

# Freedom

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## The Basis of Trade Unionism.

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### DEFINITION OF TRADE UNIONISM.

Of late the term "Trade Unionism" has a more far-reaching meaning than it used to have. The term continues to qualify "members of a Trade Union organisation." Besides this nebulous and colourless definition, which, by stretching a point, might be a label for "Yellow" as well as for "Red" Trade Unions, the term has acquired a new and very precise meaning.

The term "Trade Unionism" has become a comprehensive term: the impulsive power of conscious workers towards progress. The workers who invoke this epithet have thrown aside unsound and deceptive notions, and are convinced that improvements, be they partial or extreme, can only result from popular force and will. On the ruins of their former sheeplike hopes and superstitious beliefs in miracles to be expected from State Providence as well as from Divine Providence, they have elaborated a healthy, truly human doctrine whose basis is explained and proved by social phenomena.

The Trade Unionist is evidently a partisan of grouping workers by means of Trade Unions, only he does not conceive a Trade Union as an agent for narrowing his horizon to such a point that his sphere of action is restricted to daily debates and wrangles with his employers; and although at present he strives to get minor grievances redressed, he never puts aside the evils arising from the exploitation of the workers. Neither does he conceive the Trade Union to be, as some politicians do, an "elementary school of Socialism," where men are recruited and trained to be aggressive fighters in a cause they consider efficacious—the conquest of Governmental Power.

For the Trade Unionist, the Trade Union is a perfect combination answering to all needs, to all aspirations, and therefore sufficient for all purposes. It is an association conceived by "reformers" affording opportunity for daily conflict with employers, for improvements, and for settling minor claims.

But it is not only this; it is a combination capable of bringing about the expropriation of Capital and the reorganisation of society, which some Socialists, who are deceived by their confidence in the "State," believe will be brought about by the seizure of political power.

Therefore, for the Trade Unionist the Trade Union is not a transient association, only suited to the needs of the hour, and whose usefulness could not be conceived apart from its present surroundings. For him the Trade Union is an initial and essential combination; it should arise spontaneously, independently of all preconceived theories, and develop in any surroundings.

In fact, what more reasonable than for the exploited of the same trade to come together, to agree to unite in defence of common advantages that are to be gained immediately?

On the other hand, supposing society to have been annihilated and a Communist or any other society to have blossomed forth on its ruins, it is evident that in these circumstances, in these new surroundings, the need of associations, bringing men employed in identical or similar work and duties in contact with one another, will be most urgent.

Thus the Trade Union, the corporate body, appears to be the organic cell of all society. At present, for the Trade Unionist the Trade Union is an organism of conflict and claim of worker against employer. In the future it will be the base on which normal society will be built, when freed from exploitation and oppression.

### THE WORKING-CLASS BATTLES OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

The conception of the forerunners of Trade Unionism is not the result of a hypothetical system sprung from some brain and not justified by practical tests; on the contrary, it proceeds from the examination of historical events and of their clear interpretation. We may say that it is the result of a whole century of conflict between the working classes and the middle classes.

During the whole of the nineteenth century the proletariat strove to separate its movement from that of the purely political action of middle-class parties. This was indeed a great effort, for the middle class wanting to govern without hindrance, the assent or indifference of the proletariat was necessary, and politicians exerted themselves, not only to fight and massacre proletarians when they rose against their

exploiters, but also to make them tractable by a sham education, designed to turn them from the examination of economic questions, and to cause their energy to drift towards the deceptive hope of democracy.

We cannot make it too clear that the autonomous working-class movement has been, and is still, obstructed by all the forces of obscurantism and reaction, and also by the democratic forces that are, but under new and hypocritical disguises, the continuation of old societies in which a handful of parasites are maintained in plenty by the forced labour of plebeians.

The middle classes, through the State, whose function, independently of its form, consists in protecting capitalist privileges, have applied themselves to stifling and deviating working-class aspirations. Thus, during attempts at emancipation proletarians have been compelled to realise that the Governments they were subjected to were all alike, no matter by what name they were labelled. They passed from one rule to another without deriving any result from change of scenery, mentioned by history as of great importance. All Governments treated them with animosity and ill-will. When they obtained from their rulers a mitigation of their wretched fate, they owed it, not to feelings of justice or pity, but to the wholesome fear they were able to inspire. To Government initiative they are indebted for Draconian legislation, arbitrary measures, and savage reprisals.

Antagonism between the State and the working classes predominates the whole of the nineteenth century. We see it most plainly when we observe that Governments, by way of throwing their enemies a bone to gnaw, have readily conceded political rights to the people, while they have shown themselves intractable as far as regards economic liberties. In the latter case they have only given way to popular pressure.

This difference of behaviour on the part of the rulers is easily explained. Recognition of political rights to the people does the Governments no harm, as these baubles do not imperil the principle of Authority and do not undermine the proletarian base of society.

It is another story when economic liberties are in question. These are of real advantage to the people, and can only be acquired at the expense of the privileged. It is therefore evident that the State, the upholder of Capitalism, refuses to the last to grant a particle of economic improvement.

The demonstration of this permanent conflict of the working class with the State would lead us into writing a martyrology of the proletariat. To prove the truth and constancy of this antagonism a few historical landmarks will suffice.

Less than two years after the taking of the Bastille (June, 1791) the bourgeoisie, by its mouthpiece, the Constituent Assembly, despoiled the working classes of their right to form associations,\* a right they had just obtained by revolutionary means.

The workers believed the Revolution to be the dawn of economic freedom. They thought that burning the gates of Paris where town-dues were collected (June 12, 1789) would destroy all barriers. Let us add that two days after the burning of the gates of Paris, the Bastille was taken by assault, not because it was a political prison, but because it was a danger to rebellious Paris, as was the Mont Valérien in 1871.

Workers taken in by the enthusiastic strains of pamphleteers thought themselves freed from the trammels of the ancient régime, and began to come to an understanding with one another and to group themselves in order to resist exploitation. They formulated precise claims. The bourgeoisie soon proved to them that the Revolution was only political and not economic. It elaborated repressive laws, and as the workers lacked knowledge and experience, as their agitation was confused and still incoherent, it was not hard for the Government to check this movement.

We should be mistaken in supposing that the "Chapelier" law was expedient and that those who voted for it ignored its effect on social life. To make us swallow this fanciful interpretation, we are told that Revolutionists of that period raised no protest against it. Their silence only shows that they ignored the social aspect of the Revolution they took part in, and that they were only pure *Democrats*. Moreover there is nothing astonishing in their great want of foresight, as even to-day we see men pretending to be Socialists who are also merely simple *Democrats*.

As a proof that the Parliamentarians of 1791 knew what they were about, some months later, in September, 1791, the Constituent Assembly strengthened the Chapelier law prohibiting combinations among industrial workers, by enacting another law that made associations of agricultural labourers illegal.

\* La loi Chapelier, passed on June 17, 1791.

The Constituent was not the only Assembly that manifested its hatred of the working classes. All Assemblies that followed strove to tighten the bonds enslaving the worker to his employer. More than this, seeing that passing laws trying to make it impossible for workmen to discuss and defend their interests was insufficient, bourgeois Assemblies contrived to aggravate the wretched position of proletarians by putting them under absolute police control.

The Convention did not prove more sympathetic to the working classes. In the month of Nivôse of the year II. it legislated "against coalition of workmen, employed in different trades, who, by writing or by emissaries, incite to the cessation of work." This behaviour of the Convention, the revolutionarism of which meets with so much praise, clearly proves that political opinions have nothing to do with economic interests. A still better proof is, that in spite of changes in governmental forms, starting from the Democracy of the Convention, the Autocracy of Napoleon I., the Monarchy of Charles X., to the Constitutionalism of Louis-Philippe, never were the severity of the laws against workmen mitigated.

Under the Consulate, in the year XI. (1803), a new link to the slaves' chain was forged—the *Certificate Book*, which made the working men a class of specially registered individuals. Then, with their vile and crafty legal procedure, and their lawyers who elaborated the Code we still suffer from, rulers tied down and gagged the proletariat so well that Louis XVIII. and Charles X., heirs to this baggage, did not need to increase it.

Nevertheless, in spite of severe legislative prohibitions, the workers came to an understanding, grouped themselves under mild forms, such as "mutualities," and constituted embryo Trade Unions for organising resistance. The combinations grew to such an extent that strikes multiplied, and the Liberal Government of Louis-Philippe inflicted greater penalties against associations (1834). But the impetus had been given! This recrudescence of legal severity did not stay the movement of the workers. In spite of the law, the *Sociétés de Résistance* multiplied, and were followed by a period of growing agitation and numerous strikes.

The Revolution of 1848 was the result of this movement. A proof of the economic scope of this Revolution is that economic questions took precedence of all others. Unfortunately, the corporate groups needed experience. The urban workers ignored the peasants, and *vice versa*. Thus in 1848 the peasants did not stir, not understanding the working-class movement; likewise in 1852 the town workers understood nothing of the peasants' attempt at an insurrection. In spite of these failures, and there were many others, all improvements obtained were due to working-class energy. It was the will of the workers that was expressed in the Luxembourg Commission and was legally registered by the Provisional Government.

In the first hours of the Revolution the frightened middle classes showed themselves conciliatory, and to save Capitalism were disposed to sacrifice a few trifling privileges. They were, however, soon reassured, by the inoculation of the people with political virus—universal suffrage—as much as by inconstancy on the part of the corporate organisations, and their ferocity became as great as had been their fear. The massacres of June, 1848, were for the middle classes a first instalment of satisfaction. Soon after, in 1849, the representatives of the people, proving themselves simply the representatives of the middle classes, legislated against associations. They were prohibited, and their members subjected to penalties decreed in the law of 1810.

As the reaction of Louis Philippe failed to check the working-class movement, so did the Republican and the Napoleonic Governments fail. Without troubling themselves about the form of government, or with the prohibition to combine, the corporate groups continued to develop in numbers and in strength, so much so that by their pressure on public authorities they wrung from the Government legal sanction for the ameliorations and liberties they had forcibly acquired, thanks to their revolutionary vigour.

It was by what we now call *direct action* that the right of combination was wrung from Caesarianism in 1864. The workers of all associations grouped themselves, combined and went on strike without taking the least heed of the law. Beyond all others, the printers distinguished themselves by their revolutionary character, and in Paris (1862) one of their strikes was the determining event that brought about the recognition of the right to combine. The Government, blind like all others, thought to kill the agitation by striking a great blow. Wholesale arrests took place. All the members of the strike committee were imprisoned, as well as the most active among the strikers.

This arbitrary abuse of power, far from terrorising, overexcited public opinion, and such a current of indignation resulted therefrom that the Government was compelled to capitulate and to recognise the workers' right to combination. This was due only to *pressure from without*. It would be difficult to ascribe this success to Socialist Deputies, for the excellent reason that there were none in Parliament.

The conquest of the right to combine so stimulated Trade Union organisation, it grew so rapidly irresistible, that the State was compelled to put a good face on a bad matter. In 1863 Trade Union liberty was recognised by an Imperial circular, which said: "As to the organisation of working-class Associations, the Administration must leave to those interested in them full liberty."

Meanwhile the International Association of Workers, definitively constituted in 1864, after several earlier fruitless attempts, shed its rays on Western Europe and opened up new horizons to the working class, horizons that were to be obscured by the great crisis of 1871.

Let us now stop so as not to be lured on too far by this retrospective summary, and let us draw logical conclusions from it.

From the landmarks of history that we have mentioned, it follows that at the dawn of the present régime, in 1791, the Government, as defender of the privileges of the middle classes, denied and refused all economic rights to working men, and ground them down till they were like particles of dust, having no cohesion one with another, so that they were at the mercy of exploitation.

Later on the workers emerged from chaos, in which the middle class would like to keep them. They grouped themselves on economic ground apart from any politics. The Government, whatever name it is labelled with, tries to arrest the proletarian movement, and not succeeding, makes up its mind to sanction the improvements or liberties obtained by the workers. The most salient point in all these agitations and these social shocks is that exploited and exploiters, governors and governed, have interests, not only *distinct*, but opposed; and that there is between them a *class war* in the true sense of the term.

In the short summary given we see the drift of the Trade Union movement, untrammelled by Parliamentary contamination, and the wisdom of working men's associations on solid economic ground, which is the base of all true progress.

(To be continued in our next issue.)

## THE LAST POET OF ACTION DEAD.

Gerald Massey at fourscore years of age died at Norwood in his cottage home. He, the son of a canal bargeman, at six years of age had to help win food for the family, and devil's wages—rent—for the landlord. His earnings of 9d. a week in a silk factory at Tring were cut short by the mill being burnt down; he, with others of the child-killer's victims—as the factory hands and their employer were truly termed—danced with delight when they saw the cause of their misery burned to the ground.

In those days, from 1840 to 1850, there was vitality in the toilers to aspire to overthrow the cause of their misery in England. But insidious Liberals stepped forward with pledges, promises, and patronage to the servile. The self-taught child-workman had the manliness to spurn the temptation to bow to the gold gluttony of the lice of commerce. He replied to traitors and sycophants thus:—

"Smitten stones will talk with fiery tongues,  
The worm, when trodden, will turn;  
But Cowards! you cringe to the cruellest wrongs,  
And answer with never a spurn.  
Then torture, O Tyrants, the spiritless drove,  
Old England's belots will bear;  
There's no hell in their hatred, no God in their love,  
Nor shame in their death's despair.  
For our fathers are praying for paupers' pay,  
Our mothers with Death's kiss are white,  
Our sons are the rich man's serfs by day,  
Our daughters his slaves by night.

Oh! but death for death, and life for life!  
It were better to take and give,  
With hand to throat, and knife to knife,  
Than die out, as thousands live."

Such a daring revolutionist as Gerald Massey drew to himself a host of friends, also the harpies of the Liberals in power; but they could not plant any conspiracy or plot upon him as they did on a fellow-poet, Ernest Jones, a young barrister of London, who they imprisoned for two years, inflicting such rigorous cruelty that it undermined his robust health, and cut short a career of promise.

Before Gerald Massey was twenty years of age he had attained fame the Press-freer, then than now—cordially acknowledged. He was fortunate in meeting with John Bedford Leno, a young printer and poet of Uxbridge. Together they started the *Spirit of Freedom*, a weekly newspaper. During its short existence it kindled many friendships by the force of its glowing articles and trenchant verse.

Before he was twenty-three years old he published a volume of his poems and lyrics, which at once proclaimed him to be one of England's grand lyric geniuses. His poetry of love dimmed the polished lustre of the Laureate's by its purity, truth, and elegance.

The cause of Italian freedom won him as an enthusiastic champion. Commercialism helped to quench its light in its own blood, England aiding the crime.

Historic research was the direction of his genius. "Beginnings" and "Natural Genesis" were notable volumes of profound erudition; like his verse, ahead of his time; but they exist for the future. He lived to complete his great work on Africa, the cradle of the human race, and its record-home, Egypt.

J. CHARLES KING.

## Anarchism.

Anarchism is a theory of human development which lays no less stress than Collectivism upon the economic or materialistic aspect of social relations; but, whilst granting that the immediate cause of existing evils is economic, Anarchists believe that the solution of the social problem can only be wrought out from the equal consideration of the whole of the experience at our command, individual as well as social, internal as well as external. Life in common has developed social instinct in two conflicting directions, and the history of our experience in thought and action is the record of this strife within each individual, and its reflection within each society. One tendency is towards domination; in other words, towards the assertion of the lesser, sensuous self as against the similar self in others, without seeing that, by this attitude, true individuality impoverishes, empties and reduces itself to nonentity. The other tendency is towards equal brotherhood, or to the self-affirmation and fulfilment of the greater and only true and human self, which includes all nature, and thus dissolves the illusion of mere atomic individualism.

Anarchism is the conscious recognition that the first of these tendencies is, and has always been, fatal to real social union, whether the coercion it implies be justified on the plea of superior strength or superior wisdom, of divine right or necessity, of utility or expedience; whether it takes the form of force or fraud, of exacted conformity to an arbitrary legal system or an arbitrary ethical standard, of open robbery or legal appropriation of the universal birthright of land and the fruits of social labour. To compromise with this tendency is to prefer the narrower to the wider expediency, and to delay the possibility of that moral development which alone can make the individual one in feeling with his fellows, and organic society, as we are beginning to conceive of it, a realisable ideal.

The leading manifestations of this obstructive tendency at the present moment are Property, or the domination over things, the denial of the claim of others to their use; and Authority, the government of man by man, embodied in majority rule; that theory of representation which, whilst admitting the claim of the individual to self-guidance, renders him the slave of the simulacrum that now stands for society.

Therefore, the first aim of Anarchism is to assert and make good the dignity of the individual human being, by his deliverance from every description of arbitrary restraint—economic, political and social; and, by so doing, to make apparent in their true force the real social bonds which already knit men together, and, unrecognised, are the actual basis of such common life as we possess. The means of doing this rest with each man's conscience and his opportunities. Until it is done any definite proposals for the reorganisation of society are absurd. It is only possible to draw out a very general theory as to the probable course of social reconstruction from the observation of growing tendencies.

Anarchists believe the existing organisation of the State only necessary in the interest of monopoly, and they aim at the simultaneous overthrow of both monopoly and State. They hold the centralised, "administration of productive processes" a mere reflection of the present middle-class government by representation upon the vague conception of the future. They look rather for voluntary productive and distributive associations using a common capital, loosely federated trade and district communities practising eventually complete free Communism in production and consumption. They believe that in an industrial community in which wealth is necessarily a social, not an individual product, the only claims which any individual can fairly put forward to a share in such wealth are: firstly, that he needs it; secondly, that he has contributed towards it to the best of his ability; thirdly (as regards any special article), that he has thrown so much of his own personality into its creation that he can best utilise it. When this conception of the relation between wealth and the individual has been allowed to supersede the idea now upheld by force, that the inherent advantage of possessing wealth is to prevent others from using it, each worker will be entirely free to do as nature prompts, i.e., throw his whole soul into the labour he has chosen, and make it the spontaneous expression of his intensest purpose and desire. Under such conditions only labour becomes pleasure and its produce a work of art. But all coercive organisation working with machine-like regularity is fatal to the realisation of this idea. It has never proved possible to perfectly free human beings to co-operate spontaneously with the precision of machines. Spontaneity, or artificial order and symmetry must be sacrificed. And as

spontaneity is life, and the order and symmetry of any given epoch only the forms in which life temporarily clothes itself, Anarchists have no fears that in discarding the Collectivist dream of the scientific regulation of industry, and inventing no formulas for social conditions as yet unrealised, they are neglecting the essential for the visionary.

The like reasoning is applicable to the moral aspect of social relations. Crime as we know it is a symptom of the strain upon human fellowship involved in the false and artificial social arrangements which are enforced by authority, and its main cause and sanction will disappear with the destruction of monopoly and the State. Crime resulting from defective mental and physical development can surely be dealt with both more scientifically and more humanely, by fraternal medical treatment and improved education, than by brute force, however elaborated and disguised.

As for the expression of the common life of the community, and the practical persuasion and assistance desirable to raise those who have lagged behind the average of moral development, it is enough to note the marvellous growth of public opinion since the emancipation of platform and press to become aware that no artificial machinery is needful to enforce social verdicts and social codes of conduct without the aid of written laws administered by organised violence. Indeed, when arbitrary restraints are removed, this form of the rule of universal mediocrity is, and has always been, a serious danger to individual freedom; but as it is a natural, not an artificial result of life in common, it can only be counteracted by broader moral culture.

Anarchism is not a Utopia, but a faith based upon the scientific observation of social phenomena. In it the individualist revolt against authority, handed down to us through Radicalism and the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and the Socialist revolt against private ownership of the means of production, which is the foundation of Collectivism, find their common issue. It is a moral and intellectual protest against the unreality of a society which, as Emerson says, "is everywhere in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members." Its one purpose is by direct personal action to bring about a revolution in every department of human existence, social, political and economic. Every man owes it to himself and to his fellows to be free.—C. M. WILSON, in "What Socialism Is," *Fabian Tract No. 1* (1886).

## CHICAGO MARTYRS MEETING.

A Chicago Martyrs meeting was held at the Communist Club, Charlotte Street, W., on Tuesday, November 12th, and was well attended. Owing to being insufficiently advertised, many of our comrades were absent, but plenty of fresh faces were to be seen, which is something to be thankful for. A. Ray opened the meeting in a short speech, and was followed by Guy Aldred, who said that while the 11th of November was always set apart as a special day in our revolutionary calendar, still if we searched history we would find that every day in the year was marked by some bloodthirsty deed on the part of the oppressors. The class war is a blood feud, and trying to modify it by palliatives was not only useless but reactionary. Nothing but a complete abolition of the capitalist system would be of any value.

R. Rucker, who spoke in German, roused to enthusiasm all those fortunate enough to understand that language.

Comrade Wilquet also spoke for a few minutes, and then John Turner gave an interesting speech on the principal characters in the tragedy, pointing out that those people who stood up for our comrades would always be remembered, while those who, for political reasons, refused to speak out never obtained the political favours they sought, but received instead the contempt they deserved for their cowardice.

The sale of literature during the evening was very satisfactory. Collection 11s. 1½d.

## Ants—the Ideal Communists.

It would perhaps be pushing metaphors to an unwarranted extreme to speak of "dignity of labour" in connection with the occupations of ants. But if by the phrase we mean that labour is the honourable lot of all citizens, and that all labours of whatever sort are upon the same level of respectability, then we might venture to apply the saying even to the labours of an ant-hill. For therein all are workers, from the newly-fledged callow to the veteran of a second summer.

Therein is no taboo upon "hand toil." All forms thereof are equally creditable. We are reminded of the simpler state of society in the pioneer days of the United States and Canada and the British Colonies. Indeed, it is the natural social order of human communities, until great possessions, earned and inherited, or usurped, created a favoured class. Surely this is an ideal republic—no idlers, no tramps, no citizen-parasites, no misers, no spendthrifts, no paupers!

—Henry C. McCook, in *Harpur's* for May.

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## NOTES.

### FABIANISM IN EXCELSIS.

One of the most grotesque things done in the Socialist movement for many years is the manifesto those top-hatted, frock-coated gentry of Fabianism have issued anent the "settlement" of the threatened railway strike. To form a precise idea of what these mighty people imagine themselves to be in their own estimation would make an interesting study in psychology. As Byron said of Southey, they evidently think people have been talking of them, "for they laughed consumedly."

However, the ukase has gone forth.

Railway men must never again think of a strike.

It would inconvenience the public!

Platelayers must not trouble about being cut to pieces.

But think of the public!

Shunters are not to grumble at being crushed to death.

It is for the welfare of the public!

Drivers must not hesitate to face death in collisions.

Public convenience demands it!

Don't any of you complain of low wages and long hours.

Trust to Lloyd-George and the directors.

The Fabians approve it.

Theirs not to reason why.

Theirs not to make reply.

Theirs but to do as the Fabians say,

AND DIE!

### ART AND OFFICIALISM.

It is a doubtful question whether there really is any dramatic art existing at the present moment in England; but however that may be, there is at any rate an official person appointed to guard public morals in connection therewith. A great stir has been made over the fact that this individual has recently "censored" a play not deemed suitable for public performance. Thereupon the author gave it privately—which means that you might run the risk of having your morals corrupted if you were invited to do so free of charge. A number of persons took the risk quite cheerfully, and up to the present no one seems to be any the worse. "Waste," the title of the play, seems to have been an attempt to deal with some sordid aspects of social life which officialism would like us to suppose do not exist. Possibly the play had some moral, but only the official mind is capable of deciding upon that. It is clear, however, the public will have nothing but the trash they get so long as they consent to be the babies they are, fed on the pap that officialism thinks good for them. Certainly, the empty-heads who can sit out the demoralising rubbish officialism permits them to indulge in would be all the better if their dull minds were shocked somewhat by a serious play that attacked their prejudices.

## TO ALL COMRADES.

All comrades and friends interested in the Anarchist propaganda are informed that a meeting will be held on Tuesday next, December 10, at 17 Pitt Street, Charlotte Street, W. (near the Scala Theatre). Business: The advisability of restarting the *Voice of Labour*, and the Revolutionary propaganda generally. Commence at 8.30 p.m. Suggestions and offers of assistance are heartily invited from comrades in the provinces or otherwise unable to attend. All communications should be addressed to *Voice of Labour*, 127 Ossulston Street, London, N.W.

## CRIME AND LEGISLATION.

At the London magistrates' dinner held on December 3, the Home Secretary (Mr. Gladstone), speaking of new legislation as regards the treatment of habitual and child criminals, said: "They were not idlers at the Home Office, and if they were given a little more time—although this was a delicate subject—(LAUGHTER)—he hoped they would be able to deal with the question satisfactorily." Now is not this an edifying spectacle for those who believe in the State and legality for the treatment of our social ills? Stripped of the glamour of the Press, it amounts to this: That a set of men who have the power of inflicting punishment and lifelong disgrace on tens of thousands of unfortunate victims of the present system—including all the unhappy little waifs and strays who come before them, and whose misery and misfortune is one of society's greatest crimes—whilst listening to the heaven-born wisdom of a Cabinet Minister, break into brutal laughter at the suggestion that this question is a delicate subject. It will be observed that the gentlemen who administer the law against the little outcasts were dining at the time, and dining substantially. They were perfectly well aware that whilst filling their own bellies there existed around them a mass of starving misery that baffles the imagination to fully conceive; they knew that sure as fate next morning some of this misery would be before them to receive sentence; they quite well understood that the subject before them was of most serious import. And yet at the suggestion of treating it delicately—whatever that may mean to a politician—they shake with laughter!

It must be remembered that enlightened public opinion has been for many years in favour of drastic prison reform. Quite a literature has grown up on this subject, almost within the last decade. The result of this has been that in some directions attempts have been made to modify the brutal treatment of prisoners, and in every case where enlightenment has had its say the results have been most encouraging. Needless to say, the people who joke over this question have mostly opposed these reforms. They are paid officials; they represent the State and its fossilised laws; they are all for the "system."

The responsibility and culpability of these people is enormous. On every hand they stand in the way of social progress, enlightened development, and humanitarian science. And yet great jubilation is manifested in some quarters when a working man, created a J.P., is sent to share in this work of privilege and stupidity. It is bad enough that working men should be sent to be corrupted and lost in Parliament, but that they should be sent to sit in judgment and to pronounce sentence on their fellow-workers is a scandal that will bear bitter fruit in the future.

## BOOK NOTES.

*La Publication Sociale.* Recueil Bibliographique Historique de tous Documents relatifs au Mouvement Social en France et à l'Étranger. 46 Rue Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris.

For a subscription of 2s. per annum comrades who read French can receive monthly this excellent publication, which gives lists of works on social subjects that cannot be found elsewhere. Its utility is beyond all question, and we should like to see a similar catalogue issued of English works.

### Books, &c., Received.

*Antipatriotismo.* By Gustave Hervé (in Esperanto). 15c. Paris.

*La Internacio* (The International) (in Esperanto). 10c. 45 Rue de Saintonge, Paris, III.

*Anarchistická Morálka.* By P. Kropotkin. 5c. New York, "Volné Listy," 357 East Seventy-second Street.

*Almanach de la Révolution (Illustré) pour 1908.* 30c. La Publication Sociale, 46 Monsieur-le-Prince, Paris.

*Páginas Sindicalistas.* By Bartolomé Bosio. Buenos Aires: Solis 924.

*The Truth about the Lords: Fifty Years of our New Nobility: 1857-1907.* By Joseph Clayton. 1s. net. A. C. Fifield, 44 Fleet Street, E.C.

*The Possibility and Philosophy of Anarchist Communism.* By Guy A. Aldred. 1d. 133 Goswell Road, London, E.C.

*The Religion and Economics of Sex Oppression.* 3d. Same author and address.

## NOTICE!

Owing to FREEDOM having been permanently enlarged to eight pages, thereby entailing extra postage, the price will be raised next month to 1s. 6d. per quire of 26, post-free in the United Kingdom and Canada. Price at office, 1s. 4d.

## SOCIALISTS AND FREE LOVE.

When Victor Grayson, "Reformer," "Socialist," and "Iconoclast," made his famous speech at Colne—famous more for something he did *not* say than for what he did say—my heart (being a liberty-loving one) gave a great bound, for he was reported to have declared that he stood for the abolition of all sex ties.

Have we, I asked myself, have we really got a politician who faces this question so boldly, so fearlessly? Is there indeed a man, asking for votes, who will even discuss this tabooed subject? A man who dare tell the truth? A man who knows that nothing short of the complete abolition of all slavery—political, economic, and sexual—will ever solve the terrible problem of sex relations—and dares say so to all the world?

Surely, I said to myself, there is some mistake. Either he has said more than he intended, or the reporters have misunderstood him.

Whether it was really a mistake or intentional misrepresentation, I cannot say; but the next day my poor heart sunk to zero when I read in the Press that Grayson had only declared himself to stand for the abolition of all sex *disabilities*, a very different thing, I can assure all friends who look to the Labour Party or to the political Socialist for the emancipation of woman and the freedom of both sexes. A very different thing, as you may gather from Victor Grayson's article on marriage written for *London Opinion*, October 12. In this article of his, written not only to deny any personal belief in Free Love, but to make it quite clear to the electorate that Socialists in general are not desirous of attacking the sacred (?) institution of marriage, he even goes as far as to say that "there is not an acknowledged Socialist leader in Great Britain who advocates the abolition of the marriage bond."

Has Victor Grayson never heard of Edward Carpenter, or did he forget? Or did he not notice in the shouting and screaming of the politicians—Socialist politicians of such mushroom-like growth—did he, I wonder, not notice the soft voice of one who has not only done much to mould Socialist thought, but has faced this matter of sex in the same fearless and honest manner as he faced all other evils in the present state of society. Surely Carpenter might be counted a "leader," though he does not ask for votes; not a *political* leader, but certainly more reliable as a teacher or leader for that very reason.

I should like to tell our friend Grayson that he and nearly all other Socialists are shirking a very important matter. More important even than sending Labour men to Parliament, more important than giving women the vote, is this question of sex relationship. Sex, I should like to tell him, is the predominant note of all creation; it affects everything in life; it means joy or misery; it means dwarfed, lop-sided individuals or fully developed and properly poised men and women; it not only affects life, it *is* life. And this important matter is the one upon which we are most woefully ignorant; the one question not to be spoken of in an open manner, but in whispers, or with a leer, or a contemptuous smile; not to be discussed frankly and fearlessly, but in a mysterious manner that adds morbidity to ignorance.

This matter is so important that mankind can never be happy until it has looked it straight in the face, seeing it to be natural and good, a blessing, not a curse; and never can mankind be happy till all barriers, all artificial and legal ties, are broken between men and women, for nothing on earth should ever keep a man and woman together but love and a mutual desire for each other's company, that mutual attraction for each other which will become more powerful in a free society.

This being such an important matter to every fully developed human being, why are we afraid to speak of it? Why is it that those with the most knowledge and experience are not allowed to speak in one place, and are afraid to speak in another?

In another article I hope to touch upon the fundamental question that goes to the root of the whole subject—the economic independence of woman. For the present it is necessary to point out that the majority of Socialists, partly through lack of study and partly through lack of moral courage, are in a hopelessly mixed state of mind on this question, and are therefore the more unable to resist the attacks of the hypocritical enemy. As an example, take the position of H. G. Wells, who has been roughly handled by the Yellow Press, and who has been wriggling in a most equivocal manner in his endeavour to save his face over the charge of advocating free love. In his book on Socialism and the family he admits that "one's dream and

perfection is Anarchy," which implies freedom in *all* social relations. Yet he ranges himself on the side of the exact opposite, that is to say, the *imperfection* of a Socialism that would, as he expresses it, "concentrate all control in the State."

RED ROSE.

## The Amsterdam Congress.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 29th (Continuation).

BROUTCHOUX thought the two tendencies were now clear. He was himself of opinion, and he was delegated by Anarchists of the opinion, that Syndicalism was in itself enough to break up Capitalism. Anarchism is a question of opinion; Syndicalism is a party of material interests. He wished, moreover, to point out that if we did not want the Syndicates to support the Social Democrats, we must join and use our influence to the fullest extent. All workers—opinions apart—should enter their Syndicates.

FRIEDEBERG expressed himself in favour of Syndicalism as a means of direct action. Anarchists should enter the neutral (non-political) Syndicates, and where these do not exist, should set to work organising them.

VOHRYZEK considered Syndicalism only one form of economic action. He was very doubtful of the utility of some of the agitations carried on by the Syndicates. For instance, what was the use of agitating for higher wages when the cost of living automatically rises with any increase of cost of production?

RAMUS felt that the two extremes of the question had been fully represented by Monatte and Malatesta. The fact that Monatte treated the question entirely from the Syndicalist viewpoint proves that there is a danger of Syndicalism absorbing and stifling Anarchism—in France, at any rate.

MONATTE contended that the cost of living does not increase in proportion to the rise of wages. He could not agree with Malatesta as to the necessity of Anarchists refusing to take official positions in the Syndicates. Such positions were a tremendous help in propaganda. Nor was the talk of the General Strike addressed to the gallery, as had been suggested. Syndicalists were in earnest all right. A General Strike will never be made with their hands in their pockets. They knew it was no simple, easy matter; but they held that life in the Syndicates will give the necessary technical training and organisation.

The following resolutions were then read and accepted, approximately the same amount of support being given to all three:—

### (a) SYNDICALISM.

"The Anarchists assembled at Amsterdam, considering—

That the present condition of society is characterised by the exploitation and slavery of the producing masses, thus causing an unavoidable antagonism of interests between them and those who profit by their labour;

That the Syndicalist organisation founded on the basis of economic resistance and revolt, all questions of political doctrine put aside, is the specific and fundamental organ of this conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and all bourgeois institutions;

That it is desirable for a revolutionary spirit to be infused into this organisation in order to guide it towards the expropriation of the capitalists and the suppression of all authority;

That none but the workers themselves being able to expropriate and take collective possession of the instruments and produce of labour, the Syndicate will eventually transform itself into a productive group, thus having in itself the living germ of the society of to-morrow;

Advise the comrades in all countries, without forgetting that Anarchist action cannot be entirely contained within the limits of the Syndicate, to take an active part in the independent movement of the working classes, and to develop inside the Syndicates the ideas of revolt, individual initiative, and solidarity, which are the essence of Anarchism."

### (b) THE GENERAL STRIKE.

"The Anarchists assembled at Amsterdam declare that the General Strike with Expropriation is a remarkable stimulus to organisation and the spirit of revolt when advocated as the manner in which the total emancipation of the proletariat can be accomplished.

The General Strike is not to be confounded with the political General Strike, which idea is nothing but an attempt of the politicians to use the General Strike for their own ends.

By the extension of strikes to whole localities, districts, or trades, the working class moves towards the General Strike with Expropriation, which will mean the destruction of society as it now exists and the expropriation of all the instruments and means of production."

### (c) SYNDICALISM AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

"The International Anarchist Congress considers the Syndicates as organisations fighting in the class war for the amelioration of the conditions of labour, and as unions of productive workers which can help in the transformation of capitalist society into Anarchist Communist society.

The Congress also, while admitting the eventual necessity of the

formation of special revolutionary Syndicalist groups, recommends the comrades to support the general Syndicalist movement.

But the Congress considers it the duty of Anarchists to constitute the revolutionary element in these organisations, and to advocate and support only those forms of direct action which have in themselves a revolutionary character, and tend in that manner to alter the conditions of society.

The Anarchists consider the Syndicalist movement as a powerful means of revolution, but not as a substitute for revolution.

They recommend the comrades to take part in a General Strike even if proclaimed with the aim of capturing the political power, and to do all they possibly can to make their Syndicates put forward questions of economic rights.

The Anarchists further think that the destruction of capitalist and authoritarian society can only be realised through armed insurrection and expropriation by force, and that the use of the General Strike and Syndicalist tactics ought not to make us forget other means of direct action against the military power of governments."

## FRIDAY, AUGUST 30th. FIFTH DAY.

LANGE presiding.

### ANTI-MILITARISM.

MARMADE thought this was a subject on which we were all entirely agreed, so we could briefly define our position towards the general Anti-Militarist movement as Anarchists, and then take our places at the Anti-Militarist Congress then opening. Anarchists had been largely instrumental in starting the agitation, and had always recognised the value of desertion and propaganda with revolutionary action inside the army.

MALATESTA would like to point out the difference between Anarchists and some other Anti-Militarists. Some of the latter take simply the financial or economic viewpoint of the agitation; others would like to abolish armies but not the police.

The following resolution was then accepted unanimously without further discussion:—

"The Anarchists, desiring the integral emancipation of humanity and the absolute liberty of the individual, are naturally the declared enemies of all armed force in the hands of the State,—army, navy, or police.

They urge all comrades, according to circumstances and individual temperament, to revolt and refuse to serve (either individually or collectively), to passively and actively disobey, and to join in a military strike for the destruction of all the instruments of domination.

They express the hope that the people of all countries affected will reply to a declaration of war by insurrection.

They declare it to be their opinion that the Anarchists will set the example."

This practically closed the Congress, Saturday morning being devoted to a private sitting. In the afternoon, a short discussion on a resolution presented by CHAPELIER took place, in which he advocated Esperanto for Anarchist international communications. The following resolution was finally accepted without opposition:—

"The Congress expresses the hope that all Anarchists will study the problem of an international language."

The Congress then closed with regrets that no time had been found available for the discussion of the other subjects on the agenda—Alcoholism, Productive Associations, and the Integral Education of Children.

## TO TOBACCO WORKERS OF EVERY COUNTRY.

COMRADES,—The attempted operations of politicians in the interior of the Trade Union movement in Holland have provoked discord in the Cigar-makers' Organisation as well as in other organisations of the country. Among the cigar-makers and tobacco workers the decision was taken by all those who called themselves frankly Anti-Parliamentarian to quit the old Union, the daily practical life of which at least taught that workmen's organisations should not be the prey of incessant quarrels over politics; that we can only fight the masters efficiently upon economic grounds (in strikes, lockouts, boycottings, etc.) if we have thorough agreement among ourselves and do not try to impose upon others, by discipline and Social Democratic intolerance, political opinions which they themselves do not desire.

The Federation of Cigar-makers and Tobacco Workers (male and female) who, about two years ago, seceded from the International Union of Cigar-makers and Tobacco Workers, has developed rapidly during its short term of existence. Numbering at the present 1,500 members spread over 33 sections, it has already almost reached the numerical strength of the Union, which has diminished exactly in proportion as the Federation has gained in adherents.

It is precisely the rapid growth of our new organisation which has chiefly contributed to the recognition that the tobacco workers in other countries must have suffered just the same experiences as ourselves. The intolerance of politicians, who will sacrifice every effort at unity in the economic struggle to their petty task of legislation, is international.

It seems to us certain, therefore, that our work of organisation upon a strictly economic base will not have attained its aim unless we have an International Union of tobacco workers, who, with ourselves,

stand plainly upon the revolutionary ground of the class struggle, firmly resolved not to permit mutual separation or division by electoral campaigns and Parliamentary tactics.

Never has the need of an international and revolutionary organisation become more apparent than since the International Congress of Tobacco Workers held in Amsterdam in September, 1904.

From first to last the benefits of political action were emphatically upheld at this congress. And the fact that certain very distinct party tactics were in operation there, has revealed itself by this: that the delegates of the cigar-makers of different countries came one after another to make their Social Democratic profession of faith. In Holland, where Social Democracy degenerates more and more into a purely "small bourgeois" political party, this fact alone was likely to cause offence. But it appears to us that our colleagues, the cigar-makers of other nationalities, can never view with indifference that the workers (in our trade especially) are affected by a feebleness and inertia which disposes them to hope all from their deputies and, as a last resort, from the State, in place of learning to have confidence in their own powers.

In September, 1904, however, we yet hoped—though faintly—to come to a mutual understanding in spite of different political opinions. It was in this hope and not to leave one method untried whereby to fulfil the saying—Workers of all the World Unite!—that the Federation of Cigar-makers and Tobacco Workers (male and female) in Holland requested to be allied to the international organisation side by side with the Union. Invited to explain and justify our demand before the International Congress, we there met with the same intolerance from which we had just escaped.

"We must take part in political action," said Berner, our colleague from Berlin, to the delegates of the Federation: "as men we are Social Democrats." And it was with a certain professional pride that he reminded us—"Cigar-workers some years ago, were the first to follow Lassalle in fighting with all their power and before all for the conquest of universal suffrage."

This is, undoubtedly, very fine, but Lassalle lived fifty years ago, and during that half-century we have at least learnt something—that in the countries where universal suffrage exists, there reigns the same capitalist exploitation as in those where the suffrage is more or less restricted. Are we then, after half a century, to be lured by the same electoral phrases, and shall we because of elector-baiting interests, permit that our revolutionary action be paralysed?

Comrades, at the International Congress of September, 1904, at the time of the discussion as to our admission, we were confronted with a resolution which we could not accept and which rendered impossible affiliation with the international organisation, since upon the adoption of such a resolution whosoever is not a Social Democrat finds himself at once an outsider.

The exclusion of our Federation becomes striking in consequence of the resolution, which seems to us to be of considerable importance to the world at large.

As the most characteristic portion of this resolution appeared subsequently in a tactical proposal unanimously adopted by acclamation at the Congress, we reproduce it below:

"The sixth International Congress of Cigar-makers cannot decide to recommend Trade Unionist Organisations of Cigar-makers and Tobacco Workers to affiliate themselves to any one political party in particular; but the Congress declares political action to be necessary in conjunction with purely Trade Union action, that is to say, of course, the old and tried political action of the Social Democrats; to this end the Congress recommends all Trade Union workers to take part in politics, and deems it right to state that this Trade Union and political action will furnish the working class not only with the means for the amelioration of the conditions of life, but also for the final enfranchisement of the proletariat."

It is this curious phrase as to political action—"that is to say, the old and tried political action of the Social Democrats"—which was so repugnant to us at the time of the discussion upon the admission of the Federation, and which impels us to say:

*It is an international danger which faces the workers' movement, a danger of being ruled and Social Democratised as formerly the workers' movement was clericalised and catholicised.*

We, however, claim that from the moment of the adoption of the above-cited proposal such of our fellow cigar-makers who are a little less bound by dogmatic conceptions and somewhat more advanced than the Social Democrats will feel as little at home in the present international organisation as will those among them who adhere to other than the Social Democratic party. Even certain partisans of Social Democracy have not hesitated to state that the adoption of the above-cited resolution and its being made an essential part in the debates upon our admission, has been a "mistake" and an "act wanting fact."

Nevertheless, on the other hand, this very act has had the advantage of showing us where we stand in what concerns international relations.

Comrades, tobacco workers of other lands, we call for your opinion as to whether the moment has not arrived when the International Organisation of Tobacco Workers, which we see ruled by intolerance and fallen in an evil hour into the hands of Social Democratic leaders, should be opposed by a new and free International Union—a Union based strictly on the standpoint of the class war and cordial agreement between all the workers in the same trade, an agreement which we can only find in common action upon an economic ground.

Unions and workers in other countries who believe with us that

such an attempt at organisation should be made henceforth, are requested to send proof at least of their sympathy. At the same time we ask them particularly to forward us (before February, 1908), their opinion as to organising an International Congress of Cigar-makers and Tobacco Workers, a Congress in which the endeavour for an international agreement on the basis suggested shall stand as the first point of order of the day.

If the desired agreement, particularly on this point, can be reached, the Federation of Cigar-makers and Tobacco Workers of Holland will undertake all the necessary preparations for the projected Congress, the time and place of which, in this case, can be ultimately fixed in the summer of 1908.

Amsterdam, October, 1907.

All communications should be sent to the Secretary, J. J. HOMBURG, Borgerstraat 124, Amsterdam (Holland).

## INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

### Italy.

The principal effect of the recent strikes in Italy has been to show in all its nakedness the position of the Socialist Party. Hitherto there has always been a minority in the party who were more devoted to the practical evolution of the Labour movement than to the realisation of what they were pleased to call "Socialist ideals." This minority has now disappeared, and the whole strength of the party will henceforth be exerted for the realisation of these "ideals." To real Socialists, they declare, it matters not whether the popular tendency be for Direct Action; it is the duty of all Socialists to control all such tendencies and convert them into Parliamentary action. That is to say, wherever people are found discontented they must at all costs be persuaded to wait patiently, vote regularly, and have a faith in their Socialist leaders as absolute as any Catholic has in the Pope.

The absurd part of it all is that while the party is becoming more and more the most powerful conservative movement in the country, it is making even greater efforts to pose as the one and only party of the workers. If they had two hundred Deputies in the Chamber they could not show the political effrontery. With regard to the Trade Union Confederation, the executive of the party acts with the assurance of a Czar, summoning a meeting of the Confederation executive, telling it what it is to approve and what it is to condemn. This would indeed seem to be political power except for the interesting fact that by a simple duplication of offices the two executives differ scarcely in anything but name. At the same time the party press carries on a vigorous campaign of libel and insinuation against the Syndicalists, saying, for example, that because the Syndicalists are enemies of the Confederation, therefore they are enemies of the Unions, whose temporary officials have concocted this purely official Confederation.

On the people of Italy all these intrigues and kid glove tyrannies can have little effect. The recent strikes showed that when the masses are ready for action they will not wait for the word of command, and in the face of this obvious fact it is almost laughable to see the worthy professors without professions, and lawyers without briefs, "organising the people" on a worn-out system of sheer militarism.

But it is something for the progressive cause of the people that these organisers should have at last made clear their position and aims in practice as well as in theory. At a recent meeting of the Confederation one of the main items under discussion was how to weaken the power of the Camere del Lavoro, the local organisations, in order, so it was said, to strengthen the Trade Unions. Now it is well known that these local organisations have for some time been the most energetic in the country; they have in most cases been the mainsprings of the important strikes during the last few years. They have, in fact, been too progressive for the Socialist Party. They have shown that the people as a whole is very little concerned with political theory and dogma, that for the workers nothing is really important but the Direct Action of the workers. So in order to safeguard their precious "ideals" the Socialists are now seeking how to suppress these Camere del Lavoro.

The general condition of the country is one of expectant unrest. The increased cost of living has long since discounted any rises of wages won during the last few years, and at home the authorities have resorted to the old expedient of fixing a legal maximum price for the necessary food of the people. Still stranger is the action of the Government in anticipating the payment of dividends on Consols. Their idea is that in paying out a sum of £4,000,000 six weeks in advance the threatened financial crisis, which is at bottom a Labour crisis, will be averted. Perhaps they imagine that the workers are large holders of Consols! Before many days, too, the country will feel the effect of the thousands of families who are reported to be returning to their homes, driven out of the United States by unemployment. So that we have in Italy four separate indications of an approaching crisis: (1) the most advanced political party attempting to restrain the spontaneous action of the people; (2) the attempt to limit by law the maximum prices of necessities; (3) the Government anticipating payments to its creditors; and (4) a threatened immigration of unemployed.

### Denmark.

A comrade in Copenhagen writes:—I must tell you of something that has happened here that is a disgrace to our country. An Anarchist

comrade named Rasmussen has this morning (November 13) killed a policeman and, immediately after, himself. The cause of it would make a long story, so in a few words I can only tell you that last year he suffered eight months' imprisonment—a cruel sentence—for having written some articles displeasing to the authorities. When released he again commenced to write, and then the detectives began to persecute him in every possible way. He went to Sweden, but they followed, and finally he returned to Copenhagen. But there was no rest for him here, for he was hunted down by two detectives, who tried to arrest him, saying they would get him three months' imprisonment. Immediately he shot one dead, the other ran away, and he then turned the revolver on himself.

It is sad to lose such a good comrade, and it makes one burn with indignation at the action of our Government that is supposed to be so "good." What is more wicked than to make people kill? But this our Government is doing every day. Already twelve comrades are in gaol, and five or six more are to take their trial. You must look to Russia to find anything similar to this.

## PROPAGANDA NOTES.

[Reports of the Movement are specially invited, and should be sent in not later than the 25th of each month.]

### INTERNATIONAL ANARCHIST FEDERATION OF THE ENGLISH PROVINCES.

The above Federation was formed at a Conference held recently on the initiative of the Manchester comrades. It was decided that the object of the Federation be the solidifying of the different groups to enable each to help the other, and thus help as an organised body to spread our principles over a larger area than was possible in the past. And to put this into practice the following means were suggested:—

1. That groups be formed wherever possible, and that speakers' or organisers' expenses be borne by each group according to its numerical strength. The same principle to apply to the payment of postage, etc.

2. That the Federation Secretary notify each group as to the engagements of speakers, and invite their active co-operation towards keeping our speakers, if possible, lecturing in different places each week-end.

3. That all isolated comrades be written to and asked to keep themselves in touch with the Federation, so that they can be helped with speakers and literature to do propaganda.

4. That *Freedom* and the *Workers' Friend* be invited to help the Federation by inserting fully their reports and the names and addresses of the secretary of each group.

After confirming the selection of secretary (A. Despres, 27 Gidlow Road, Liverpool), it was decided to hold the next Conference in Liverpool on December 15, and that a public meeting be convened for the same date. The Conference concluded by calling upon all comrades to unite in one common effort to help the Federation to spread the principles of Anarchist Communism by the formation of groups or any other way possible. We afterwards passed a pleasant social evening with refreshments and songs.

### MANCHESTER.

The Manchester group have done a good deal of propaganda during the month. They are indeed a most energetic group, as besides holding their indoor lectures they have also done active work amongst the Trade Unionists, taking a most active part in the recent cap-makers' strike. They fought very strenuously against this strike being settled by arbitration, but the democratic idea of palliatives and the tone of respectability lent to it by the presence of our one and only Winston Churchill, the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the Mayor of Salford, a few Councillors thrown in, and lastly, law and order represented by the Chief Constable of Manchester, broke down what otherwise would have been a glorious victory for Labour. The group have also tried to revive the open-air meetings in Stevenson Square, both Comrade Kavanagh and myself being invited by them to carry this work on.

On November 11 they held a Chicago Martyrs meeting in the Labour Hall, Great Ducie Street, the speakers being Comrades Franks, Goodstone, Vermont, Ziedler, Clarke, and myself. The audience was a most attentive one, and at its close they proved their sympathy by giving a real good collection.

Thus ends a month's work that our Manchester comrades can always look back upon with pride. Bravo, comrades! Keep the flag flying that you have so gallantly unfurled, and make us more and more determined to show our active antipathy to the false society in which we live.

### LEEDS.

Leeds has thrown off her mantle of sleep to once more take an active part in the struggle for emancipation, and has formed a group called the Leeds Anarchist Self-Educative Group, their object being to study all that may tend to develop themselves, and thus be enabled to more accurately impart knowledge to others. Comrades Bodansky and Newdall, who founded the Jewish *Free thinker*—and who we can imagine to make it the success it is more or less to-day must have suffered many times the feeling of despair, but the truth of their ideal still spurred them on until now, having a widespread connection with agents and supporters in most parts of the world—have still further proved their solidarity by not only handing over the publication of the *Free thinker*.

and pamphlets to the group, but also giving them over 1,300 other books and pamphlets, as well as their large and varied assortment of printing type, etc. They make an appeal to all comrades abroad to help them to do their work effectively not only by pushing the sale of their publications, but above all to realise that such efforts can only be successful when they are monetarily supported.

I was invited to Leeds on November 3rd and held four very successful meetings. Our old comrade Mat Sollett reminded me of his fighting days eighteen to twenty years ago, for he was in splendid form. Comrade Nicoll, looking quite juvenile, gave a rapid but clear outline of Continental Syndicalism, Comrade Goldberg, who is a keen student of economics, very ably helping. I shall feel surprised if we do not hear more of our Leeds comrade Kitson. Altogether my impressions are that Leeds has at present in its group all the means to make them an effective fighting force for the propagation of our principles.

On Sunday, November 17, Comrade Nicoll delivered a lecture on "William Morris and his Times" in their meeting-place, 1 Fieldhead Terrace, in which he very ably illustrated and compared the Labour movement in this country during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the great Labour struggles, on the Continent during the same period, concluding by giving some revolutionary recitations, after which the comrades discussed the following week's programme, thus completing an evening of idealistic joy tempered with reason.

I feel assured, comrades, that the work you are doing to-day must bear its fruit in the future, so continue to let us hear of your efforts.

#### CARDIFF.

I hear from our Cardiff comrades that they have recently formed a group there and are doing their best to spread the principles of Direct Action by keeping themselves in touch with the Trade Unions. They have also formed a group in Swansea, but they feel the lack of English speakers, especially in Cardiff, where they think a good strong English group could be formed in a very short time, ways and means towards which they desire to be discussed at our next Conference to be held in Liverpool on December 15. Thus the light is spreading far and wide, proving more and more the necessity of cohesion, solidarity, and organisation amongst us.

#### LIVERPOOL.

The Revivalists have more than played their part in the spread of our doctrines, for with the assistance of Comrades Beavan, Kavanagh, Fairbrother, O'Shea, and others good and healthy work has really been done, with the result that the group is stronger to-day than ever. Comrade Turner is due to lecture here on December 1, and everybody is working hard towards making it a huge success.

#### BURNLEY.

Comrade Silverman, of Burnley, makes an appeal to all sympathisers to turn up at 10 West Gate on Monday nights at 7 o'clock, with the view of forming a group in Burnley. I hope to hear that his efforts and the efforts of all other comrades have their reward in more work being done.

On behalf of the Federation,  
A. DESPRES.

Comrade Beavan also writes from Liverpool:—"During the past month we have had good indoor meetings. Papers have been read by Comrades Bessie Ward and Metcalf on "The Social General Strike" and "The Shop Assistants Union and Direct Action." The discussions were of an interesting character, comrades showing a keen desire to know and understand the problems involved. A suggestion was made for an appeal to FREEDOM to reprint "The Social General Strike" and Comrade Blair Smith's "Direct Action v. Legislation," these two pamphlets being considered valuable for propaganda purposes. At the same time it is recognised that the FREEDOM Group is already too much burdened with the expense attached to the issue of our paper, and we therefore further suggest that comrades and groups throughout the country should send financial help for the purpose of getting these pamphlets reprinted. Our group is prepared to guarantee £1 as a start, and we hope others will follow suit. If Direct Action as an antidote to Parliamentary tactics is to be thoroughly advocated, we must recognise the necessity of getting suitable literature for distribution. We have been getting ready for Comrade Turner's visit, and in next month's issue will be found a complete report of meetings."

#### INFORMATION WANTED.

Roger Williams—known as one of the earliest advocates of religious toleration, the founder of Providence, Rhode Island, after his expulsion from Massachusetts—when he had become Governor of Rhode Island, according to the "Dictionary of National Biography," "earned some unpopularity in 1656 by issuing a warrant for the arrest on a charge of high treason of one of his old followers, William Harris, who had given an absurd application to Williams's views [of toleration, etc.] by promulgating anarchical doctrines, such as the unlawfulness of 'all earthly powers' and the 'bloodguiltiness' of all penal discipline." This seems to mean that William Harris was one of the early forgotten Anarchists. Is anything further known about his theories and history?—M. N.

#### MONTHLY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(November 9 + December 4.)

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