FREE SOCIETY

A PERIODICAL OF ANARCHIST WORK, THOUGHT, AND LITERATURE.

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The Voice of the Times.

Back to the throbbing of thought
In the breast of the waking earth!
Over head, over it both come—
The sea that was yesterday's thought.
Today his defenses hath barred—
No more in his slavery bond—
And tomorrow will break from the fetters that him
And lift a bold arm for the rights of mankind!

Back to the voice of the time—
The multitudes think for themselves,
And weigh their condition, each one—
The drudge has a spirit sublime—
And whether he hammers or slaves—
He rights when his labor is done—
And learns to be generous under penury's ban—
Then is true to think of the last birth of man—

The voice of opinion has grown—
Twa yesterday changeful and weak—
Like the voice of a boy ere he prides—
Today it has taken the tone
Of an orator worthy to speak—
Whom knoweth the demand of his time,
And tomorrow will sound in oppression's ear
Like the trumpet to set in motion our sphere.

Be wise, oh, ye rulers of earth,
And close not your ears to his voice—
Nor allow it to warn you in vain—
True freedom of yesterday's birth
Will mark them on their way to reign—
And never be conquered again—
The day hath a tongue, yea, the hours after sleep—
Who, who will be led by it—
—Charles Mackay.

Radical Reflections.

The second year of the twentieth century of the Christian era finds the world rushing onward towards what destiny no one knows. The nations divide their attention between the achievements of peace and the pursuit of war. The intellectual conflicts wages between the defenders of the old and the advocates of the new; and the masses plod on in the small pursuits of everyday life, the same stupid, inert, thoughtlessly indifferent force they have ever been since the race had existence. The world's great stage—the grand opera of life—has nothing new. It is the same old, old drama of life and love and death, with perhaps a little different setting of the stage; but when the curtain falls upon it all, we know that the actors are gone forever, and we see them no more, the players for the next scene appear at the right moment, and take up the continuous thread. So the play goes on and on forever, and whether it be a tragedy or a comedy we cannot tell. Each plays his part without rehearsal; there is evidently no prompter behind the scenes; the play is without a name, and if it is has a plot no one knows what it is.

So far, the twentieth century has made no new achievements of importance, has added nothing to humanity's stock and store. Wireless telegraphy and aerial navigation are yet in the experimental stage. Science has made no new discoveries, and philosophy has added nothing to the span of human knowledge. But, at least, the restless spirit of investigation, of doubt, of dissent, which characterized the entire nineteenth century, yet prevails—or rather is intensified—and this fact is propitious of the continued advance of the race. For the race does advance, and however little change has taken place in the methods and motives of human action, no one will deny that the horizon of the human mind is expanding—the depth of human understanding is deepening—its breadth widening. And so today we feel that we are upon the eve of change of advance, of revolution, and all is expectancy.

A superficial glance at the world as it is reveals little that is new. Each nation has its three classes—the workers, the masters, and the rulers labor, capital, and the State. The toilers are now, as in all past ages, producing wealth for the enjoyment of the idle; and the doctrine of the State is to provide safeguards for the exploiters and to elaborate means whereby its own power and prestige shall be extended and perpetuated. And because of this, the recent discussion of peace conferences and arbitration boards and international disarmament, is idle and foolish. So long as privilege and power have their hands upon the throat of humanity, armies and armadillos will be a necessity, and wars and rumors of war will exist as necessary adjuncts of Statecraft's game of diplomacy.

The political State is always the same in essence, whatever its form or external aspect—whether it be monarchical, republican, or democratic. It is always composed of the same distinct persons: the rich. The official classes, the beneficiaries. In the second stage: The beneficiaries, Third: The exploiters. The beneficiaries are the privileged class, the aristocracy. This aristocracy is sometimes the priesthood, as in ancient Egypt, India, and Peru; sometimes it is the nobility, as in Europe from the decline of the Roman empire to the overthrow of feudalism. Today the aristocracy is that of wealth. But in all ages and under every form of political authority, the exploited class has been the workers, the producers. Under the Roman and Greek systems, as well as in some modern countries, the workers appear as chattel slaves. Under feudalism, they were tillers of the soil and passing from master to master with the transmission of the landed possessions. Under capitalism, the worker became a wage slave, subject to the employer-class by the necessity of having a master to provide him with the opportunities to produce—land and tools. But, under each of these systems, the workers have always been slaves, subject to the exploitation of the privileged class.

All the rulers—the official class—have always been the upholders of the privileged aristocracy, we have seen that these two classes did not always get along well together—that they have often been arrayed against one against the other, and from these conflicts we have come, in large part, those measures of freedom and social improvement that rescued humanity from stagnation and kept the race on its upward march. The reason was, that the privileged class—the aristocracy—whether the priesthood, nobility or plutocracy, has always sought to direct the political power and to make the State a mere instrument for the accomplishment of their class interests. And it has naturally followed that the officials, whether kings or republican representatives, have revolted from this domination, for they, too, are a distinct class; and it has more than once happened that the official class found it necessary to ally themselves with the exploiting workers, to sustain their supremacy against the ever-grown power of the aristocracy.

So today, we see the hydra of Capitalism becoming more and more a political power, swaying the policies of nations with autocratic hand; and we observe, too, that the official class—the politicians, the statesmen—are leaning towards the proletariat, alloying themselves with the even the Socialistic sentiment, in order to combat the tyranny of this capitalist class oligarchy.

In confirmation of this, we have only to cite the attitude of the French government towards Socialism, and the Bryan movement in this country. It is the same old political maneuver by the governing class, of alliance with the discontented masses, in order to maintain their waning power and influence. This lends encouragement to the Socialists and other honest believers in political action, but it is the worst of delusions.

Freedom knows no implement a State can wield. Revolutions in the past have always come to naught because, at the moment of success, the political leaders came to the front and assumed dictatorial power, thus allowing the leadership resulted in compromise, surrender of principle, and inevitably in a counter-revolution. It was thus with the Chartist movement, the French revolution, the Paris Commune, and countless other uprisings of the people.

The twentieth century opens with a world-wide discussion of human problems. The searchlight of criticism is thrown mercilessly upon the most sacred institutions of our social order. The pampered, pampered parasites at the top feel a shudder...
of coming upheaval from the submerged half under them. Social prophets with rude and sinister visions having gone along such fashionable boulevards, assailing the delicate ears of the parasites with the clamor of the rebellions proletariats, and the scarcely veiled threats of a coming class revolt. This was only the beginning of doings, however, and soon all the little and little seem to begin to comprehend that the universe is in motion—that progress did not go out of business with their advent. The sentiment of their wage slaves is forcing them to the perplexing situation of deciding how to deal with the whole mass and occasionally to speak to them direct thus the crude interpretation of a Cæzoglo, a Brezel, or a Ravachol. And the the voice of reason is no longer heard in their deaf ears, the voice of dynamite occasionally commands their interest and attention. But privilege is ever blind.

Cold, cold are the ashes of the ruins of the social orders that have fallen before—fell because founded upon human slavery. But those ashes should fall like blistering fire upon the shrinking hearts of the Aristocracy of Thieves, for these ashes are a prophecy of the stars. And herein the chief distinction of the twentieth century will be the scarlet and sable lights of that social revolution, the coming of which is as irresistible as the outbreak of day.

Government or No Government—Which? — Ross Winok

The law is never made for the one who makes it, unless it be to break it. It is always made for others to obey and respect. Here is a pious, honest, law-abiding citizen, who has committed a crime. He knows perfectly well that he has transgressed the law of his country. Will he stand up like a man and confess to the judge, like the fanatic Catholic before his priest, that he is guilty and is ready to pay the just punishment, knowing that he can slip out of the clutches of the law by some trick, “pull,” or falsehood? People believe in law, but only when they derive some benefit out of it, the same as the prisoner and the thief, their enemies and adversaries. A man loves the law that compels his debtor to pay him his money, or that avenges his wrongs for him. But no sooner does the law lay his hand upon his own throat than he flings it with might and main. He will engage the services of the most despicable petitioners to defend him of charges which he knows to be true. And he is no anarchist; oh, no! he loves the government and all its laws, abide by them, in perfectly consistent, and would Lynch the “bloody anarchist” on the first lump point.

— Seth Low, at present mayor of Greater New York.

Why, go hang him because one man is shot? All your life you have upheld and worked to maintain a system of government and greed, that is every year murder ing tens of thousands of innocent children, loving women, and noble, brave men—all equally precious in the sight of the God you profess to worship, as you or McKinley—you are ignoble, do you not know that the president’s death was God’s will—McKin ley said so; consider, if you can, the subject calmly, open your mind’s eye and ded uct the facts; McKinley was Hannon’s pet tool, a man who avunculated bimetallism, in and out of congress, until Hannon himself knows why? Is a man like this fit to reform and purify the evils and vices against which he battled so hotly?

approached him with the offer to free him from his financial difficulties and make him president. One would think that the gold standard, the powerful layer of “corporations” and “trusts.”

Senator and partiears would crucify Jesus No. 1, if he appeared for the first time in his first appearance; if either attempted to whip Usury out of The Temple of Humanity.

Hanna selects McKinley to do his will; and God knows Congress under the wing of the great oppressor of Labor; “and God said,” by the mouth of his servant Cæzoglo, “for the sake of the good working people,” this is a plain logical deduction from a law quotation of Lencky’s “Nationalism in Europe,” may put the matter so plainly, before your unbalanced mind that possibly you may begin to reason on correct lines and draw reasonable deductions. At present you are busy with the work of providing some island on which to banish Anarchists—the salt of the earth you would go completely rotten without them, every mother’s son of ye.

If some foolthings have been let loose upon the hand, and was doing all around him, who would not be disposed to applaud the man, who, at the risk of his life, had consented to test it? — Vol. I., p. 352.

Happy indeed would it be if mankind were there many of such unflinching resolution as our soldier and sailor, and who have the desire of safety withholds most men from great deeds, and this is one of the most noblest of great deeds so few have perished by the sword. It is, however, I should say, not only a sentimentary, but in the matter of deeds, to burn down it, that if they open the present and make themselves responsible for the whether it is, in the act of great deeds. — Vol. I., p. 354.

Some presidents have more power than this, and are more imperialistic than an emperor.

Go to Leaky, Senator Hearst! isn’t he just awful?

The prosperity of today is for the rich, and Labor is robbed of more of its products than ever before in the history of the world, not omitting even the slaves who had to make bricks without straw.

Make large provisions, wise, as to space for the Anarchists, for they will astonish you even more than the noble, loving Boers have astonished the world. How is it? No American Rough Riders have been equipped to help them, but the Spaniards were weak, and it was the opening scene of a deep held plot to steal, with murder, extending as far as the Philippines; the English at present are stronger, — 240,000 trained soldiers, against 80,000 Boer farmers; in these last days it is not flattering to be called an Englishman or an American.

Senator, you will not be able to find an island large enough; California to the Anarchists, it has taken fifty years of government to work the population up to one and a half millions—the Anarchists lived from the vice of government, and this section, and as you can see, the poor would increase the population to three millions in three years, and pay off all present inhabitants wishing to leave for
the property they left, barring the land, because, senator, you know your God said, 'The land shall not be sold.'

Senator, do you know the definition of Anarchy? The poet Pope, gives a short clear explanation, thus:

The happy state where wants each other draw.
When harm is done, there's no undone.

Read Blackstone, Senator Hoor, and learn what Anarchy really means.

The law of life is to be equal, without distinction of rank or station, as to every other. It is binding all over the globe, and holds every other nation's law the same, and of an entirely different nature to every other. They are all vastly different.

Sir, Blackstone was an Anarchist, for present day Anarchists subscribe to the above with the exception that they consider 'and dictated by God himself' as redundant. See Century Dictionary also.

Sir, you know, Senator, that there is no liberty, but individual, and that you cannot make any law to force people to be good and loving. Has not the fact yet penetrated your thinking matter, that you said, 'But the people that have the power have the laws,' and that there have been the manufacturers of all the civilized criminals and will continue to make them at an increasing ratio, as you throw them out of work and rob them of their inherited arms?

The United States law-makers are 'bible clubs,' whose members are bribers, thieves, their degrees are relatively highest, their pockets, big, as they happen to be bought sufficient, or unimportant.

Lord Eldon said in his old age, 'If I were to begin life again I would be damned but I would begin an agitator.'

The New Orleans Harp-Journal has the following to say about "The Kickers":

What use is a kicker, do you ask? Is he the great advance agent of progress? Is he the disciple of every good and social reform? He is the victim of every wrong which has its root in the savagery of the wrong-doer; he is the advocate of human liberty; he is the champion of all the wronged. He is my friend, every man's friend, and he shall be my friend forever.

Yes, power is degrading; and Anarchism is the noblest ideal of man.

Get the ball, and hold all their power the fear from Anarchists to recognize no power but love.

Choose ye this day which shall guide you.

Charles B. Biddle.

San Francisco, Cal., 36 Geary St.

Philadelphia Meeting.

The Social Science Club held its meeting on Sunday evening, January 28 at the White House. It had its usual two man's speech. The real question that stood behind the throne.

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Mr. Kenan replied in Mr. Frost's place, saying that Socialism was really an effort to free the individual. Government was one man stepping from a doorway, seized by a second who held his hands while a third rilled his pockets.

Mr. Stephens stated in answer to a man being owned by the State, that he, undoubtedly, gained something from association with his fellows, but that he would rather lost the whole thing to have the liberty of all the others. It was noticeable that the severest criticism of government was made by governmentists.

Mary Hasken.

Philadelphia, Pa., 202 E. 3rd St.

A hint to Senators Hoor, McCammary & Co.

We commend the following incident, which was printed in the London Daily Telegraph, and which no doubt will receive the same service of Boston about to be organized to hunt down Anarchists and discover plots.

W. W. T."
FREE SOCIETY.

(Formerly The Firebrands.)

An Expression of American Opinion: Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone constitutes Freedom; that in the absence of Monopoly Price and Combination Control, East and West, and that Combination is an Irrevocable Consequence.

Published Weekly by A. ROACH.

ONE DOLLAR A YEAR.

Address all Communications and make all Money Orders payable to FREE SOCIETY, 515 CARROLL AVE., CHICAGO, III.

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AMERICAN—A social theory which regards the voice of order with the absence of all direct government control by men as the political ideal. Absolute Individual Liberty—Centurty Dictionary.

CHICAGO, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1902.

Chesbro, McKinley, and Roosevelt.

A 2-page pamphlet, entitled "Chesbro, McKinley, and Roosevelt," from the pen of Comrade Jay Fox, is the portion that the New York comrades have thought of, so to speak, to obtain the laborer's support in defense of our theories and beliefs, and the dissemination of our ideas. We do not doubt that the publication of this pamphlet will have much effect upon the already too blued-minded of the American public.

This few lines are addressed to all comrades, who, without exception, see the necessity for such pamphlets and the good results to be obtained from them. We solicited the aid of our comrades, who, with exception, see the necessity for such pamphlets and the good results to be obtained from them. We solicited the aid of our comrades, who, with exception, see the necessity for such pamphlets and the good results to be obtained from them. We solicited the aid of our comrades, who, with exception, see the necessity for such pamphlets and the good results to be obtained from them. We solicited the aid of our comrades, who, with exception, see the necessity for such pamphlets and the good results to be obtained from them.

The front cover-page of the American Federationist for February is adorned with the modest and blushing countenance of its editor, Samuel Gompers. This attempt to do beauty and at the same time to advertise, with a plausible excuse, is commendable, but alas, I fear that this Wistler will fail to win Sam's literary audience, for the tawdry picture of the man who so much the better side of labor for another advertising scheme of brazen proportions.

The authoritarian Socialists constantly assert that personal liberty will be safeguarded under their party administration of government. But hope they will pardon me for presuming to be slightly skeptical. The Socialist conception of personal liberty and individual sovereignty has a hard side-light thrown upon it the other day in the German Reichstag, when a prominent Socialist leader, Dr. Heinrich Mueller, arose and demanded the suppression of Christian Scientists. Intolerance and tyrannical can go no longer lengthened than is embodied in the German Reichstag. The followers of the Christian Science cult may be a blot, in the form of rainbows and charmers, and the doctrine itself a brazen fraud (frankly I do not know), but the assembly of men who assume the legislative right to direct the minds of everybody and to fix by law the personal opinions of the people, should be taken by the neck of the neck and the face of the pontiffs and burnt against the stained glass. The particular brand of Socialism that puts forward men like this fellow Mueller as its mouthpiece, is decidedly begging for more effective program than that of the general strike.

I had begun to think that we Socialists and Anarchists had gotten the ubiquitous Mr. Madden suppressed, but it seems he has broken loose again, and is rampaging the range with blood in both eyes. This time he has been caught in the way of Bryan, who has had the audacity to imagine that he can run a newspaper without consulting the Diogenes of the postal department. It appears that Comrade Bryan has been sending free copies of his paper, The Commoner, to the members of Congress at Washington, which was, of course, a useless waste of paper and postage; for our congressmen are not of the reading class, and when they do read, it is the opening page of some great religious and moral diat that about strikes their intellectual level. But that is not the issue. Bryan had no encyclopedia of the latest postoffice rulings and it seems that he forgot to consult a chairvounevant that post himself regarding the probable nature of Mr. Madden's rulings for the next twenty-four hours. So he was anxious to get his paper out at his regular rate. It happened that Mr. Madden had whacked out a brand new, type-written ruling, one of the made-to-order variety new in vogue, to the effect that free copies must be returned at a third-class rate. So Bryan the full benefit of it. It is now up to William. I am betting heavy that Bro. Madden has inserted himself into a good kine rumpus, and that he is after trouble,
the brother from Nebraska will give him the worth of his money. Ross Wm.

How Will a Free Society Come, and How Will It Operate?

The more I read of Anarchist writings, the more I am puzzled to know how they propose to abolish government and usher in a free society. Ross Wm says: he will not, he says: "It is the duty of every one to apprehend the power of religious authority; and it will surely undermine the State. How was that destruction made manifest? If I am rightly informed, the early colonies, now the United States, compelled people to pay taxes to support the Church until a majority voted not to do so. (1) "Individuals create wealth and individuals should enjoy it." In a sense individuals create wealth; but in another sense the amount of wealth created, or possible of creation, without the cooperation of many individuals is very small. Probably we could have either offence or opportunity if Ross Wm doubts believe in it. He presents a most attractive consummation in the following paragraph:

1. I believe there is a society that will enter into the spirit that will abolish commercialism and the greed of gain. With the land and opportunity will be the property of the idea, and people will own the land with his labor. With the wonderful facilities for manufacturing, the immense labor intensive gains that are at work, and the work of the government, every man would be independent, and the fruit of poverty would be unknown. The fact that a society will exist for any other purpose than we would be gone.

That precisely what the Socialists say except possibly, they would change the terms and say fraternity will usher in liberty and equality. But the Socialists say: "We propose to educate the majority of the people to a belief in the cooperative commonwealth, take possession of the government and the means of production and distribution, and let the people operate them collectively for the benefit of all." This has, at least, the merit of being brief, definite, and easily understood; (3) but I am so far from the ideas of the Austrian society that I have not seemed to me to present any plan of action. (3) Do they believe in doing nothing? Destroy government and all progress.

James F. Marten, Jr., writes in "The Commoner," January 1, "What is required is to demonstrate the adaptability of Anarchism to social needs." Can that requirement be met? Mr. Morton seems to try to do this, but I read carefully his attempt in this direction, I failed to get the required demonstration. Like Ross Wm he professes pleasant results. He tells us: "No man would have the means for thriving at the expense of his fellows." In my present state of knowledge and progress I am unable to conceive of any means for bringing about the conditions except that proposed by the Socialists. (5) To help me out of my confusion and ignorance will somebody answer, directly and clearly, this question?—Under Anarchist society would the railroads, telegraph, and other continental railways and who would see that a letter I want to send from Denver to New York would get there? (6) I sincerely hope that nobody will point me to the possible for public action; and all that government could do with advantage for the people can be done by the people themselves without government. The present international postal system is carried on by voluntary agreement. It exists thus the cooperative action of the different nations, and all the international postal progress. Likewise the Red Cross Societies, which came into being by the voluntary efforts of humane individuals when governments had proven their inability to take care of those they claimed and maintain their numerous wars. And wherever the Red Cross Societies have been able to keep aloof from governmental interference they have been the most efficient. Voluntary cooperation is our answer to the question. What will you put in place of authority government?

International Topics

England is agitated at present over the revolt of a gigantic socialists, which ascertain an army of officers have perpetrated on the government, in losing horses. These officers do not know where their patriotism utters them must. The expenses of the army are enormous. Big money for the proposal. An Englishman has entertained that at least eighty, per cent of the people there are not likely sick of the war, and wish it was over.

In Rome a large meeting to discuss the unemployed has taken place. About 15,000 people were present, and the speakers, who were workers, were all opposed to delays of legal action, and showed a thrilling attitude toward the government.

In Trieste, Austria, three comrades, Giraldo, Conetti, and Pattoni were arrested on the charge of revolutionary agitation.

The Communist Movement in Holland

The events of the last few years in the Dutch Socialist movement—-the rupture, the complete dissolution of the Federation of Socialists, the Communist Congress of Rotterdam in December, 1878, the election of its officers after that Congress, finally the fusion of the rest of the Federation with the Social Democrats, whom they were opposed to in principle, are of international interest because they form the history of a movement of the masses.

The Socialist movement in Holland distinguished itself from the beginning by its Communist and revolutionary character. That is to say, the aspiration for a radical transformation of the basis of existing society and for establishing a new Communist order, which predates and predominate with opportunity for every man to participate in the German Social Democracy and the Communist party in France. Hence we dispute the assertion that political Socialism is "practical." We cannot judge a tree by its fruit.

In the absence of government, the private ownership of such vast public enterprises and utilities as the railroads, telegraph, postal offices, etc., would be impossible. Hence they would continue the communal and shareholdings of the whole people, who will operate them. What is now successfully of a society where men work for each other and enjoy with each other as brothers and sisters of one large human family.
Another characteristic of the Dutch Socialist movement which must be noted is that the movement has penetrated especially among the rural population of the country.

There are whole regions where Socialism has conquered a large part of the population, especially in the northern provinces of Groningen and Friesland, further south into the region of Zuid (Zuid, Zandam, Koog, Zandijk, West Zaan, and so on). So it is also in those parts of the country where, within the last twenty years or more, elements of the working class have gathered. In their quest for a better life, the poor wanted to work for a better life—a paradise on earth. It was something to see the earnestness with which the rural population, accompanied by their families, was willing to participate in open-air meetings with their banners, accompanying often by choirs or bands; it was something to see those country folk, women as well as men, walking one, two, or more hours to attend a meeting held in some public house or barn, singing revolutionary songs on the way instead of going to church with Bible under the arm as before; and to see the workers waving the eyes of their poor toilers as they shook hands with the Socialist speaker after the meeting; only then might one understand what Socialism meant for them.

Common feeling had become too strong a new religion. Our country people had never seen other representatives of the government than the mayor or the county and the rural police, holding more or less regular gatherings. They had no confidence in the government and the Democrats who call themselves Socialists, who protest that the social question consists in replacing the Liberal or the Democratic regime by a new one, without changing the way to their hearts.

The social life of the rural population in Holland distinguishes itself by certain special Communist characteristics. Then the people in general felt secure, and they were wont to think that the first Mayday demonstration by our Socialist orators spoke to the country Socialists about an eight-hour day to be established by law. They had expected that in the country before the working day was shorter by the season and by the weather, and that, after all, the workers themselves would decide the question since in any case regulations made by people who know nothing of agriculture were not good. The country folk understood quite well that the social question was for them one of possession, and not of regulation. In short, they wanted to give their strength for society, for that purpose fraternizing among themselves and without making the acquaintance of the government officials.

Then the old energy arose once more, and, notwithstanding the opposition of the government, a congress was held during Christmas, 1894, at The Hague. The congress was founded by the organization known from that time under the name of "Federation of Socialists" (Socialistenbond).

But discord was already shown, and in the same year (1894) the first elements of the political division had separated themselves from the party. Dissolution undermined this Dutch Socialist party, which had set out with such high enthusiasm and which, toward the middle of 1893, the election campaign and sent a message to the International Congress of Zurich: "If the Federation counted 66 sections—in 86 communes in the country—by the end of the year 1893, at present it is composed of sections in 118 communes. And each day in some corner of the country new sections are formed." At this time the organization counted 9,000 affiliated members, paying their dues; but the influence which the Federation exercised was much greater than its numerical force seems to indicate.

The first collision of ideas and interests took place at the Congress of Groningen, 1893. From the sections which the Federation then counted in 126 communes of the country, 86 sections were represented some communities, like Amsterdam, had more than one vote). Only three sections had sent parliamentary Socialists; but these owed some of their strength to the adherents of some under-represented delegations or even the majority of the Congress wishing to finally decide the war of opinions proposed the following resolution:

"The Congress decides under no pretext whatever to participate in the elections—even if that be the price of a majority." There discord began! Who was not to participate in the elections? The party as a whole the Federation? Or the sections of the party? But the section of the party, because of the congress, had thereby injured the autonomy of the sections and did not such a move threaten the liberty of the individuals? From both sides the fight began; on the right the particular congresses, on the left the national congresses, the section of Saint-Anna-Paradise, for instance, where the Anarchists were in the majority, separated itself from the Federation immediately after the Congress, and that became the liberty they had violated. On the other hand, the reforming elements did not wait until the Hague Congress at which it was declared that members of the party, as individuals, were free to participate or not. A certain number of federations or groups, called Socialists or Social Democratic parties, were formed in the month of January, 1897, the twelve, among which the latter were good orators, obtained more votes than anybody had expected—perhaps even more than they who had hoped for themselves.

Then a new election took place, this time at the Congress of the Federation itself, held in Rotterdam, December 25-26, 1897. On this occasion it was among the sections that a division took place, the first having been only a protest.

The actual congress was thus prepared by the elections in June 1897. There existed also in the Federation of Socialists a minority, who—due to belonging to that anti-parliamentarian federation—stressed the importance of participation, but instead of taking part in elections for the purpose of agitation as understood in France by the Anarchists.

This minority, which, if it interfered in the elections, did not do so in a systematic way, nevertheless succeeded in electing as a deputy a member of the Federation, Gurt...
L. van der Zwag. Van der Zwag himself had been engaged during the election period and that he expected nothing from parliamentary activity, from parliamentary reforms, and that if he could earn his £100 yearly (the salary of the members of the Dutch parliament) by "honing tongs," he preferred this honest work to that of a deputy of Parliament.

But the young Social Democratic Party had also tasted poison. It had obtained two seats, but the Social Democrats lacked the necessary two significant votes to maintain the party in the rail and also to take part in the election of the Congress. They had refused participation in the election of the new Central Council. So that the Right faction chose the seven administrative members—who, however, did not represent the general vote of the Congress. These measures resulted in the secession of many sections from the Federation, forming "the free unions of Socialists."

It was evident that the parliamentary minority of the Federation did not differ in reality from the Social Democrats, and that, for some months, by an editorial committee the two sides came to an understanding at a Congress in Brussels, 1900, which had for its object the unification of the Parliamentary and Socialist movement.

At the time of the Congress of 1897, a significant number of Local Socialist journals existed:

1. The Klok (clock) in Friesland;
2. Recht voor Zee (straight forward) in Overijssel;
3. Arbeider (worker) in Groningen;
4. Volksted (the people's journal) in Zeeland;
5. Toekomst (the future) in Zuidland;

The editors of these journals voiced different views upon the question of a federative movement. While, for instance, the editor of the Klok, van der Zwag, stuck to his principle of participation in elections for propaganda's sake and has not been willing to make common cause with the representatives of the minority in the Federation, on the other hand, Toekomst and Arbeider have adhered to revolutionary communism and anarchism. Recht voor Zee, that calling itself anti-parliamentarian, hails both of the two directions.

To give an example of how difficult it is to judge the situation, I will quote the Toekomst whose editor immediately published his opinion after the Congress of 1897. Invited to do so, the Volkstedh published the opinions of its four editors. There were four different opinions.

Relese local papers, the Socialist (free Socialist) appears twice a week. The parliamentarians ceased the publication of Recht voor Zee since 1900 to concentrate their forces upon one daily paper, Recht voor All (the people). They publish besides a local weekly paper, Volksted (the people's struggle), in Groningen in competition with the Arbeider.

The more or less individualistic anarchists call them so because I think the individual sentiments dominate the collaborators of the paper—recommended the publication some months ago, of an equally small journal, Arbeider (worker), not to be confused with the Arbeider which was published for years by one of the oldest Communist Anarchists, J. McLeafer, who with C. Croll were two of the founders of the Communist Anarchists movement. As far as the Social Democratic forces have successfully achieved their unification and combined for the latest elections, on the other hand, the revolution has been made by the Communist and Communist Anarchists. I think, will shortly unite in order to form one decentralized organization—a sort of federation of autonomous groups. But this can only be brought about if in the future the Communist Anarchists accept the highest dictation and become a sort of common arrangement for certain purely administrative matters.

One force remains after all the workers' movement, the Federation of National Trades Council, which unites the principal trade unions of the country (the diamond workers are not affiliated) and numbers among 12,000 organized workers of different trades. The Federation of Labour Exchanges and the General Confederation of Trade Unions in France, the National Trades Council does not occupy itself with political and takes no part in elections, leaving liberty to the members of different trade unions to do so, however. They are engaged in the economic struggle by means of the wage movement, strikes, etc. These are the movements with which the struggle against capitalism has been held in Holland, after years of theory—C. Comyns, in Freedom, London, England.

A Suggestion

Have you heard from Senator Barrows, please? Some body has suggested to him that when the great debate on legislation against Anarchy (the science of analyzing the validity of any government, or right of one party to pass another) is started to simplify his purpose he should have a well-written paper on the floor of the Senate to explain and demonstrate the efficacy of Anarchy and the menace and even crime of government (so easily proved by simple history). So far we have had only, from Roosevelt down, willful misrepresentation of what Anarchy really is—the enemy's side.

When workmen of a watch were to be explained one would hardly choose a house-shoer, for instance, to explain it, but a good watchmaker.

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