

F R E E D O M B U L L E T I N

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MANAGERS OF THE ESTATE.

People often talk glibly about electing Labour men or Socialists to Parliament or to municipal bodies, and of the beneficial results which will follow for all those who work by hand or brain; but few who talk like this ever seem to have any real idea of the purpose of the institutions to which they elect their representatives. For centuries this country was ruled and administered on behalf of a small but privileged class who owned all the land worth owning, and who regarded the rest of the community as having been provided by a beneficent deity as hewers of wood and drawers of water for them. They controlled Parliament, the judiciary, the army, the navy, the Church, the civil service, all the principal educational institutions—in fact, everything useful in carrying on the work of ruling this country, which they regarded as their private estate. Parliament passed laws to safeguard their interests, the judges interpreted them, and the police and, when necessary, the soldiers enforced them. The interests of this privileged class were alone considered worthy of notice, and if sometimes legislation was passed for the protection of the working class, it was simply because they were workers on their estate.

With the coming of the Industrial Revolution, another powerful class arose, and after much opposition the Reform Act was passed and the franchise granted to give voters the impression that they helped to govern the country, but in reality little was changed. With the subsequent extensions of the franchise to include all adults over the age of twenty-one, the illusion of self-government was complete, and to-day we are told that by dropping pieces of paper in a ballot-box once every few years we can accomplish anything we desire. Revolutions, it is said, are unnecessary and harmful.

The facts, however, give the lie to this assertion. Very little change has taken place in the government of this country. The privileged class are still in full control, and even though many Labour and Socialist men and women are Members of Parliament, city councillors, borough councillors, and magistrates, they are simply carrying on the administration of the country under laws passed by their masters, and so long as the interests of the privileged class are not endangered, the Labour Government and Labour councillors will be allowed to carry on. MacDonald and his Cabinet have a great reverence for the British Empire and the Mother of Parliaments. In his Empire Day address, which was broadcast to the world, MacDonald spoke sneeringly of those "trying to break abruptly with the past," and said the British Empire "has the genius of being responsive

to the needs of changing times." This must be a great comfort to the two million and a half unemployed.

Our Labour Ministers are fond of saying that this must be a democratic country, where engine drivers and dockers and farm labourers can become Cabinet Ministers. But that shows the astuteness of the real rulers of the country. When they see the Labour Ministers in their Court dresses bowing and scraping at official receptions they know they have been caught and tamed, and that their privileges are perfectly safe in their hands. These men and women are bribed with big salaries and flattered by their aristocratic masters and their wives, but when it comes down to brass tacks in Parliament, they find themselves hedged in by ancient and musty laws and rules of procedure, which prevent them going either fast or far, if they have the wish to do so. When MacDonald became Prime Minister in 1924, Asquith grimly remarked, "He has a policeman on either side of him," and in essence the position is the same to-day. He is regarded by the privileged class as temporary manager of their private estate, and must take his orders from them. He is allowed to pay lip-service to the interests of the workers who voted for him and the Labour Members, but beyond doing some red cross work in assisting those who are wounded or cast aside in the ranks of industry, the Labour Government have made no change in the position of the workers. They are still hewers of wood and drawers of water for their masters, and will remain so while they put their faith in Members of Parliament and not in themselves.

To see the rulers of this country in all their glory one should go to the Eton and Harrow cricket match at Lords, or the lawn at Ascot or Goodwood, or to Cowes during the Regatta week. There you would find wealth and luxury rampant. The aristocratic folk who stroll about at these functions draw their wealth from all the exploited races of this far-flung Empire, and generations of domination have bred in them a supreme contempt for the common herd who produce their wealth. Governments come and Governments go, and even if a Socialist Chancellor of the Exchequer raises the income tax or the death duties, the money goes towards the payment of interest on their war loans, or to the maintenance of the army and navy which protect their wealth. A few millions may be given to the unemployed, but merely to keep them from starving and thinking too much of "trying to break abruptly with the past." The astute folk who rule us know that a Labour Government is much more likely to keep the workers

quiet during hard times than any other Government, and the sweets of office and the rubbing of shoulders at the many society functions have swept away all thoughts of harm they may have had about the bloated capitalists and exploiters.

There are many good revolutionists who even now think that radical changes may be brought about by Parliament if only the right people are sent there. Well, for thirty years they have been working to get the "right people" there, and they must admit the result is a tragedy. Parliament, as

an institution, to us, is representative of exploitation and robbery. It has ever been used to protect the interests of an arrogant and aristocratic class, and if those revolutionary changes which all thoughtful people desire are to be brought about, they must come, not through Parliament, but in spite of Parliament. We are of those who would "break abruptly with the past," and the sooner the better. Government is always a sign of domination, and domination has always meant wealth and luxury for a few and toil and hardship for the many.

THE REVOLUTION IN SPAIN.

The Monarchist régime in Spain has been shattered and the Catholic priesthood has lost most of its powers. Alfonso has departed—unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. His reign has been a record of cruelty, oppression, and greed. When we heard the news our thoughts at once went back to that October day in 1909 when Francisco Ferrer was shot in the trenches of the Montjuich Fortress at Barcelona. Young Alfonso on that occasion showed himself a willing tool of the cunning and ruthless Catholic hierarchy of Spain, who had long sought the death of Ferrer because of his libertarian educational ideas as expressed in the Modern School at Barcelona, which he founded in 1901. Ferrer's judicial murder was but an incident in the eternal struggle between liberty and authority, but it threw a flashlight on the corruption of official Spain. Since then every attempt to throw off the dead weight of the Monarchy and the Church has either been side-tracked by the political hacks of the King or drowned in blood. The history of the Anarchist and Syndicalist movement in Spain is a ghastly record. Assassination, torture, exile—these have been the lot of those who dared to speak openly and frankly of the sufferings of the workers. The Syndicalist movement, however, fought back and managed to survive until the Dictatorship, when all activity was driven underground or severely limited.

The brutal oppression of the workers, however, was not the cause of the downfall of the Monarchy. Oppression is so universal that it can easily be tolerated by other sections of the nations. The principal factor was the war in Morocco, when 10,000

Spanish troops were wiped out by the Riffs in one battle. The Moorish adventure had been much criticised from the beginning, but was forced through by Alfonso and his clique in their greed for plunder. But the disaster to the Spanish Army and the financial strain of the subsequent campaign raised a storm of indignation against the King who, to save inquiry into the matter, appointed a Dictator and suppressed all constitutional liberties. For eight years Alfonso has ruled through the Dictator, but modern capitalism demands more freedom than dictatorships allow, especially when accompanied by clerical corruption; and after one or two abortive revolts, the storm burst in all its fury. The monarchy collapsed like a pack of cards, and the old grandees of Spain followed Alfonso to safety as rats leave a sinking ship.

The revolution is not a social revolution, though the workers had their part in it, but it has swept away the old rottenness; and the people who have shown their strength must now use it to build better and freer institutions. Some of the old religious superstitions have been shed; they must now shed some of their political and economic ones.

A breath of free air has swept through Spain. The Anarchist and Syndicalist Press has been reborn, and we hear from a comrade in Barcelona of an Anarchist meeting with an audience of 10,000, the first Anarchist meeting for many years without police supervision. Everywhere the workers are rejoicing at their new-found liberties. They must see they never lose them. Their political victory is complete; now for an economic and social victory.

RURAL SIGNS OF CHANGE.

Strange things are happening in the agricultural community of England. There are signs of change that indicate a reversal of the cringing Tory attitude which put all the initiative of the farmers under the heel of the National Farmers' Union. The policy of this body is that the Government ought to make farming pay, especially by a tariff that would make the urban proletariat do the paying. The Labour Party pretends that it can make farming pay by other State measures; but the strange and significant point about the new agricultural orientation is that it completely ignores all the political parties and all reference to the State. Dr. Addison's State farming schemes and his new landlordism for smallholders under State control and his State control of marketing have not caused anything like the stir at

N.F.U. headquarters that has been made by the new determination shown by the agricultural co-operative societies to throw off the yoke of the N.F.U., which the first Labour Administration put on their necks. It started with a conference of 112 societies privately held in London in December, 1930, in defiance of the claim of the N.F.U. to be the sole authority in such matters. At this conference the main theme was the lessons to be learned from the consumers' co-operative movement, and the chief desire expressed by the conference was that the agricultural producers' societies should be free to associate themselves with the organised consumers for an exchange of goods and services. The suggestion of setting up again a central State-aided body (the old Agricultural Organisation Society) was

rejected, and a Committee was appointed to find out on what terms the agricultural societies would be accepted as members of the Co-operative Union. The Committee went to Manchester and there also found changes had taken place. The policy of the Co-operative Union used to be that agricultural societies could only join their geographical sections of the Union, where they would be submerged minorities among the consumers' societies; the Co-operative Union now offers to set up an autonomous agricultural section on an equal footing with the other sections. Hearing this, the N.F.U. became alarmed, made various concessions, and said they would have nothing to do with co-operation if the Societies joined the Co-operative Union.

However, a "free" conference of societies held in May, showed that a number of these farmers' societies have decided to throw in their lot with the voluntary organisations of the urban workers. England being such a politics-ridden land just now, the news will hardly find its way into the Press, but these developments show our connection with the world theatre in which the great economic drama is being played, from Capitalism to Co-operation, from Autocracy to Anarchism. In Russia, many of the agricultural co-operative societies are still carrying on their fight for the survival of voluntary association

in a welter of State coercion. In America, the whole edifice of profit-making institutions supported by the State is trembling, and the best of the co-operative organisations are refusing to accept their part of the hundred million pounds bribe which is the State's bid for control of their activities. In China, the only reason the whole country does not swing over to an alliance with Russia against the pretentious American and European Governments, I am told by a Chinese student recently arrived from Canton, is that "the leaders of the popular movement feel that Anarchist Communism is more natural to our people than Communism of the Russian kind." Even in Eastern Europe the free association of the producers is overriding the decrees of political alliances; while Geneva, apart from all the flummery about the League of Nations and disarmament, is becoming an international meeting place for co-operative organisations which want to set up an entirely new order of non-profit-making international trade. The new direction taken by the English agricultural co-operative societies may seem to casual observers a small matter in itself; it gains significance, however, not only from its complete independence of any of the political currents of the day, but also from its parallelism with what is taking place on a large scale elsewhere.

RUSTICUS.

ANARCHISTS AND SOCIAL REVOLUTIONISTS.*

The Anarchist movement is fortunate in having within its ranks such a splendid historian and bibliographer as Max Nettlau. His knowledge and understanding of Anarchism are unique, and his painstaking energy has produced a number of volumes dealing with the subject. This volume is the third of a series on the Anarchist movement. The two previous volumes were "Der Vorfrühling der Anarchie" (1925) and "Der Anarchismus von Proudhon zu Kropotkin" (1927), which were reviewed in *Freedom* when they were published. In the present volume he displays a knowledge of our movement and of its literature which is overwhelming and must have entailed a tremendous amount of research. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, and the United States are dealt with and the development of the propaganda of our ideas in those countries reviewed; but the chapter which especially interests us is the one in which he deals with the beginnings of modern Socialism in England. In the period under review the Anarchist movement was just emerging from a series of Socialist organisations which were revolutionary in spirit but had hardly crystallised their aims and principles. Nettlau traces the history of these groups and of the Socialist League in particular. In the League Statists and anti-Statists worked together for a time, but when the question of Parliamentary candidatures arose a split was inevitable. William Morris was the driving force in the League and his writings in the *Commonweal* were frequently Anarchist in spirit, especially his "News

from Nowhere," which was published serially in the paper; but he was rather a free Socialist or Communist than an Anarchist.

The first Anarchist paper in England was the *Anarchist*, published by Henry Seymour (March, 1885, to August, 1888). Individualist until April, 1886, it then proclaimed itself Anarchist-Communist. In October, 1886, Mrs. Wilson and Peter Kropotkin founded *Freedom*; and we think it may be claimed that this event was mainly responsible for bringing together the scattered Anarchist groups in England and making a definite movement of them. All these happenings are sketched by Nettlau with a wealth of detail of great interest to Anarchists, both old and young. He recalls the names of men and women whose work in those early days is almost unknown to the present generation, but who helped to build up the Anarchist movement and also what we speak of broadly as the Labour Movement. It is good to have all this recorded in a permanent form, our only regret being that these books are in German. Some day, we hope, an English translation of the series will be published and become available to English students of the Anarchist movement.

We render our hearty thanks to Max Nettlau for his excellent historical work, and look forward with interest to further volumes.

All communications should be addressed to
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* "Anarchisten und Sozial-Revolutionäre. Die historische Entwicklung des Anarchismus in den Jahren 1880-1886. Von Max Nettlau. Pp. 409. (Asy-Verlag, G.m.b.H., Berlin S.14.) Cloth, M.6; paper, M.4.50.

PETER KROPOTKIN.*

Recollections and criticisms by one of his old friends.

Peter Kropotkin is undoubtedly one of those who contributed most—more even, perhaps, than Bakunin and Elisée Reclus—to the elaboration and propagation of the Anarchist idea, and for this he has well merited the admiration and gratitude which all Anarchists feel for him.

But respect for truth and the supreme interest of the cause make it necessary to declare that his work has not been wholly and exclusively beneficent. This was not his fault; on the contrary, it was just the eminence of his merits which caused the evils which I propose to indicate.

It was only natural that Kropotkin could not, nor could any other man, avoid mistakes and comprehend the whole truth. Under these circumstances it would have been right to profit by his precious contributions, and to continue to search for new progress.

But Kropotkin's literary talents, the value and extent of his work, his prestige due to his fame as a man of great learning, the fact that he had sacrificed a highly privileged position to defend, at the price of danger and suffering, the cause of the people, and with all that the charm of his personality, which laid under a spell all who had the good fortune to come near to him, all this gave him such a reputation and influence that he appeared to be, and to a great extent really was, the recognized teacher of the great majority of Anarchists.

It happened thus that criticism was discouraged, and the development of the idea was arrested. For many years, in spite of the iconoclastic and progressive spirit of Anarchists, most of them on the field of theory and practice did nothing but study and repeat Kropotkin. To say something differing from him was to many comrades almost an act of heresy.

Hence it would be right to submit Kropotkin's teachings to severe and unprejudiced criticism, to distinguish between what is always true and alive and that which later thought and experience may have demonstrated to be erroneous. This would, by the way, not concern Kropotkin alone, for the errors which can be placed to his charge were professed by Anarchists before Kropotkin had acquired an eminent position in the movement. He has confirmed and continued them by giving them the support of his talent and prestige; but we, the old militants, we have all, or nearly all, our share of responsibility in this.

In writing this time on Kropotkin, I do not propose to examine thoroughly all his doctrine. I will only record some impressions and recollections which might help, I believe, toward a better understanding of his moral and intellectual personality and of his merits and faults.

Before all, however, I will say a few words which come from my heart, for I cannot think of Kropotkin without being moved by the recollection of his great kindness. I remember what he did in Geneva in the winter of 1879 or 1880 to help a group of Italian refugees in distress, to which I belonged; I remember

the care, which I might call maternal, which he took of me in London one night when I had been the victim of an accident and had knocked at his door; I remember a thousand traits of his gentle behaviour with everyone; I remember the atmosphere of cordiality which one felt in his society. For he was really a good man, of that almost unconscious kindness which feels the urge to relieve all suffering and to spread around him smiles and joy. One might, indeed, have said that he was kind without knowing it: in any case, he did not like to be told so. He felt offended because in an article written on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, I had said that kindness was the first of his qualities. He rather preferred to show his energy and fierceness, perhaps because these latter qualities had been developed in the struggle and for the struggle, whilst kindness was the spontaneous expression of his intimate nature.

I had the honour and the good fortune to be attached to Kropotkin for many years by most fraternal friendship. We liked each other because the same passion, the same hopes, animated us, and also the same illusions.

Being both of an optimistic temperament (I believe, however, that Kropotkin's optimism by far surpassed mine and sprang perhaps from a different source), we saw things rose-coloured, alas! too much rose-coloured; we hoped—this happened more than fifty years ago—for an early revolution which would realize our ideals. During this long period there were many moments of doubt and discouragement. I remember, for instance, Kropotkin, on one occasion saying to me: "My dear Henry, I am afraid that only you and I believe in an early revolution." But such moments passed quickly, and confidence soon returned; we explained in one way or the other the difficulties of the hour and the scepticism of comrades, and we continued to work and hope.

Nevertheless, one must not believe that we were of the same opinion on everything. On the contrary, we were far from agreeing upon many fundamental ideas, and we seldom met without some point of difference causing angry discussions between us. But as Kropotkin was always sure he was right and could not endure contradiction calmly, and as I, for my part, had much respect for his knowledge, and much thought for his indifferent health, we always ended by changing the subject to prevent our becoming too much irritated.

But this did not impair the intimate character of our relations, for we liked each other and we cooperated for sentimental rather than for intellectual reasons. However differently we explained facts or justified our conduct by arguments, in practice we wanted the same things and were impelled by the same ardent desire for freedom, justice, and well being for everyone, hence we could march together in agreement.

And, in fact, there was never a serious disagreement between us until the day when, in 1914, a question of practical conduct of capital importance for me and for him presented itself: that of the attitude which Anarchists ought to take with regard

* Article written for the Kropotkin memorial issue of the Russian review, *Probuzhdenie* (Detroit), February, 1931, translated from the original French text, printed in *Le Reveil* (Geneva), April 18th, 1931.—N.

to the War. On this disastrous occasion his old preferences for all that was Russian or French were rekindled and strengthened, and he declared himself passionately a partisan of the Entente. He seemed to have forgotten that he was an Internationalist, a Socialist, and an Anarchist; he forgot what he had said himself not long ago on the war which the capitalists prepared*; he expressed admiration for the worst statesmen and generals of the Entente; he treated Anarchists who refused to enter the Sacred Union as cowards, deploring that age and health did not permit him to take a rifle and to march against the Germans. No means of coming to an understanding. For me this was a real pathological case. In every way this was one of the most painful, the most tragical moments of my life (and I dare to say, also, of his life), that moment when, after the most painful of discussions, we separated as adversaries, nearly as enemies.

My pain for the loss of a friend was great, and also for the damage resulting to the cause by the dismay which such a defection would spread among Anarchists. But, in spite of all, my love and esteem for the man remained intact, and also the hope that when the frenzy of the hour had passed and he would have seen the consequences of the war which could have been foretold, he would recognize his error and become again the Kropotkin of old.

Kropotkin was at one and the same time a scientist and a social reformer. He was possessed by two passions: the desire to know and the desire to bring about the well-being of humanity. Two noble passions these, which can be useful one to the other, and which one would like to see in every man, without their being by this one and the same thing. But Kropotkin had an eminently systematic mind. He wanted to explain everything according to the same principle, he wanted to reduce all to a unity—and he did so, often even, in my opinion, in the teeth of logic. Thus he based his social aspirations upon science, as they were, in his opinion, only rigorously scientific deductions.

I have no special competence to be able to pass judgment on Kropotkin as a scientist. I know that in his young days he had rendered remarkable services to geography and to geology; I appreciate the great value of his book, "Mutual Aid," and I am convinced that with his great culture and his highly developed intelligence he could have given greater contributions to the progress of science if his attention and activities had not been absorbed by the social struggle. It seems, however, to me that he lacked something to make him a real man of science; the capacity to forget his desires and preconceptions in order to observe the facts with an impassive objectivity. He seemed to me to be rather what I should really call a poet of science. He might have been able to arrive at new truths by intuitive genius, but others would have had to verify these truths, men with less genius or no genius at all, but better gifted with what is called the scientific spirit. Kropotkin was too passionate to be an exact observer.

It was his habit to conceive a hypothesis and

then to search for the facts which ought to justify it; this might be a good method for discoveries, but it happened to him without this being his wish, that he could not see the facts which contradicted the hypothesis.

He could not make up his mind to admit a fact and often not even to take it into consideration, if he did not first succeed in explaining it, that is, to make it enter into his system.

As an example, I will relate an episode occasioned by myself.

Being in the Argentine Pampa some time between 1885 and 1889, I happened to read something on the experiments in hypnotism of the Nancy school. The subject interested me greatly, but I had not then the means to get further information. Returning to Europe, I met Kropotkin in London and asked him if he could give me information on hypnotism. He replied right away that nothing of this must be believed, that it was all fraud or hallucination. Some time later, when we met again, conversation drifted once more to the subject of hypnotism, and with surprise I noticed that his opinion had completely changed; the hypnotic phenomena had become an interesting subject worthy of study. What then had happened? Had he become acquainted with new facts? Or had he found convincing proofs of the facts which he denied at first? Nothing of the kind. He had simply read in a book of I know not which German physiologist a theory on the relations between the two hemispheres of the brain which could, by hook or by crook, explain the said phenomena.

With such a disposition of mind, which made him arrange facts in his own way in questions of pure science where there was no reason that passion should trouble the intellect, one could foresee what would happen in questions concerning closely his greatest desires and most cherished hopes.

Kropotkin professed the materialist philosophy which dominated the scientists of the second half of the nineteenth century, the philosophy of Mole-schott, Büchner, Vogt, etc., consequently his conception of the universe was rigorously mechanical.

According to this system, will (a creative power, the source and nature of which we cannot understand, as, by the way, we do understand the source and nature of "matter" and of other "first principles"), will, I say, which contributed more or less to the determination of the conduct of individuals and of societies, does not exist, is an illusion. All that was, is, and shall be, from the orbits of the stars to the birth and decay of a civilization, from an earthquake to the thought of a Newton, from the perfume of a rose to the smile of a mother, from the cruelty of a tyrant to the kindness of a saint, all did, does, and will happen by the fatal consecutive series of causes and effects of a mechanical character, leaving no room for any possibility of variation. The illusion of the existence of a will would be itself only a mechanical fact.

Naturally, logically, if will has no power, if it does not exist, if everything is necessary and cannot happen in another way, then the ideas of freedom, of justice, of responsibility, have no meaning, do not correspond to anything real.

* This refers to the pamphlet "War," published in French, by *Les Temps Nouveaux*, Paris, 1912, 22 pp., and in Italian, by *Il Risveglio*, Geneva, March, 1912, 22 pp.—N.

By logic, in that case, one may only contemplate the things that happen with indifference, pleasure or pain, according to everybody's sensibility, but with no hope and without any possibility of changing anything.

So Kropotkin, who was very severe on the historical fatalism of the Marxist, fell into the mechanical fatalism which is much more paralysing.

But philosophy could not kill the powerful will that lived in Kropotkin. He was too much convinced of the truth of his system to renounce it, or even to agree calmly when doubts were expressed about it. But he was too passionate, too great a lover of freedom and justice, to be stopped by the difficulties of a logical contradiction and to give up the struggle. He found a way out by inserting Anarchy into his system and by making of it a scientifically established truth.

He affirmed himself in his conviction by maintaining that recent discoveries in all sciences, from astronomy to biology and sociology, concurred in demonstrating more and more that Anarchy is the mode of social organization exacted by Nature's laws. One might have objected to him that, whatever conclusions might be drawn from contemporary science, it was certain that if new discoveries would destroy the present scientific beliefs, he, Kropotkin, would have remained an Anarchist in the teeth of logic. But Kropotkin could not have brought himself to admit the possibility of a conflict between science and his social aspirations, and he would always have imagined some means, no matter whether logical or not, of conciliating his mechanistic philosophy with his Anarchism.

Thus, after having said* that "Anarchism is a conception of the universe based upon the mechanical interpretation of phenomena, comprehending the whole of Nature, including the life of societies" (I confess that I have never succeeded in understanding what this means), Kropotkin forgot his mechanical conception as if it were a mere nothing, and threw himself into the struggle with the impulse, the enthusiasm, and the confidence of one who believes in the efficacy of his will, and hopes by his action to obtain, or to help to obtain, what he desired.

In reality, Kropotkin's Anarchism and Communism, before being a question of reasoning, were the result of his sensibility. The heart in him spoke first, and then came the reasoning to justify and to strengthen the impulses of the heart.

The basis of his character was constituted by love of man, sympathy for the poor and the oppressed. He really suffered by the sufferings of others, and injustice, even if in his favour, was insupportable to his spirit.

At the time when I frequently met him in London,† he made his living by contributing to magazines and other scientific publications, and he was in a situation of comparative ease. But he felt it as a reproach to be better off than most of the manual workers, and he seemed always to wish to

excuse his little comforts. He often said of himself and those in a similar situation: "If we have obtained instruction and developed our faculties, if we have access to intellectual pleasures, if we live in material conditions which are not too bad, this is because we benefited by the chance of our birth from the exploitation which weighs upon the workers; to struggle for their emancipation is for us a duty, a sacred debt which we must pay."

By love of justice, as if to expiate the privileges which he had enjoyed, he had given up his position and neglected his beloved studies in order to devote himself to the education of the workers of St. Petersburg, and to the struggle against the despotism of the Tsars. Impelled by the same sentiments, he had later joined the International and accepted Anarchist ideas. Finally, among the different Anarchist conceptions he had chosen the Communist-Anarchist programme which, being based upon solidarity and love, goes beyond justice itself.

But naturally, as might be foreseen, his philosophy was not without influence upon his manner of conceiving the future and the struggle which had to be waged to arrive at it.

Since by his philosophy all that happens had to happen, Communist-Anarchism, which he desired, had necessarily to triumph as by a natural law. And this took all incertitude away from him and hid every difficulty. The bourgeois world was fated to fall; it was already in dissolution, and revolutionary action only helped to accelerate the fall.

His great influence as a propagandist, besides his talent, was owing to the fact that he showed these happenings to be so simple, so easy, so inevitable that those who heard or read him were seized by enthusiasm.

The moral difficulties vanished, because he attributed to the "people," to the mass of the workers, all virtues and all capacities. He exalted, with good reason, the moralising influence of work, but he did not sufficiently recognize the depressing and corrupting effects of misery and subjection, and he thought that the abolition of capitalist privileges and governmental power were sufficient to make all men begin immediately to love one another as brothers and to care for the interests of others as much as for their own.

In the same way he saw no material difficulties or he easily got rid of them. He had accepted the idea then current among Anarchists that the accumulated products of the land and of industry were so abundant that for quite a long time it would not be necessary to give a thought to production, and he always said that the immediate problem was that of consumption; that to ensure the victory of the revolution it was essential to satisfy at once and amply the needs of all: production would naturally follow the rhythm of consumption. Hence that idea of the *prise au tas* (taking from the heap) which he made a fashion, and which is certainly the simplest manner of conceiving Communism and the most apt to please the masses, but also the most primitive and the most really Utopian.

And when one remarked to him that this mass of products could not exist, because the owners of the means of production normally have only produced

* In "Modern Science and Anarchism."—N.

† This refers mainly to the years 1881-1882.—N.

what they can sell with profit, and that perhaps during the first stages of the revolution rationing might have to be organized, and an impulse given to intensive production rather than encouragement to the taking from the heap, which after all does not exist, he began to study the question directly* and arrived at the conclusion that in fact abundance does not exist, and that in certain countries one was always under the menace of famine. But he became reassured when thinking of the great possibilities of agriculture aided by science. He took as examples the results obtained by some agriculturists and some agricultural scientists on a limited area, and from this he drew the most encouraging conclusions, not thinking of the obstacles which the ignorance and the spirit of routine of the peasants would have put in the way, nor of the time which, in any case, would be required for the universal spread of the new methods of cultivation and of distribution.

As always, Kropotkin saw things as he would have wished them to be, and as we all hope that some day they will be: he assumed as existing, or as immediately realisable that which can only be gained by long and hard-working effort.

Kropotkin conceived Nature as a kind of Providence thanks to which harmony must reign in everything, human societies included. This has made many Anarchists repeat this phrase, of a perfectly Kropotkinian flavour: "Anarchy is natural order."

One might ask how it comes that if Nature's law is really harmony, Nature has waited for Anarchists to come into existence, and still waits until they are victorious, before destroying the terrible and murderous disharmonies which at all times men have suffered.

Would it not be nearer to truth to say that Anarchy is the struggle within human societies against the disharmonies of Nature?

I have dwelt on the two errors into which, in my

* His article, "The Capital of the Revolution," in *La Révolte*, early in 1891, contains Kropotkin's first consideration of this subject, and his studies were caused by Malatesta's criticism expressed to him during the year 1890.—N.

SEX AND THE NEW WORLD.

Whatever attitude one may take towards that very daring book by D. H. Lawrence, "Lady Chatterley's Lover," few would deny the fundamental challenge therein. That challenge—ever old and ever new—the right of men and women to act, think, and discuss the intimacies of their sex relationships without the interference of puritanical busybodies, can only be understood by reviewing the economic, moral, and religious institutions which happen to prevail.

To Lawrence lies the credit, not of discussing a mythical past or an improbable future, but of portraying vividly and boldly the age we live in. That is why his book was banned. It still is!

The sex urge in men and women—as in all forms of sentient life—is strong and deep-rooted. Without it there could be no life as we understand it. With the freedom to do so, the sex urge will express itself

opinion, Kropotkin has fallen, his theoretic fatalism and his excessive optimism, because I believe I have seen the evil effects which they had upon our movement.

There were comrades who took seriously the fatalistic theory (euphemistically called determinist), and who, in consequence, lost all their revolutionary spirit. Revolution is never made, they would say, it will perhaps arrive in its time; but it is useless, unscientific, and even ridiculous to want to make it—and with these good reasons they withdrew, and thought of their own affairs. However, it would be a mistake to think that this was for all a cheap excuse for retiring. I knew several comrades of ardent temperament, ready to face every danger, who have sacrificed their position, their liberty, and even their life in the name of Anarchy, being convinced all the time of the uselessness of their action. They have been prompted by disgust of present society, by revenge, by despair, by love of the beautiful deed, but without believing that by this they have helped the cause of the revolution, and consequently without selecting the goal and the right moment, and without any thought of co-ordinating their action with that of others.

In another direction, some who, without giving a thought to philosophy, wished to work to hasten the revolution, believed their task to be much easier than it really is, did not foresee the difficulties, were not properly prepared, and thus they were powerless on the day when perhaps a possibility of doing something practical did exist.

May the errors of the past serve as a lesson to do better in the future.

I have finished. I do not think that my criticisms can belittle Kropotkin, who remains one of the purest glories of our movement. If they are correct, they will serve to show that no man is exempt from error, not even if he possesses the high intelligence and the heroic heart of a Kropotkin. In every way, Anarchists will always find in his writings a treasury of fruitful ideas, and in his life an example and an incentive in the struggle for what is good.

ERRICO MALATESTA.

cleanly and unashamed; for why be ashamed of a natural function? Without such freedom, deceit and perversion will prevail, as it does to-day. Economic systems may come and go, but the sex urge will remain. It will outlive all institutions!

Primarily, however, sex is the problem of youth. "A young girl and a young boy," says Lawrence, "is a tormented tangle, a seething confusion of sexual feelings and sexual thoughts which only the years will disentangle." For the youth of this country, the sex question is paramount, but its relationship to our economic system must not be overlooked. The economic supremacy of "the workshop of the world" has passed. Empire Free Trade and New Party groups—separate or combined—will never regain that supremacy. This country carries a burden and it is a growing burden; and it is on the youth

of to-day that the burden of to-morrow will fall. On them will fall the task of repressing all their aspirations, social and economic, if the present system is to continue.

The brains of the workers have become mechanised in our mechanical age; their chests have become stunted in factories and mines; their bowels are poisoned with substitute foods; and now the pressure is striking at their genital organs. Marriage is a hopeless outlook for the youth of to-day, and a family—even if desired—is a suicidal thought.

There is but one alternative, and that is to change the economic order. The freedom to assert their dignity and fulfil their aspirations can only be obtained from an economic structure with a foundation that will enable it to do so. That economic foundation must be free, not fettered. Anarchism alone will bring this freedom. Anarchism alone can serve the youth of to-day.

Let us spread its message!

H. MACE.

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