

Freedom

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NEWS FROM FRANCE.

(From our Paris Correspondent.)

THE ideas disseminated by the Anarchists are beginning to bear fruit. The idea of a General Strike is becoming more and more popular amongst the workers' organisations. *L'Egalité*, a paper whose Socialism is very much suspected, and which besides, after having jesuitically attacked the Anarchists, makes use of their ideas, and sometimes their writings, as its own (not that this displeases us at all), has commenced in its turn to take part in the campaign in favour of the General Strike.

Everything goes to show that the year 1890 will be a notable one. To the economic crisis which is becoming more and more intense, is to be added a political struggle more furious than ever. The Municipal elections which will take place in May will be contested. The Boulangists, beaten in September, thanks to discreditable manœuvres which were calculated to disgust the most simple-minded individuals with universal suffrage are preparing to try and secure their revenge. The Monarchists, who can very well accommodate themselves to our middle-class republic if they feel so disposed, have almost thrown over *le brav' général*. On the other hand three-fourths of the Blanquists headed by Granger and Roche have definitely given in their adherence to the party of the dictatorship. Only a few of these furious authoritarians have split off and consolidated their alliance with the Marxists. The crushing defeat of the Socialist Parliamentary Party at the last general election has not cured them of the electoral fever. They are exerting themselves to make a fresh start, and are going to make desperate efforts to secure some seats on the Municipal Council.

The other day these Blanquists took part in a painfully comic exhibition, which, if they were not incurable, would certainly cure those who still believe in the religion of idols and official staffs. On the 2nd of January, the Socialist (?) Blanquists led by Vaillant and Chauviere went to Père la Chaise to the grave of the revolutionary who was first to utter that thoroughly Anarchist war cry "Neither God, nor Master!" And these mad statisticians who are never sparing in their calumnies and injuries when Anarchists are concerned, expressed their devotion to the principles of Blanqui, and appealed, without joking, for a union of all the revolutionary forces. Three days afterwards the Boulangist Blanquists, led by the deputies Roche and Granger, went also to this grave, declared themselves also to be followers of Blanqui—poor corpse served up with all sorts of sauces! They even carried their impudence so far as to go and orate at the wall where the last combatants of the Commune were shot by the Versaillais troops, amongst whom Boulanger, who is to day the friend of these very Blanquists, distinguished himself by his ferocity.

The Socialist deputies show their incapacity more and more. Thivrier who has become popular amongst the imbeciles by going to Parliament in a blouse, has introduced a Bill to permit the workers to indulge in sport on Sundays by paying a tax of 9½d. Clusuret asks for the repression of duelling, and that the salaries given to deputies shall not be subject to seizure. In the meanwhile the people are starving.

All is quiet as yet, but infallible signs are to be seen which demonstrate that the fire is growing strong beneath the cinders. Who knows if the Boulangist crisis has not answered the purpose of purifying the Socialist groups by ridding them of the ambitious elements, and showing the mass of the people once again how worthless are the politicians. It would not be at all astonishing if 1890 saw a great forward movement of the workers, a wild awakening of the revolutionary spirit.

DEMOCRACY OR ANARCHISM.

IT is surely a somewhat arbitrary definition of the word Socialism to use it as a term of exclusion for the complete socialisation of all wealth, viz., Communism, and to confine it to the partial socialisation of wealth aimed at by certain Socialists who would limit their endeavours to the socialisation of land and certain of the agents of production. This sort of Socialism is obviously a compromise between the idea of the absolute individual right to monopolise wealth, i.e., to prevent others from using what one calls one's own, whether one is using it or not, and the idea of the common and equal claim of all to the use of the collective wealth of the whole society.

We are living exactly at the moment when the conflict between these two ideas of right and justice in economics is beginning to wax hot and

strong and is rapidly becoming general throughout civilised society, and the sort of Socialism referred to is the natural creed of all peaceable folks, who convinced of the injustice and woful consequences of private property or individualism in economics, are prepared to introduce the new or rather the growing idea of social justice as gradually and smoothly as possible; a sort of boring of the rock that has fallen athwart the stream of human progress. Some people seem to incline to bore it with a gimlet. As the idea of land nationalisation was the thin end of the wedge which opened a way for the idea of the socialisation of capital, so the idea of the socialisation of those means of production which afford a special instrument of exploitation when monopolised, is opening a path for the socialisation of all wealth. And the word Socialism, though it covers all these approximations to common ownership, should also, and of greater right, cover that Communism which is their logical and natural result.

We do not use the word Democracy in the vague and poetic sense in which it is employed, by Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter, for the whole progress of mankind from political, economic and social bondage towards liberty, equality and fraternity, but according to its exact political meaning—the rule or government of the many. Democracy is the natural and inevitable political form of the period of economic transition in which we are now living—for it too is a compromise—a transition phase of thought between two definite principles of human association.

There are two definite principles, on which human beings can associate for any purpose whatever, the principle of authority and the principle of free consent. Men associate on the understanding that one or some of them have a claim to over-rule the opinions or the actions or both of the others, or they associate on the understanding that they are all equals, meeting on equal terms, each one having as much claim as the rest to think and act on his own initiative, and therefore that common action must be decided upon unanimously. As far as we can judge human association began unconsciously on this latter principle. And after passing through a long phase of development, during which authority first became paramount, unconsciously, and was afterwards consciously adopted as a principle of social order, it would appear that humanity is returning to the association of free consent, but this time consciously and of deliberate intention, to escape the evils of the other system.

What we call the Saxon period in English history was one long struggle of the principle of authority in association against the principle of free consent; of the efforts of the land grabbers to obtain ascendancy in the folk moots of the village communities and the larger moots of the various federations, and of the biggest practising land-grabber who made himself king, to secure the ascendancy of himself and his companions in arms in all the public business of the community which, it would appear, was being carried on without his interference on the basis of free association and unanimity. We have scarcely any records of the working of the old principle in the purity of its unconscious ascendancy, we see its strength only in the long struggle that was made to retain it, re-appearing again (as in the guilds and the early days of the free cities) every time that anything like economic equality was restored in any section of society. The jury is a vestige of it that has lingered in a curious distorted medium down to our own times. In less civilised communities, in the mir in Russia and the hill communities of India for example, we see it still remaining in its ancient form—in Russia curiously overlaid by one of the foulest examples of the rival principle that history has furnished.

Of the dolorous history of that rival principle of authority we need no examples. We all know how the wretched fate of humanity has led us through the rule of a number of small tyrants, distinguished by strong muscles, to the rule of one big tyrant distinguished by superior cunning, and then again to the rule of a minority distinguished by superior capacities for land-grabbing and wealth-appropriating in general till it has landed us in the rule of the large minority of property holders over the propertyless masses. Each of these forms of over-rule has fought desperately both in the spiritual and the material sense with the form preceding it; first for bare survival and then for supremacy, and each has prolonged its existence far into the overlordship of its successor. At the present moment the recently victorious plutocracy is engaged in a conflict for dear life with that strange, shapeless monster, called vaguely democracy, which from being the obedient support and cat-spaw of the rule of the rich, has lately threatened to transform its accustomed gullible stupidity into an unknown aspect of threatening defiance.

Democracy is the political theory that assumes that all members of a community meet as equals on equal terms, but that nevertheless the majority have an absolute right to over-rule the minority. And it is

worth while to look closely into the real significance of this curious *non sequitur*, which starting with the formula of free association ends with the formula of authority.

Where does the majority get its absolute right from? Right is a dubious word that one gets in the way of using without explanation; but I suppose that we mean by it in a general way, a claim put forward by members of a society and allowed by the rest, either because they feel it to be just or because they are afraid or unwilling to contest it a socially recognised claim in fact. It is often said that men have no rights as against one another individually and collectively but such as they are able to maintain by superior force. And I think that though this barbarous and inhuman theory is perfectly untrue of many social rights, it is the universal explanation of the acceptance of a claim to rule. But can majority rule claim its right on these grounds?

Is it not a plain and obvious truth that supremacy in brute force by no means rests with the majority. History and daily life show us examples thick as blackberries of an energetic and resolute minority utterly defeating the majority in the most desperate trials of actual physical strength, ever since the days when a handful of Greeks defeated the mighty hosts of Persia on the plain of Marathon and Horatius and his two comrades held the Tiber bridge against the army of Lars Porsenna. Providence fights on the side of the strongest battalion, but not by any means on those of the largest. And this is even more obviously true when the contest is transferred to the intellectual field.

No: the history of authority has consisted of a series of minority rules, each one of which has existed in virtue of the superior possession of the real strength of vital energy in one form or another. And where is the evidence that the dominating force is about to become or is becoming the portion of the majority? The majority to-day retains the relation it has always retained to the energetic minority of the population. It represents the dead blight of a blind adherence to habit and custom, of insensibility, dullness and apathy, of lazy inclination to avoid all responsibility, all reform, all enlightenment, in fact all departure from the beaten track, all need for unwonted exertion even in thought. If it is to exercise authority it will exercise it only by the dead weight of inertia, the blind force of unreasoning and irresponsible stupidity—in the sense, in fact, in which it exercises it now and always has exercised it.

No doubt "the public collectively," as Mill says, "is abundantly ready to impose not only its generally narrow views of its own interests, but its abstract opinion and even its tastes upon individuals." And if it has machinery at command for doing this without trouble it will oppress without mercy. Do you think that the majority of American citizens were any more unwilling that the Chicago men or John Brown should be hanged than the majority of Jews that Christ should be crucified? Do you think that a *plebiscite* of London citizens, or the inhabitants of England would maintain the right of meeting in Trafalgar Square. In the name of human progress and the spontaneous individual initiative on which it depends, we may thank our stars that the majority as yet show no sign of acquiring that right to rule founded on superior force. But if the theory of democracy or the rule of the majority cannot be based on the appeal to force which has been the basis of all other overruling, what, then, is its basis? Shall we say expediency? It is a first approximation—a blundering attempt to return to the principle of free association, still hampered by the ideas of authority yet current in society. On all occasions for common action, or where a general understanding is desirable, one must have some principle of decision and the recent development of social feeling has rendered an appeal to the old species of authority as morally odious, as it is intellectually contemptible. It is a matter of common experience that men, like sheep and all other gregarious and social animals, have a pretty general tendency to go in masses and act together unless they are prevented by some abnormal division of interests. Each one of us is inclined by our social feeling to like in a general way to do what the rest like. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred where a number of people are met together to decide upon some common course of conduct, they will all in the end come to some definite decision in favour of one thing; because those who were at one time inclined to dissent, prefer in the end to act with the majority, if the matter is of practical importance; not because they are forced to do so by the majority overruling, but because the largest body of opinion has so much weight with them that they chose not to act contrary to it.

We all admit this general fact. It would be quite impossible to take any common action at all if it were not so. But the special theory of democracy is that the general tendency of humanity which becomes so apparent whenever men associate on anything like terms of economic equality, should be made by men into an arbitrary law of human conduct to be enforced not only in the ninety-nine cases where nature enforces it, but by the arbitrary methods of coercion in the hundredth case where she doesn't. And for the sake of the hundredth case, for the sake of enforcing this general natural tendency where nature does not enforce it, democrats would have us retain in our political relation that fatal principle of the authority of man over man which has been the cause of confusion and disorder, of wrong and misery in human societies since the dawn of history.

"Men are not social enough to do without it," it has been said. For our part we do not know when they will be social enough to do *with* it. Experience has not yet revealed the man who could be safely trusted with power over his fellows; and majority rule is nothing else in practice than putting into the hands of ambitious individuals the opportunity to crush their fellows by the dead weight of the blind mass of which we have spoken. If the principle of authority in human association survives the destruction of the plutocracy, the next ruling minority will probably be the wits and apostles of reason worship. But we do

not think they will have a long innings, even if they ever take their turn in the field at all. The real strength of democracy, its real terror for the ruling-classes of to-day, its real hold over the minds of the people lies in the fact that after all it is but the somewhat uncouth and misleading mask beneath which the principle of free and equal association is advancing to victory. The so-called advent of democracy means not that authority is transferred from the minority to the majority, but that authority is dying, and the masses and each individual man and woman of them, are preparing to throw off the yoke of property and authority together and assume the attitude of equality politically as well as economically.

It is a commonplace to say that every man who chokes has thrown off the yoke of authority, even of majority rule in matters of opinion; and generally speaking it is true, in spite of the occasional bursts of atavism in the form of some petty persecution. It is needless to dwell on the growing disrespect for the existing forms of authority in every relation of life. Let us only instance the change of spirit which has come over one sort of association—the smallest possible—that of marriage. Fifty years ago it would have been a scandal to deny the authority of the husband over the wife. Association would be impossible on any other terms than the authority of one of the partners, said the superior wisdom of the nation; and yet now, despite the prayer-book and the lawyers, any one in the more enlightened society of our time who disputed the perfect equality of the man and woman as regards a right to decide on their common interests and action, would be looked on as a barbarian. It is only one instance of a change of attitude which permeates the whole public opinion of our time.

Briefly, then, let us note what line the political organisation is likely to take in a state of society where the principle of authority in all forms of association—in action as well as in opinion—is no longer recognised as *moral* or *just*. First, it will be decentralised. Except in moments of extraordinary popular excitement, when a whole people may be said spontaneously to act as one man, we cannot have a centralised administration of public affairs by unanimity. That ancient tendency to the local management of affairs which has been mixed up with the principle of free association all through our history and is now declaring itself in the present attitude of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, in the demands for a local government bill, local government for London, etc., will take a much wider scope. Each town, village, locality, each trade and craft and art knows its own needs and affairs best, and each such group like each individual man can serve humanity in general best by themselves setting about what they see wants doing in their locality

instead of either sending some one else to do it elsewhere, or waiting for orders or permission from any central authority before beginning to act. Each commune, each association, will settle their own general affairs amongst themselves, every sane, grown-up person in the society having an equal voice in deciding what is to be done. This sort of decision by unanimity does not take so long or require so much patience after all when people know that they must reach such a decision on pain of losing some advantage and that they have no means of coercion to force their individual will or wills on their fellows.

But public business includes not only local affairs but matters of general concern to all the communes of a nation, not to speak of international federation of nations. How shall we manage them?

How are they managed now?

Each commune concerned will, we think, meet and discuss the affair in question and then send one or two of their number to meet like delegates from the other localities concerned. The congress will discuss the particular business in hand and after arriving at some general decision, the delegates who have each represented the ideas of their own locality, will return to their own communes, not with laws in their pockets to be enforced with soldiers and machine guns, or even "moral miracles in blue," but with proposals for some line of common action, as scientists or commercial men return from a congress now. Proposals which are not acceptable to the commune will not be acted on, but further discussed until some common understanding can be arrived at. The delay will be less costly in human effort and human suffering than any system of coercion.

INDIVIDUAL OR COMMON PROPERTY.

A DISCUSSION.

Comrade Tom Pearson writes: I should like to offer a few remarks in reply to comrade Tarn on the question of property. I think it would add to the value of the discussion if comrade Tarn would more clearly state his position. An inquiry into the meaning of property would mean in my opinion an inquiry into the whole history of Governments, it having assumed its most vicious and pronounced form under representative government. It is true that the possessive pronouns "mine" and "thine" have to-day the meaning Tarn gives them. But why? Because a man having the right to monopolise the means of life, and calling them his can compel his fellow men to slave for him whilst he lives in idleness and luxury. The truth is there is no use for the possessive pronouns in the sense Tarn means. Only the present conditions of immense wealth and great poverty give them any significance at all. In the awful struggle of to-day for a mere subsistence, they have a deadly meaning, but under a rational system in which wealth can be created in abundance, they would no longer be employed in the same sense. Tarn argues that if a man has no more property than he can protect by his might or artifice, he has a right to it. Might and artifice in my opinion cover a wide ground, and may mean that a

number of men have a right to organise together and monopolise something useful in society to the detriment of others. Tarn says it matters not how the possessor has come by his property. In that case we may presume that he would agree with hereditary right of ownership. I would like to ask all Individualists this question. Do you mean to respect the laws of inheritance or not? If not, what method of distribution of the present accumulated wealth do you propose; would you allow those who have possession of the property (no matter how they came by it) to retain it, if by their might or artifice they could protect it? If so, then clearly Tarn and the rest of the Individualist school are opposed to our ideas, for we believe in expropriating the expropriators, in fact, in the worker seizing the accumulated wealth and using it for the common benefit. Tarn's idea is that wealth should be distributed according to the natural gifts and talents of each. I would like then to ask him who is going to decide the merits and abilities of every individual. Every man and woman has some merit and ability, and because some have less than others, it is no argument that they should have less food, leisure, clothing, or shelter. What more can a man want than the full satisfaction of his needs and what less should any man have, however nature has endowed him. Tarn seems to think that Earl Dudley is a monopolist, because the State protects him. We think him a monopolist because his possession of land and mines deprives other people, who are compelled by that very fact to be his slaves, but if he could hold these things by his might and artifice instead of by means of the State, what good would there be in abolishing the State? Under a system of free communism there will be no talk of property, natural allowance or payments according to merits or ability, because men will be free, and wealth plentiful. In conclusion I should like to point out to our Individualist friends that we are not authoritarian communists; we are communists because we believe communism to be just and inevitable, but if comrade Tarn and his friends like to isolate themselves, and try their mutual banking, cost theory, or anything else, they will be free to do so when Anarchism is an accepted principle of social organisation.

NOTES.

CONFESSIONS OF THE BLOODHOUND OF CHICAGO. Captain Schaack, of the Chicago police, has lately favoured the world with a work on "Anarchy and Anarchists," in which with the fertile fancy of a detective "the best in America" they call him he has traced the details of the imaginary Haymarket conspiracy. His book should be called the "Confession of a great crime," for in it he shows, and glories in showing, how step by step he hunted a group of innocent men to their death. The quality of the evidence by which he attempts to bring home to our Chicago comrades the charge of having conspired to "murder the police" may be judged by his quotation, as decisive proof of Fielden's guilt, of his exclamation when he saw the coming police charge, "Here come the blood hounds, the police; you do your duty and I'll do mine." This according to Schaack was the preconcerted signal for the fatal bomb to be thrown! But the interest of the book lies not in Captain Schaack's ingenuity in constructing non-existent conspiracies, but in his estimate of the effects of the execution and imprisonment of the Chicago Anarchists on the revolutionary movement. "The movement is in reality more formidable than it was three years ago." He estimates the number of Anarchists at about 7,300. "Of these there are 35 known to us to be desperate men, ready to commit murder, arson, or any other crime to revenge themselves upon the officers and the magistrates who were concerned in bringing about the hanging of their leaders." There are about 40 women workers in the cause and schools have been established to further it. "Captain Schaack," says the *Times*, reviewing his book (Jan. 4, '90), "has his own views about the future of the Anarchists. He cites Verestschagin's gloomy prediction that the day will come when the two great defenders of society, the Church and the Army, will be powerless to save it from the rush of ravenous barbarians—when the Church will no longer awe or convince them, and the Army will refuse to shoot them down. Meantime Captain Schaack thinks that much may be done by a vigilant detective and an energetic police officer!" Unfortunately for him, his previous estimate of the growth of the movement since the police activities of three years back, throws some doubt over the efficacy of the police as a safeguard of social tyranny. Truly, as of old, "the blood of the martyrs is proving to be the seed of the church."

THE SIBERIAN MASSACRES. Our readers are aware of the shameless massacre of political exiles, which took place on the 22nd of last March, at Yakoutsh, in Siberia. The *Times* and several other newspapers have described how the exiles, going to present a petition to the governor, were detained in the prison yard, hustled, maltreated and finally when they produced their pistols in self defence, fired upon by the soldiers. Six of the exiles were killed and eight wounded; yet no attempt was made to investigate or rebuke the conduct of the soldiers, whilst their surviving victims were brought to trial, three hanged and the rest condemned to penal servitude for long terms or for life. The news of this shameless injustice did not reach Western Europe until last August; probably the Russian government trusted that the vengeance recked upon its foes in the depths of the wilderness, would never reach the ears of the civilised world at all. Since a defence has been needed, its agents, Mrs. Novikoff and such-like, have put about a lame story of a "plot," the discovery of a secret printing press, which the most reliable private information renders extremely unlikely, and even if true,

is no excuse for the ferocity of the retaliation. Our Russian comrades feel that the matter ought not to be allowed to drop, and an influential meeting of the Russian colony in Paris on December 10, passed a resolution of protest, to which we gladly draw attention. We trust that their example may be followed by all English Socialists and friends of humanity. The execution of public opinion cannot restore life to the dead, cannot even, we fear, bring freedom to those whose lives are wasting in mines and prisons; but it does distinctly tend to make such deeds less easy in future for the Russian government, which is very anxious not to be considered "barbarous."

SOCIETY ON THE MORROW OF THE REVOLUTION.

Translated from the French of JEHAN LE VAGRE.

III.—CLASS RULE.

WE have been told: Yes, it is true that the Commissions of Statistics would not be Government: they would determine production, distribute the products, they would establish this and organise that, but they would not have any authority. Then why establish them if the groups are free to disregard their commands when they do not find them to their taste? Where is their utility? Is it not simpler to allow the groups to organise themselves freely and regulate their production and consumption as they choose?

Whatever form the denials of the Collectivists may take, it will not prevent us from putting them into this dilemma, from which they cannot escape: either the groups and individuals will be free to accept or reject the decisions of these commissions, or the decisions will have the force of law, which means that a police force and an army will have to be established to compel their acceptance by the disobedient, in which case a Government will have been created with all its consequences.

In order to prove that it is really a Government which they wish to establish we will take the liberty of asking what do they wish us to understand by the rule of the working class, if it is possible to give an explanation of the phrase. Is it not, indeed, one of those high flown expressions which sound very well but are entirely devoid of sense, signifying absolutely nothing, empty words that are thrown to the crowd from time to time, so as to avoid giving them other explanations. We ask then what is this rule of the working class? how will it come about and how will it work? Whereupon we are told it is the keeping in subjection of the middle class by the workers! Very good, but what will become of this working class rule on the morrow of a revolution the aim of which will be to cause the disappearance of the inequalities which constitute the classes?

If we imagine this method of acting, this system of grouping, we can boldly draw therefrom the following conclusions: it is desired to organise the workers into a blind and unconscious mass, receiving their orders from certain chiefs of battalions, to accustom them to act only after an impulsion has been given, whilst they have no initiative apart from the impulsion received; and the final aim is the establishment of a state of things and a system of organisation which must not be enquired into and which will be imposed on all on the morrow of the Revolution.

We admit that under such a system we should be able to dispense with the official government having an army at its back to ensure obedience to its will, for our rulers would have in their hands the very forces of the Revolution, habituated to the execution of orders coming to them from above; and instead of having a dictatorship centred in some sort of a Council Chamber, we should have a dictatorship in our very ranks unseizable and ever being reborn. We Anarchists would fight with all our strength against such a dictatorship, which would have consequences far more terrible than all the others, for the people believing that they were defending their own interests would do nothing but execute the orders of their new masters.

Besides, as those individuals who would be taken from the workshop (for we suppose that workers would be selected to dictate) would no longer be able to produce, being compelled to give all their time to the exercise of this dictatorship, they would become by this very fact middle class men. The first thing they would have to do in order to carry out their principles would be to suppress themselves. But, you say, they would be there by the will of their comrades and in a position quite different from that of the middle class men of to day; if they did not produce materially, they would nevertheless do their share of useful work, seeing that they would be contributing to the progress of society. But this is mere quibbling. How will it help us to throw overboard one aristocracy if we raise another in its place? Shall we have made any progress thereby. It is not the number of the employers and proprietors which weighs so heavily upon our shoulders to day. Misery presses upon the workers at the present time not so much because property is owned only by a few as because the few need a system of organisation which involves the creation of a vast number of useless employments, and that the workers are compelled to produce for all that. It would be just the same in a society in which (under different names it is true) we should again meet with all the faults of the existing organisation.

A last objection to this working class rule: if the people make a Social Revolution with the object of taking possession of land, capital and all other forms of wealth, will not classes be abolished by this very circumstance? There will, we are told, be sure to remain some middle class persons who, discontented with the position in which they find themselves, will possibly be a danger: it is on them that war will be made. Very well, then you will, it seems, make war against those who are discontented

with the situation created by you? You will establish a Government to make war on those who desire to put society back; but when once this government is established, who will prevent it making war on those who wish to go forward? No, no, this dictatorship is too elastic, we do not want it. We Anarchists, who fight for genuine liberty, do not consider that the ill will of a few isolated individuals in society can be a danger to anybody, as they will be deprived of all that which constitutes their strength to-day—capital, wealth, government. On the other hand, an authority at the head of the new society would be a danger to all.

Moreover, does anyone seriously believe that this Collectivism could be established without its having to pass through the same tentative stages which are foreseen for Communism? Surely not, and whilst the latter would go on, feeling its way it is true, but at any rate in perfect freedom, allowing individuals of every variety of character and temperament complete liberty of association, Collectivism, with its claim to establish a single system of organisation, would go on, injuring the feelings of some, destroying the hopes of others, and immediately creating a contented class and new interests at its centres. It would leave to the discontented no escape but in another revolution. But by leaving the groups to organise freely, any group which no longer found itself in agreement with the developments of society could reorganise itself on new bases or the individuals who composed it, if this group no longer responded to their aspirations, could leave it to form new groups or enter other groups with which they could be more in agreement. And this could be done without in any way causing a general disturbance in society, for these changes would take place partially and by degrees. Then the progress of humanity would present to us a continual evolution which would lead us up to the goal for which we are striving—the common happiness.

It will be seen by what has been said that far from wishing to disturb at every instant those who are not of our opinion, we ask only the right, or rather the opportunity to exercise the natural and imprescriptible human right, of being able to organise ourselves in whatever manner we may desire, leaving those who do not think as we think free to organise themselves as they desire. In a word, what we want is again to take up our place in the sunlight, and we look forward to the Revolution precisely because the middle class uses the power which it has acquired and the economic situation which it has created for the purpose of enslaving us, and they have left us no other alternative but either to cowardly submit to this exploitation or to destroy it utterly. But in wishing to dispossess the middle class of this property which they hold we do not want to appropriate it and exploit it in our turn for our individual ends as the middle class did in '89 when they took possession of the wealth of the clergy and nobility. No, we wish to dispossess them of it in order to put it at the disposal of all, so that all without exception may take therefrom their share of enjoyment, and if in order to accomplish this transformation we have recourse to force, so far from this being an act of authority, as has stupidly been said, it is an act of liberty—we break the chains that confine us.

Another argument in support of the autonomy of groups and individuals in a society really based upon the solidarity of the individual efforts and interests is that the social idea progresses without cessation whilst on the other hand the individual arrives at a period when the development of his brain is arrested, his ideas become fixed, and he considers the new ideas professed by those younger than himself as follies. For example, do not the ideas of '48 appear to us to-day more or less feeble, and in what camp do we to-day find the few survivors of this period—those who formerly passed for enthusiasts? Without going so far back, does anyone to-day fight for the ideas of '71? What have we seen on the return of the amnestied, who by the fact of their transportation found themselves separated from the intellectual current? For the most part they have returned to us not even so far advanced in opinion as the Radicals. No, in desiring to establish a single method of organisation we build a barrier against the future, a barrier that can only disappear through a revolution of the next generation.

CRIME.

CRIME has arisen through the unjust procedure of those whose lives are given up to the pursuit of habits which bring injustice into the world's arena. Injustice fosters crime, because those who are persistently unjust prevent countless human beings from being in a position to live without being driven into a state of desperation, resulting in the committal of offences altogether repugnant to the better nature of the offenders. When a minority of the human brotherhood are in a position to make laws giving rise to gross injustice, which must be borne by those dependent upon the minority, then the dependents are forced to pursue criminal methods in order to secure necessities, and yet they are afterwards severely punished by those very laws which whenever they are enforced, cause criminals to become numerous. Crime can only be blotted out of the world's history when the evils which prompt persons to commit crimes are abolished, through the instrumentality of those who are at this moment under the control of a few monopolists. And since ignorance keeps the many in subjection to the few, the former must get rid of that which gives a minority the power to reign predominant over them.

Caste distinction prevents the wealth producers from living the lives of honest citizens, and the evils arising out of it are sufficient to create a desire, among those made miserable by it, to overthrow organisations which have made caste distinction a necessary thing, and which force those not belonging to the privileged class to almost bend the knee of

adoration before the persons belonging to the same. This class is the only one for which our social structure exists, and it is responsible for the many criminals who now parade European soil; for the evils which create crime emanate from the inhuman doings of the privileged minority, for keeping the many under their control, that they may boast about their superiority over the ignorant majority, who look upon the minority as having power to reign over them. If every individual could have the opportunity to labour honestly for his personal requirements, the result would be the abolition of the crime which is brought into being through the criminals being prevented from securing what human nature must have or otherwise the body ceases to live. When we examine the conditions of rich and poor, we discover that the latter are forced to do things which they would not do if the rich did not prevent them from receiving a share of the commodities requisite for keeping their bodies in a healthy condition. Instead of being free to perform the labour essential for producing the articles necessary for consumption, they are driven too and fro by a minority who have the power to refuse them the right to labour whenever the minority choose to exercise such power; which is an every day occurrence. Therefore our social institutions which recognise private property are the authors of crime. Unjust laws make private property legal, and sanction the unnatural conduct of the property owners.

Crime is unnatural and can be destroyed; every disease is removable by the destruction of its causes, but since unnatural conditions create unnatural diseases, these conditions must be destroyed before unnatural evils can be blotted out; for unless the origin of the disease is removed the evil will grow greater every moment its origin is allowed to remain. In a free society wherein every human being could exercise his individual liberty without restraint from any man so long as natural laws were obeyed, crime would die out; for the incentive to commit crime would be removed when freedom and natural life took the place of restricted and unnatural existence. The actions of men in a free society would be rational and natural, for there would be no artificial laws to obey; to-day they are irrational and unnatural because there are artificial laws to obey. The workers to-day swear vengeance against their employers who grind their wages down to the lowest possible point; under Anarchism there would be no employers for the producers to threaten with destruction, owing to every worker being his own master, and doing voluntarily that which he will not do to-day unless he is ordered to do so. The so-called religious people tell us that vice and crime must exist, but we Communist Anarchists decline to accept that necessity. We argue that vice and crime ought to be abolished, and with them the distinction the religionists have made between the members of the human society, namely, a virtuous people, and an immoral people. When vice and crime cease to be manufactured there will be no necessity for priests to preach to us about morality. At present the clergy subsist upon crime; for were there no crime we should not require their assistance. Whilst they talk about what people ought to do so as to live a virtuous life, they forget that if they wish crime to cease, they should help us to destroy the unnatural institutions which create it. Injustice must be abolished before crime can be got rid of; injustice will never cease until the evils responsible for it are unfamiliar to us; the evils are private property and governments, which will remain so long as ignorance prevails; ignorance will become a thing of the past when intelligence shows itself among the now degraded and down-trodden; intelligence will not support institutions that were founded on ignorance; unjust institutions will be abolished when the majority perceive the ignominy they are now subjected to; and when that period arrives and come it will—crime and its consequences will pass away.

JOHN MARSHALL.

It has been suggested that the Anarchist movement in London would be strengthened by the formation of a sort of Anarchist Club open to both Communists and Individualists, which should hold meetings to discuss the best means of propagating Anarchist principles and to thrash out the differences amongst Anarchists as well as to deal with the Social question from the Anarchist stand-point. In the first place it is proposed to secure the names of those willing to aid in the establishment of such an institution and afterwards to call a preliminary meeting to discuss the matter. Friends and comrades are requested to communicate with Albert Tarn, The Labour Press, Limited, 57 Chancery Lane, W.C.

EUSTON ROAD. At the Athenaeum Hall, George Street, on Jan. 5th, Marsh opened a discussion on "Anarchist Communism." A long and interesting discussion followed, in which Neilson, Miss Hicks, Tom Walker, and other Social Democrats and Anarchists took part. Most of the views put forward by the opener were received with marks of approval.

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N O W R E A D Y.

THE WAGE SYSTEM.

By PETER KROPOTKINE.

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