to violent rebellions. Revolution, therefore, as I understand it, means the accomplishing of a radical change, irrespective of the means employed.

In this instance, when the change to be brought about is intended to be the substitution of Anarchy in place of chaos, the only weapons suitable must be those of peace. Reason and the spread of knowledge, a steadfast though peaceful resistance to war and violence in all their forms, active participation in every effort towards Socialist organisation—these are the means by which Anarchy will be won, and these will be strengthened by sympathetic recognition, and cooperation in like efforts undertaken by those State Socialists, opposition to whom is at once a source of weakness to the Anarchist Communist and an injury to the general cause of Socialism.

There are signs of such fraternity being realised. The attitude taken by such men as Edward Carpenter, J. C. Kenworthy, Walter Crane, and others, towards all parties; the fact that some party journals, such as “*Liberty*,” and the “*Weekly Times and Echo*,” publish the views of all parties; and the expressed desire of such a man as William Morris for a closer union, not only among the various State Socialist bodies, but also with the Anarchist Communists—are all indications of what might, and we trust soon will be realised.

THE WALSALL ANARCHISTS' CASE.

MR. HOPWOOD, Q.C.'s OPINION.

I have read the story of the trial of the Walsall Anarchists—Frederick Charles, Victor Cailles and Jean Battola—condemned to ten years' penal servitude, and Joseph Deaken, who has served his term of five years. I have no desire to excuse these men in their criminal purpose. It is evident, however, that they were the victims of a trap set by a treacherous spy, an “*agent provocateur*” employed by the police. Such agents, and such persecutions have been numerous and detestable in our history. The action of the accused is de-

plorable because it has a tendency to endanger that sacred right of asylum of political offenders, which we have—to the honour of England—always accorded. Yet the instincts of mercy, and confidence in its wisdom as a policy, lead me to plead for these men. They have suffered for more than four years in the dreadful silence of an English prison. In the prime of manhood their lives are being wasted. They have atoned for their offence and I do not doubt, may be safely set at liberty. The exercise of mercy is potent for good effect: it softens all concerned; those who have done wrong and receive pardon; those who regard with pity and affection the condemned, and those who in anger cherish revenge: it teaches that the Executive should not be remorseless, ought to disclaim vengeance, and should not be guilty of the ferocity it condemns. The persistence in long and terrible sentences exasperates and provokes retaliation.

CHAS. H. HOPWOOD.

Temple, June 5, 1896.

PUBLIC MEETINGS.

The Swansea Trades Council have carried unanimously a resolution calling for the release of the prisoners. At a densely crowded I. L. P. meeting, at Norwich, J. Burgess in the chair, Keir Hardie moved a resolution similar to that adopted at the meeting held in the Holborn Town Hall, which was carried by acclamation. At meetings held at Long Eaton and Nottingham, after a lecture on the Walsall case by D. J. Nicoll, the resolution submitted was carried unanimously. The Long Eaton Branch of the I. L. P. voted 5s. to the Amnesty Fund.

FORTHCOMING MEETING.

An International Demonstration will be held in Trafalgar Square, on Sunday, August 2nd., at 3.30 p.m., at which many of the delegates—Continental and British—to the International Congress will attend and speak.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

Anarchist Communists sometimes feel that they can justly charge the great majority of English Socialists with either a want of sincerity or a lack of common sense. Communists are opposed by them at every turn; are perpetually being unfairly attacked in their organs; are abused and derided in lieu of receiving a fair hearing at their meetings; are excluded from "workers" congresses, of which they have the business arrangements, and are invariably treated as though their ideals were directly opposed to those of Socialism. We should not, however, be justified in attacking them if the majority of Socialists did honestly believe the Anarchist-Communist ideal to be inimical to their own, but it is evident that such is not the case. Go where you will in the Social Democratic ranks, you will find that the great mass of men and women are Anarchist Communists (that is

Free Communists) at heart, though working only for Collectivism. Here our charge of insincerity, or incapacity to understand, comes in. But the excuse of these is that Anarchist Communism is only possible through, and evolving out of, Collectivism, and that they work for the latter system as a matter of expediency. (Oh, Expediency! what crimes are committed in thy name!) Now here it is that our friends seem to us to be lacking in common sense. Doubtless if the Socialists keep to the road they have chosen, we shall eventually have have Collectivism, and finally Anarchism, just as it is possible—starting from Bristol to arrive at London via New York; but we maintain that one is as unreasonable as the other.

It is not assuming or conceding any more than is due, or any more than they themselves would claim when we assert our belief that Socialists are capable of self-government; that they prefer governing themselves to letting other people do it for them; that they do not hold the idea that lordship and slavery are eternal and unalterable verities; that they do not wish merely to change the tyranny of individualist capitalism for the tyranny of collectivist governmentalism.

Now if we pursue the present Socialist movement to its logical conclusion, we have the "Revolution" brought about by the English people eventually adopting Collectivism and returning a "Socialist majority" to the House of Commons. Here we wish to insist on this point. On the day that a Socialist cabinet is formed, Anarchist Communism will be possible: but shall we have it established? Not a bit of it! The entire force of education will have been directed towards the Collectivist ideal, and consequently Collectivism we shall have, necessitating another long struggle for final liberty.

We have the two ways opening before us. It is absurd to imagine that Communism would take longer to establish than Collectivism; it would take longer only if there were less propaganda. If we work for Collectivism we shall get Collectivism; if we work for Anarchist-Communism we shall get Anarchist-Communism. Does it require a great philosopher to point out the loftier ideal? And hence our indictment of the modern trend of the Socialist movement whose followers will persist on taking the lower and more devious path, instead of going straight forward to a recognised goal.

John Bunyan's metaphor seems particularly apt here. How long will the Man grovel with his Muckrake amongst the Dungheap of Parliamentarianism; in his eagerness for illusory Gas and Water municipalization Bills, hypothetical Traffic nationalization Bills and unsubstantial Registration Reform Bills and all the trickery and claptrap incidental to vote-catching and office seeking, failing all the while to see how the angel Liberty is holding aloft her Lamp revealing life—life as it would be under Anarchist-Communism, the loftiest imaginable.

G. D.

Recommend "Liberty" to your friends.

AGRICULTURE.

By PETER KROPOTKIN.

I.

Political economy has often been reproached with drawing all its deductions from the decidedly false principle, that the only incentive capable of forcing a man to augment his power of production is personal interest in its narrowest sense.

The reproach is perfectly true: so true that epochs of great industrial discoveries and true progress in industry are precisely those in which the happiness of all was the aim pursued, and in which personal enrichment was least thought of. Great investigators and great inventors aimed without doubt at the emancipation of mankind. And if Watt, Stephenson, Jacquard etc. could have only foreseen what a state of misery their sleepless nights would bring to the workers, they would probably have burned their designs and broken their models.

Another principle that pervades political economy is just as false. It is the tacit admission, common to all economists, that if there is often overproduction in certain branches, a society will nevertheless never have sufficient products to satisfy the wants of all; and that consequently, the day will never come when nobody will be forced to sell his labour in exchange for wages. This tacit admission is found at the basis of all theories of the so-called "laws" taught by economists.

And yet it is certain that the day when any civilized association of individuals would ask itself, what are the needs of all and the means of satisfying them, it would see that, in industry as in agriculture it already possesses sufficient to provide abundantly for all needs, on condition that it knows how to apply these means to satisfy real needs.

That this is true as regards industry no one can contest. Indeed, it suffices to study the processes already in use to extract coals and ore, to obtain steel and work it, to manufacture what is used for clothing, etc., in large industrial establishments to perceive that we could already increase our production fourfold and yet economize work.

We go further. We assert that agriculture is in the same position: the labourer like the manufacturer, already possesses the means to increase his production not only fourfold but tenfold, and he will be able to put into practice as soon as he feels the need of it, and he will establish the Socialist organization of work instead of the present capitalistic one.

Each time agriculture is spoken of, men imagine a peasant bending over the plough throwing badly sorted corn haphazard into the ground, and waiting anxiously for what the good or bad season will bring forth; or a family working from morn to night and reaping as reward a rude bed, dry bread, and coarse beverage. In a word we picture "the wild beast" of La Bruvère.

And for this man, thus subjected to misery, the utmost relief society proposes is to reduce his taxes or his rent. But they do not even dare to imagine a cultivator standing erect, taking leisure, and producing by a few hours' work per day sufficient food to nourish, not only his own family but a hundred men more at the least. In their most glowing dreams of the future Socialists do not go beyond American extensive culture, which, after all, is but the infancy of agricultural art.

The agriculturist has broader ideas today—his conceptions are on a far grander scale. He only asks for a fraction of two-and-a-half acres in order to produce sufficient vegetables for a family; and to feed twenty-five horned beasts he needs no more space than he formerly required to feed one; his aim is to make his own soil, to defy seasons and climate, to warm both air and earth around the young plant; to produce, in a word, on two-and-a-half acres what he used to crop on 125 acres, and that without any excessive fatigue—by greatly reducing the total of former labour. He assures us that we will be able to feed everybody, by giving to the culture of the fields no more time than what each can give with pleasure and joy.

That is the "present" tendency of agriculture.

While scientific men, led by Liebig, the creator of the chemical theory of agriculture, often got on the wrong tack in their love of mere theories, unlettered agriculturists opened up

new roads to prosperity. Market-gardeners of Paris, Troyes, Ronen, English gardeners, Flemish farmers, agriculturists of Jersey, Guernsey, and the Scilly Isles have opened up such large horizons that the mind hesitates to grasp them. While a family of peasants needed at least 17 to 20 acres to live on the produce of the soil—and we know how peasants live—we can no longer say what is the minimum area on which all that is necessary to a family can be grown, even including articles of luxury if the soil is worked by means of intensive culture.

Ten years ago, it could already be asserted that a population of a hundred million individuals could live very well, without importing anything, on what France could produce. But now when we see the progress recently made in France as well as in England, and when we contemplate the new horizons that open up before us, we can say that in cultivating the earth, as it is already cultivated in many places, even on poor soils, a hundred million inhabitants to the 193,000 square miles of French territory would still be a very feeble proportion to what man exacts from the soil.

In any case, (as we are about to demonstrate) we may consider it as "absolutely proved", that if to-morrow Paris and the two departments of Seine and of Seine-et-Oise organized themselves as an Anarchist Commune, in which all worked with their hands, and if the entire universe refused to send them a single bushel of wheat, a single head of cattle, a single basket of fruit, and left them only the territory of the two departments, they could not only produce corn, meat, and vegetables necessary for themselves, but also articles of luxury in sufficient quantities for all.

And, in addition, we affirm that the sum-total of this labour would be far less than that expended at present to feed these people with corn harvested in Auvergne, and Russia, with vegetables produced a little everywhere by extensive agriculture, and with fruit grown in the South.

It is however patent that we in nowise desire "all" exchange to be suppressed, nor that each region should strive to produce that which will only grow in its climate by a more or less artificial culture. But we care to draw attention to the fact that the theory of exchange, such as is understood today, is strangely exaggerated—that exchange is often useless and even harmful. We assert, moreover, that people have never had a right conception of the immense labour of Southern vine growers, nor of that of Russian and Hungarian corn growers. Considering the wonderful fertility of their prairies and fields, this excessive labour could be very much reduced if they adopted intensive culture instead of their present system of extensive agriculture. In fact by this new intensive culture they could produce the same quantity as they do now, with less labour even if they worked in a much more unfavourable climate and on a less fruitful soil.

II

It would be impossible to quote here the mass of facts on which we base our assertions. We are therefore obliged to refer our readers who want further information to our articles published in other periodicals. Above all we earnestly invite those who are interested in the question to read several excellent works, published in France and elsewhere, and of which we will give a list at the close of these articles. As to the inhabitants of large towns, who have as yet no real notion of what agriculture can be, we advise them to explore the surrounding country on foot, and study its cultivation. They but need to observe, and to question market gardeners, and a new world will be opened to them. They will thus be able to see what European agriculture will be in the twentieth century; they will understand with what force the Social Revolution will be armed when we know the secret of taking everything we need from the soil.

A few facts will suffice to show that our assertions are in no way exaggerated. We only wish them to be preceded by a few general remarks.

We know in what a wretched condition European agriculture is. If the cultivator of the soil is not plundered by the land owner, he is robbed by the State. If the State taxes him moderately, the moneylender enslaves him by means of promissory notes and soon turns him into the simple tenant of a soil belonging in reality to a financial company. The owner,

the State, and the banker, thus plunder the cultivator by means of rent, taxes, and interest. The sum varies in each country; but it never falls below the quarter, very often the half of the raw produce. In France agriculturists pay the State 44 per cent. of the gross produce.

Moreover, the share of the owner and the State always goes on increasing. As soon as the cultivator has obtained more plentiful crops by prodigies of labour, invention, or initiative, the tribute he will owe to the landowner, the State, and the banker will augment in proportion. If he doubles the number of bushels reaped per acre, rent will be doubled and taxes too, and the State will take care to raise them still more if the prices go up. And so on. In short, everywhere the cultivator of the soil works 12 to 16 hours a day; these three vultures take from him everything he might lay by; they rob him everywhere of what would enable him to improve his culture. That is why agriculture remains stationary.

The cultivator will only progress by exerting his intelligence and increasing his work under quite exceptional circumstances, following upon a quarrel between these three vampires. And yet we have said nothing about the tribute every cultivator pays to the manufacturer. Every machine, every spade, every barrel of chemical manure is sold to him at three or four times its real cost. Nor let us forget the middleman who levies the lion's share of the earth's produce.

This is why, during all this century of invention and progress agriculture has only improved from time to time on very limited areas.

Happily there have always been small enclosures neglected for some time by these vultures; and here we learn what intensive agriculture can produce for mankind. Let us mention a few examples.

In the American prairies (which however only yield meagre crops, from 7 to 10 bushels per acre, and even these are often marred by periodical droughts,) five hundred men, working only during 8 months, produce the annual food of 50,000 people. Here the result is obtained by a great economy in manual labour. On those vast plains the eye cannot encompass, ploughing, harvesting, thrashing are organized in almost military fashion. There is no useless running to and fro, no loss of time. All is done with parade-like precision.

This is agriculture on a large scale, extensive agriculture, which takes the soil from nature without seeking to improve it. When the earth has yielded all it can, they leave it; they seek elsewhere for a virgin soil, to be exhausted in its turn. But there is also intensive agriculture which is already worked, and will be more and more so, by machinery: its object is to cultivate a limited space well, to manure, to improve, to concentrate work and to obtain the largest crop possible. This kind of culture grows every year, and whereas agriculturists are content with an average crop of 11 to 13 bushels per acre by extensive culture in the south of France and on the fertile plains of Western America, they reap regularly 39, even 55, and sometimes 61 bushels per acre in the north of France. The annual consumption of a man is thus obtained from less than a quarter of an acre.

And the more intense the culture is the less work is expended to obtain a bushel of wheat. Machinery replaces man at the preliminary work, and the improvements needed by the land—such as draining, clearing of stones—which will double the crops in future, is done once for all. Sometimes nothing but ploughing deeply, without ever manuring, allows an average soil to yield excellent crops from year to year. It has been done for 20 years at Rothamstead, near London.

Let us not write an agricultural romance, but be satisfied with a crop of 44 bushels per acre—that needs no exceptional soil, but merely a rational culture, and let us see what it means.

The 3,600,000 individuals who inhabit the two departments of Seine and Seine-et-Nise consume yearly for their food a little less than 22 million bushels of cereals, chiefly wheat. In our hypothesis they would have to cultivate in order to obtain this crop 494,200 acres of the 1,507,310 acres which they possess. It is evident they would not cultivate them with spades. That would need too much time—96 workdays of five hours per acre. It would be preferable to improve the soil once for all—to drain what needed to be drained, to level what needed levelling, to clear the soil of stones, were it even

necessary to spend five million days of five hours in this preparatory work—an average of ten workdays to each acre.

Then they would plough with the steamdigger, which would take one and three-fifths of a day per acre, and they would give another one and three-fifths of a day for working with the double plough. Seeds would be sorted by steam instead of taken haphazard; and they would be carefully sown in rows instead of being thrown to the four winds. Now all this work would not take 10 days of 5 hours per acre if the work were done under good conditions. But, if 10 million workdays are given to good culture during 3 or 4 years, the result will be later on crops of 44 to 55 bushels per acre by only working half the time.

Fifteen million workdays will then have been spent, to give to a population of 3,600,000 inhabitants. And the work would be such, that each could do it without having muscles of steel, or without having even worked the ground before. The initiative and the general distribution of work would come from those who know the soil. As to the work itself, there is no Parisian of either sex so enfeebled as to be incapable of looking after machines and of contributing his share to agrarian work after a few hours' apprenticeship.

Well, when we consider that in the present chaos, there are, without counting the unemployed of the upper classes, about a hundred thousand men who are out of work in their several trades, we see that the power lost in our present organization would alone suffice to give, with a rational culture, bread necessary to the three or four million inhabitants of the two departments.

We repeat, this is no fancy dream, and we have not spoken of the truly intensive agriculture. We have not depended upon the corn (obtained in three years by Mr. Hallett) of which one grain, replanted, produced a cluster carrying more than 10,000 grains, which would allow of reaping the corn necessary for a family of 5 individuals on an area of 120 square yards. On the contrary we have only mentioned what has been already achieved by numerous farmers in France, England, Belgium, etc.,—and what might be done tomorrow with the experience and knowledge acquired already by practice on a large scale.

But without a revolution, neither tomorrow, nor after tomorrow will see it done, because it is not to the interest of landowners and capitalists, and because peasants who would find their profit in it, have neither the knowledge, nor the money, nor the time to obtain what is necessary to go ahead.

The present society has not yet reached this stage. But let Parisians proclaim an Anarchist Commune, and they will of necessity come to it, because they will not be stupid enough to continue making luxurious toys (that Vienna, Warsaw and Berlin do as well already) and to run the risk of being left without bread.

Moreover, agricultural work, by the help of machinery, would soon become the most attractive and the most joyful of all occupations.

We have had enough jewellery and enough dolls' clothes! It is high time for the workers to recruit their strength in agriculture, to go in search of vigour, of impressions of nature, of "the joy of life" that they have forgotten in the dark factories of the suburbs.

In the middle ages it was Alpine pasture lands, rather than hand guns which allowed the Swiss to shake off lords and kings. Modern agriculture will allow a city in revolt to free itself from the combined bourgeois for us:

To be continued.

He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all. —COLERIDGE.

The importance given to social questions is always in an inverse ratio to the strength of political pre-occupation. Socialism gets the upper hand when patriotism grows weak. —RENAN.

Idleness is the badge of gentry, the bane of body and mind, the nurse of haughtiness, the step-mother of discipline, the chief author of all mischief, one of the seven deadly sins, and a great cause not only of melancholy but of many other diseases; for the mind is naturally active, and if it be not occupied about some honest business, it rushes into mischief or sinks into melancholy. —BURTON.

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