

The Firebrand

OF THE CONQUESTS OF IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION.



An Exponent of Anarchist-Communism: Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone Constitutes Liberty; that in the Absence of Monopoly Price and Competition Cannot Exist, and that Communism is an Inevitable Consequence.

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THE FIREBRAND

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By the Nile, the sacred river,
I can see the captive
Strain beneath the lash and quiver
At the long, slow, steady
While in granite
Rings the
Ages ago, the
Lord of Lords.

I can hear the trumpets waken
For a victory old and far—
Carchemish or Kadesh taken!—
I can see the conqueror's car
Bearing down some Hittite valley,
Where the bowmen break and sally,
Sargina or Eashaddon,
Grim with war.

From the mountain streams that sweeten
Indus to the Spanish foam,
I can feel the broad earth beaten
With the serried tramp of Rome;
Though whatever hosts environ
Onward with the might of iron—
Veni, vidi, veni, vici!
Crashing home.

I can see the ki-
With us-
As the-
On their cities fall like fate,
Like the heat-wind from its prison
In the desert burst and risen—
La ilaha illah 'lahu!
God is great!

I can hear the iron rattle,
I can see the arrows sting,
In some far off northern battle,
Where the long swords sweep and swing
I can hear the scalds declaiming,
I can see their eyeballs flaming,
Gathered in a frenzied circle
Round the king.

I can hear the horn of Uri
Roaring in the hills enorm;
Kindled at its brazen fury,
I can see the clansmen form,
In the dawn in misty masses,
Rushing from the silent passes,
Over Granson or Morgarten,
Like the storm!

On the lurid anvil ringing
To some slow, fantastic plan,
I can hear the swordsmith singing
In the heart of old Japan,
Till the cunning blade grows tragic
With his malice and his magic—
Tenka tairan! Tenka tairan!
War to man!

I can feel the modern thunder
Of the cannon beat and blaze,
When the lines of men go under
On your proudest battle-days;
Or perchance I hear the lifting
Of the bloody chorus drifting
Round the burning mill at Valmy—
Marseillaise!

Still the tides of fight are booming
And the barren blood is split;
Still the banners are upoming
And the hands are on the bill;

But the old world waxes wiser;
From behind the bolted visor
It descries at last the horror
And the guilt.

Yet the eyes are dim, nor wholly
Open to the golden gleam,
And the brute surrenders slowly
To the godhead and the dream;
From his cage of bar and gridler,
Still at moments mad with murder,
Leaps the tiger, and his demon
Rules supreme.

One more war with fire and famine
Gathers—I can hear its cries;
And the years of Might and Mammon
Perish in a world's demise.
When the strength of man is scattered,
And the powers of earth are shattered,
From beneath the ghastly ruin,
Peace shall rise!

—Archibald Lampman in Cosmopolitan.

Notes on Points.

NON-PRODUCTIVE LABOR UNDER COMMUNISM.—I think the wording might be improved. As it is, I am not quite certain as to the precise meaning. I suppose the general idea, though, is sufficiently evident. In a condition of Communism, people would group themselves together according to convenience and lay their needs—at least those which they did not propose to supply by their own unassisted efforts—before each other, when each individual would say what he was prepared to do toward the satisfaction of those needs, or any of them. Similarly, any one who had any help to offer which was not so bespoken, would make the fact known, in case of the occasion being found for it. In precisely the same way, if a man wanted to devote himself to literary work to an extent that would compel him to abstain from giving any help in the commonplace affairs of those about him, it would rest entirely with them as to how far they would choose to occupy themselves in commonplace affairs for his benefit; that would depend on their appreciation of his work in relation to the circumstances of the case. If to carry out this work he has to call upon others for his entire support, it would be at their option individually to assist him or not. As a matter of fact, the contingency would be exceedingly rare. A man cannot continuously do mental work to the absorption of all his energies, without getting tired of it, and for the same reason that a laboring man cannot wheel barrowloads of stuff up a plank from the time he wakes to the time he goes to sleep without getting disgusted with molecular exertion. You find that the purely mental workers, those whose mental labor does not require the constant active cooperation of the muscular system, always when it is in their power get a garden to dig in, or something of the kind, by way of recreation. And so far as my experience goes, a man not under compulsion to work continuously at forced speed, will do as much of each of two or three kinds of work, that is, two or three times as much work altogether, as he would do of any one kind of work under the same conditions. This in the long run; for during some days or weeks he may suit himself better by apply-

ing himself closely to one kind of work while the mood is upon him. And he will do better work of each kind.

This is especially true of purely mental work, which must be varied by some that is less abstract, inasmuch as the mind being composed of the impressions, more or less complex, made upon the brain from without in the first instance, there is an absolute necessity for the largest possible contact with the outer world to renew, add to and recombine these impressions. In default of this a man ceases to have ideas at command. The mere specialist is the most unintellectual being imaginable except an absolute idiot—just as truly if this specialty is botany or chemistry as if it is making the hundredth part of a pin, except insofar as the occupation itself contains more variety. A man may be a specialist and intellectual, but only on condition that the man includes the specialist, and that the specialist does not exclude the rest of the man. I speak as a mental worker by occupation, and feelingly. I have never been able to do so much or so good mental work as when I have had the greatest variety of it together with the greatest amount of the most diversified physical exertion.

FREE CONSUMPTION.—It seems to me that a lot of people fail to discern the difference between freedom and privilege. The objectors to free consumption appear to be under the impression that it means the privilege of any loafer or waster to consume just as he pleases, no matter what other people may think about it. This is just on a par with the idea that Anarchy or freedom of action means that if I want to hit you, you are bound to let me. Freedom of action implies that society has not pledged itself to take sides against me if I hit you, but that every one reserves the full right to form his own judgment and act upon it; and you are in exactly the same position toward society in that respect as I am. Freedom of consumption implies that people in general have not pledged themselves to allow any person to consume so much or compel him to do with so little. If two of us have a loaf between us, and there is no arbitrary limit to what either may consume, it is free consumption whether we divide it amicably or fight over it; whether we share fairly or one takes the whole loaf; but our freedom and the freedom of everybody else is precisely the safeguard against this latter being done, inasmuch as nobody is obliged to recognize the privilege of either to have any quantity whatever. Nobody will contend for a moment that freedom of consumption or freedom of action in general is incapable of being abused—there is no condition either of freedom, of authority or of subjection which is not capable of being abused; but freedom does not admit of the abuse becoming a system dominating over society.

LABOR EXCHANGE.—I have read the literature of this movement, forwarded by Carl Gleaser, and consider it a move in advance and capable of affording some amelioration of conditions to those

concerned, in so far as it breaks through the stone wall of Legal Tender, which is a curse within a curse; but it does not make for any radical change. The founder of the institution, in his book, *The Trials and Triumph of Labor*, points out the absurdity of people declining to produce for each other or let each other have their products which they themselves do not require, until someone can begin by handing to somebody else a piece of metal or transubstantial paper; but it is equally absurd that people should decline to render each other the help they have no real reason for not rendering, unless they receive an immediate equivalent or an ironbound contract for an equivalent. That is based on the ego-manical idea, "I am the only decent fellow in the world; and though I would help a man with goods or services because he had occasion for them, and I could conveniently do so, still if I wanted any such help I could only get it from the damned scoundrels who form all the rest of the world by exercising compulsion upon them—which compulsion I am accordingly going to exercise by refusing them the help they need except on condition that they make over some article to me or bind themselves to serve me to an amount which I regard as equivalent." The only form of combination which makes directly for economic Anarchy is one in which people will combine to lay their needs before each other and agree what each will undertake to do toward satisfying all or any of those needs, and those who have time and abilities, or material resources, which they do not require to their personal purposes, lay the fact before their comrades in case occasion may be found for them—and such to be the whole basis of the transaction, without any "payment" entering into the matter.

FREE LOVE.—It is evident that if the natural instincts of most people are towards having a single and permanent sex partner, the result of sexual freedom will be for such people monogamy and constancy; and that free love has no more to do with polygamy or promiscuity than free conduct has to do with standing on one's head. Those who prefer to stand on their heads can do so, but the advocacy of free conduct by no means implies the recommendation that people should stand on their heads. Sex partners must either accept each other for what they are, or else one of them must have the privilege of dictating what nature the other shall have, which is absurd. But the main difficulty with most people arises not out of the sex question at all, but out of the economic question; to which economic Anarchy, that is to say Communism, furnishes the only solution. Even the economic difficulty, however, would be a mere nothing in even the present system if it were not for the fact that not only are the means of subsistence "property," but women and children have been thought of as property, virtually if not always expressly.

A younger brother of mine once said to me, "If a man and a woman really love each other you cannot separate them, and if they don't you have no business to keep them together." That is a pretty fair rational statement of the free love position.

THEORY AND PRACTICE.—I don't think the founding of the experimental communes which are by this time no novelty, is much of an object lesson in Anarchist practice. The fact is that people have wants of real life which act upon them no matter what condition of society they are in, and very often it is much easier to meet these wants in the broad world, notwithstanding all the disadvantages of its false system, than in a like close community. Accordingly, the individuals who enter into these communes are in a false position; they are seeking to play a drama of Anarchy before the world, and they cannot do so and obtain the best possible satisfaction of their various mental and material wants at the same time, hence the play goes to pieces on the stage, to the delight of the enemy and the laughter of the ignorant. The object of Anarchy is to bring about the better adjustment of needs and satisfactions, and the object of these experiments is to make the present adjustment of needs with satisfac-

tions subordinate to an appearance of Anarchy—which is contrary to Anarchy. The "practices" to be real must have for its purpose not the ostentatious resort to Anarchist modes irrespective of the total of general outer circumstances which press upon the individual, but the better satisfaction of needs, to which the Anarchist methods can in face of outer conditions serve as the best means, to be used as means not for the means' sake but for the end's sake.

It is only making a mess of things to try and do under the influence of one set of general circumstances, as you would like in some other circumstances, and pretend that you are showing an example of doing as you like. Do as you like best now, under all the actual circumstances, including both your ideas and the way external conditions press on your individuality; and insofar as you are able to like best for present purposes what you would like best under reformed conditions, you will be able to demonstrate that the way you like is superior to the way other people have been blindly following. But to attempt to go to sea in a boat that is not yet built, and the planks of which you have to hold together with an arm and a leg over the gunwale, or to launch your ship on dry land—that isn't likely to convey the desired satisfaction to yourself, or the intended edification to beholders.

J. A. ANDREWS.

Communism and Individualism.

In the last copy of "Liberty," an Individualist-Anarchist organ of New York, Mr. B. R. Tucker advances certain assertions concerning Communistic Anarchy which appear to me should be refuted. He affirms, to begin with, that Communistic Anarchy in France, and in England and America, is dying out. In French revolutionary circles, he says, "collectivism is the order of the day, and Communists must choose between State Socialism, for which they manifest so much aversion, and Individualist-Anarchy. The few Communists who really desire liberty will have to seek it by acting in concert with the Individualists, and once attained can pursue their experiments in voluntary Communism without let or hindrance."

Mr. Tucker has been misinformed regarding the state of the revolutionary movement in France. No doubt for some time past an interesting evolution, to which Comrade Kropotkin has already drawn attention, has presented itself among the different revolutionary factions, which evolution will eventually before a great while, clearly divide the revolutionists into two well defined camps. On the one side the "Autoritaires" who, drifting away from the old revolutionary traditions, have now only one aim in view: that of obtaining political power. On the other hand the "Libertaires" recognizing on the contrary as a necessity, the abolishment of the State, and comprising the revolutionary work in the sense of a free understanding, of the voluntary and spontaneous grouping in view of the satisfying of the divers and multitudinous needs of the individuals. The first class comprises the Collectivists and Blanquists. The second, or Communistic Anarchists, and naturally the revolutionary Federal Communists otherwise "Allemanists" and a great number of groups and labor corporations without special denominations. And among this last named revolutionary element, evolution toward Communistic Anarchy is very marked.

Only lately the Federation of the Labor Exchanges published a manifesto, formulating as a program the abolishment of the State and of individual property. This new support for Communistic Anarchy consequently denies Mr. Tucker's assertion that Communism is dead in France and Collectivism is the order of the day. But as a great many others, the editor of Liberty substitutes his desires for the reality, and being an adversary in Communism, there is nothing surprising in his desire for the extinction of this conception. This however has no importance only from the fact that all misstatements cannot be modified. One truth is that the idea of Communism has completed and purified itself in dropping the vague sentimentalism which permeated it at the outset. The All for All, better understood, however contradictory may seem the linking of the words, has resolved itself in a sense, to one more individualistic. The Communists soaring towards liberty have understood that the object of their conception was the individual and he alone represents a concrete entity, and that it is absurd to sacrifice the

interests of the individual to society or to the community; abstract entities having a reality only through the individuals that compose them. The end then to be attained is the happiness of the individual, and this can only come through absolute liberty or Anarchy.

But this absolute liberty can only be obtained by giving to the individual every facility for extending in every direction his personality, developing without obstacle all his aptitudes, and satisfying all his needs. This result could only be obtained on condition that the individual could dispose of all the means existing to attain it, but so long as a tribute is levied on the individual just so long an obstacle will be in the way of his realization of happiness. That is the reason the Communistic Anarchists are consistent in their "libertaire" theory in maintaining that their obstacle must be removed, the same as the obstacle of authority in order to reach the common end of all Anarchists, the abolishment of State and all pertaining thereto, and the abolishment of individual property. The happiness of the individual is the end, the only means of action. I propose at a future time to go deeper into this subject. What I wish to combat at present is the assertion made without plausible reasons by the individualistic Anarchists of being the enemies of liberty, while on the contrary we are only Communists for the sake of guaranteeing to the individual the greatest amount of liberty.

Mr. Tucker in the above mentioned copy of "Liberty" renews this accusation which he pretends to base on what certain communist writers J. Moet, Kropotkin and J. H. Morris style forcible ejection and asks "Can these authors be partisans of liberty?" The argument is very shallow, and in turn I would ask this friend of liberty a question. Is a thief purloined divers objects, from Mr. Tucker, necessary to his subsistence, what means would he employ to have him return them, persuasion? But if the thief would not be persuaded, I think, Mr. Tucker would resort to force. Would his conscience smite him for having interfered with the liberty of his thief.

The means of production, that is to say the means of acquiring the well being of all, belonging to all by natural rights have been since time immemorial controlled by a privileged class. Robbery of ancient times is still robbery to day. And Mr. Tucker must recognize that technicalities in law sometimes favorable to the criminal do not constitute an act of justice. This privileged class then compares exactly with the thief spoken of. The persuasive means have been exhausted without results. What is left to do? Just what Mr. Tucker would do with the thief:—use force. And this would not be encroaching on the liberties of the robbers, but would only be taking possession of objects illegitimately kept from us.

At the bottom of the quarrel instituted against us by the Individualists there is only a misunderstanding. The Individualists have an erroneous idea of the manner in which the Communists, the real "libertaires" understand Communism and its establishment. The word Communism awakes in our opponents' the idea of barrack, common mess pot and obligatory promiscuity. They see in it the negation of the opportunity for the individual to isolate himself, if he desires, to have a distinct home and family. They imagine that Communism implies as a forced consequence the consumption in common of the goods produced, and I must admit that such a state of affairs is not calculated to be very seductive. They also hear of expropriation. Visions of carnage, and armed hordes invading proprietors and industries, and forcing them at the point of the sword to relinquish their wealth to the common fund. Such pictures may appear to advantage in a romantic melodrama, but they become puerile to one who knows how slow economical transformations take place. A property transformation cannot take place in a day, by a forcible stroke. Alone the State-Socialists pretend that the State can regain possession of private property. The "libertaire" Communists simply say this: "At all times property has attained a degree of perfection in accord with the means of production only under a favorable economy of force. If individual property for a long time has filled the requirements necessary to the means of production, the conditions are today altered. The actual production disposes of too powerful means to permit that the present property form be the one to realize the greatest economy of forces. It can only produce a concentration of the capital and its steady absorption to the profit of a minority. It is no longer the corresponding form to the present improved means of production.

Its transformation is implied only. And the economic

forms which today responds to the economic forces is Communism, which leaving to each, according to his needs, the free use of the productive forces, assuring a maximum of production, proportionate to these needs.

How establish Communism? None are prophets, and he who would attempt to predict it, would run the risk of being disappointed. However no economic transformation has ever taken place without leaving certain trails, and occasioning a stubborn resistance by the beneficiaries of the dying regime. Today, a strong organization, the State,— whose reason to exist is the safeguard of property and the maintenance of the present economic forms, opposes itself directly or indirectly in the interest of those benefitted by the present regime, to the effort of those interested in the necessary transformation. It will therefore require force to remove this obstacle. Education toward liberty on the change of conditions will accomplish the balance.

As to the puerile and absurd conception formed by a great many people concerning Communism it must be eliminated. Communists have never pretended to prevent any person from owning if he choose a house or a field where he could sweat and toil, with his spade, his axe or his fall, while alongside of him machinery would perform in a few hours on vast tracts of land what would take him weeks to accomplish on his small plot, as in other things, he could if he saw fit live a primitive secluded and rudimentary existence; none would prevent him, none envy him. But on the other hand, one must not compare a communistic society to a sheep ranch, where the different groups would resemble herds of animals rather than groups of intelligent beings. The indivision nor the primitive indifferenciation, would have nothing to do with the simple method left to each, to use or not to use, according to his demands, of the different elements of action placed at his disposition.

What constitutes Communism is not that promiscuity due to life but the free enjoyment of the products and the free use of the means of production, absolute freedom for all to partake of the same without paying tribute to so and so for the commodities of civilization. With these things, and because of these things, none will be obliged because living in a communistic society to live in barracks, to sleep in common dormitories, nor to eat at the common mess pot. I leave these idyllic dreams to be digested by the simplists and descendants of Florian. — [Translated from Les Temps Nouveaux.

"Let us be Philosophers."

If the Anarchists would promptly denounce bomb-throwing they would win our respect, but it seems, unfortunately that the Anarchists attract the desperate side of humanity. The idea that the explosion of a bomb would help any cause is ridiculous. Besides, shall we, as the educators of the people, place ourselves on a level with the murderous capitalist system which slays its millions of innocent children? And of what possible use can it be to throw a bomb in the midst of a great city maiming and killing the innocent?

No, we cannot and will not affiliate with any class of reformers who, at least by their silence, countenance any such insane methods. We can make no excuse for such desperate measures except on the score of insanity. We are looking for light, we are not trying to shroud ourselves in the darkness. We believe that all we desire may be accomplished by peaceful methods—we believe that if any tyranny is to be exerted that capitalists shall be left to perform the act. We should, as far as possible, be non-resistants so that the world may clearly see the justice of our cause.—[The White Slave.

Bless you, some do denounce it. Ask Tucker. He'll tell you that only the Communist countenances it. But why don't I, an Anarchist-Communist, denounce bomb-throwing? It is destructive of innocent life. Why don't I denounce voting? It perpetuates government, the most destructive of all destructive agents. It inflicts suffering, misery and death simply for the aggrandizement of its beneficiaries. But the bomb thrower voluntarily gives his life for the privilege of doing the last desperate act in his power for the freeing, as he thinks, of his fellows. Innocents may die thereby, he knows, but what is the death of a few to the worse than death of the many? asks he. Perhaps he is insane—are not present conditions sufficient to drive one mad? Perhaps he is insane rather than an Anarchist. Not all bomb-throwers are Anarchists. Some are capitalists and their hirelings—take the Chicago case, for instance. Some are simply what they call revolutionists. Some are revengers of personal wrongs, real or fancied. But, whatever they are, why don't we denounce them? Why don't we denounce all who do not agree with us in thought or action? Denunciation requires but a little wind, or a little

printers' ink: it is such an easy road to "respectability."

I will tell you why we don't denounce the bomb-thrower. Because men are the products of their environment, physically and mentally. The man who stabs a Carnot or blows up a czar, with the intent to rid society of an oppressor, and the man who writes a line, casts a ballot or utters a prayer to the same end, are equally worthy, or unworthy, of denunciation: The act is the man. I do not do any of these things because I cannot. The men who do them cannot do otherwise. This being the case, do you want me to denounce another's act merely for conformity to a senseless "moral code"? Do you want me to make Anarchy appear "decent" and "respectable"? Well, I won't.

Am I and Comrade Bernine, who resist with our pens, to be praised, and our more unfortunate and, consequently, more desperate brother who resists with a bomb to be condemned? Non-resistant? Throw away your pen, brother, and shut your mouth! J. H. M.

Is Maternity a Disgrace?

If it is every one would be justified in committing suicide for having disgraced his or her mother.

"Maternity is not a disgrace, but rather a God enjoined duty," I think I hear some Christian saying. But if that be true why is it that so many women try to conceal the fact that they are with child; that so many parents lie to their children, telling them that the doctor brought the baby; and that "refuge homes" abound?

"Ah, but 'refuge homes' are good and charitable institutions, and prevent the disgrace of the family," I am told. But how can the family be disgraced by one of its members becoming a mother when God has enjoined it? "But that is different," says my friend, "the children born at the 'refuge homes' are bastards, the girl has done wrong, she was not married." Oh! So a work which "God has enjoined" upon the women of the world—"increase and multiply and replenish the earth"—is wrong unless certain requirements which men have set up be complied with. Such a proposition is absurd in the extreme and yet that is the attitude of the Churches, and most Christians, as well as society at large. To them maternity is a disgrace, and becomes "decent" only when a lot of formalities and flummuries have been gone through with. These make it legal and "right," and lessen the "indecent" and disgrace which otherwise attach to maternity, and the necessary act which made it possible.

Such a view of maternity is not only illogical and ridiculous, but is disgusting to all who appreciate the nobility and utility of maternity. Maternity a disgrace? Well, I should say not. Is it a disgrace to live? If it is not, then the ushering into life of a human being cannot be a disgrace. If maternity is not a disgrace, then "houses of refuge," lies to the children concerning where the baby comes from, and the hiding of a condition of pregnancy are disgraces, and a sad commentary on the ethical standard of people who boast of their enlightenment and civilization.

When I speak of maternity I refer to it separate and apart from all legal or social considerations. I speak simply of maternity. If, then, maternity is not a disgrace, in and of itself, all laws and customs which tend to create the idea that it is, are vicious and must result badly. "Houses of refuge" can only serve to impress their inmates with the idea that they are disgraced by the fact that they are to become mothers, and must create a popular sentiment against maternity, or rather against mothers who have not been absolved from the disgrace of maternity by due conformity to the requirements of the State and the Church. But maternity is beyond the power of Church and State to regulate, and too pure for the denunciation of these institutions and their fanatical supporters to sully.

Oh, ye hypocritical upholders of existing institutions! look within the bounds of these sacred institutions; look within your own homes if you wish to see causes of disgraceful maternity. How many unwelcome children; children of an undesired sexual union, are born, only to be deplored, or despised, by their parents, right under your nose; in your own home; among your friends, and the membership of

the church to which you belong? Their name is legion.

Draw aside the curtain and you'll find a skeleton in the closet of almost every home. In the houses of the more "refined and respectable" you will probably find a number. Behind the veil of matrimony is hid some of the most repulsive enormities of which the human mind can conceive, while the cloak of respectability hides from view untold horrors. And all because the Church, seeking to bring every relation of life under its control, has taught that maternity is a disgrace: An act that must be sanctified by the Church.

HENRY ADDIS.

Obligations of the Labor Exchange.

HENRY ADDIS, in his recent article on Labor Exchange in your very instructive paper, makes a rather fundamentally erroneous statement, concerning the Labor Exchange that I cannot permit to go uncorrected. He says that Labor Exchangers are "pledged to accept Labor Checks". I must say that this is a very mistaken conception comrade Addis has of the obligation of membership in the Labor Exchange. Members are "not pledged to accept Labor Checks" but it means "will not demand legal tender money for deposits made with the Labor Exchange or work done for it."

It is simply a pledge of non-invasion. Workers produce wealth, but not legal tender money, yet for all deferred claims against others, every creditor is invasively privileged to demand legal tender in payment. This plays directly into the hands of money monopolists and the object of the L. E. obligation and other provisions is simply to protect the institution against the inroads of money sharks, monopolists and speculators.

Membership in the Labor Exchange is voluntary and remains voluntary. Members are as free after joining the L. E. as they were before. After anyone has become a member he is under no obligation to either work for it or deposit with it. If he does, however, work for it or deposit with it he cannot demand legal tender money for the same, but he can at any time present checks received in evidence of deposits made or labor performed and draw out the face value in goods at the Labor Exchange at current market rates.

The number of branches is not limited and if members are dissatisfied with the management of a branch they can draw out the value of their investment and either form a new branch, join another one, or dispose of it at his pleasure.

There is no sumptuary arrangement in the Labor Exchange. It places no irresponsible opportunity or authority in a majority, minority; or in anyone man, clique or class.

We believe in the widest individual liberty and the most perfect methods and arrangements for securing the necessities, comforts, happiness and wellbeing of the membership.

CARL GLEESER.

It seems to me that in the above criticism, Mr. Gleaser jumps at a conclusion, and has to make a very long jump to reach it. His statement as the relation of the members of the Labor Exchange to the Association is in substance identical with what I said, but couched in different words. I did not aim to convey the idea that anyone was in any way under any obligation to the Labor Exchange, nor did it ever occur to me that in promising to accept the certificates of the Labor Exchange for any service I might render that my liberty was being curtailed or invaded.

H. A.

Sorry and Ashamed.

ROBERT BLATCHFORD, author of "Merrie England," writes as follows of the London International congress:

"I have been sitting for a full hour gazing at a blank sheet of paper and wondering what I ought to say, and what I ought not to say, about the London conference of workers. . . . Let me begin with the first day. Towards the end of the meeting there was considerable disturbance, and of course the hostile press has seized upon this and represented it as a disgraceful riot. There was no such thing as a riot, nor was there anything surprising, let alone disgraceful, in the scene which ensued.

On Tuesday, so far as I can speak, for I left at 1 p. m., there was no disturbance, and yet I cannot help feeling that the conduct of the meeting was not wholly

credible either to the delegates or to the very officious superior persons on the platform.

It is here that I find the subject so difficult to handle. Were I to say one half of what I feel I should give great offense and probably cause a good deal of dissension. As I have said before, I do not approve of leaders, nor of leadership, and have a strong aversion to the "never ending audacity of elected persons." In a democratic meeting I think it is a mistake to have superior persons on the platform.

Then as to the treatment of the antiparliamentary Socialist (Anarchists!). It did not seem to me quite fair, and was certainly not generous. I have in the past been accused by the English Anarchists of being unfriendly to them.

I am not an Anarchist, in the usual acceptance of the term. But I felt pained and ashamed when I saw how these strangers—many of them valuable and honest Socialists—were treated in a meeting which professed to be democratic. Very honest and very sincere, and very intelligent were the faces of the evicted Dutch and French delegates; very forcible and moderate were their speeches, and very scant courtesy did they receive at the hands of the superior persons who sat—for reasons which I should like to have made plain—upon the platform.

I came away sorry and ashamed. I regretted more than ever my deplorable ignorance which made it impossible for me to talk with our Dutch and French friends and utter a few words of sympathy and regret. It is pitiful to see what we have seen today: it is still more pitiful to recognize the ugly facts behind the intolerance and contempt with which a body of men and women, whom I believe to consist chiefly of honest and able Socialists have been treated.

Believe me, there are rocks ahead. . . . It behooves all who have the interest of Socialism at heart to prepare themselves for an hour of severe trial. If personal vanities and ambitions, and the substitutions of dogmas and shibboleths for the living, breathing cause are to be resisted, the movement must be made democratic, and to make the movement democratic we must have democrats. . . . If Socialism means a cast-iron administration by a dictatorship or priesthood of superior persons of the conference platform type, we had better turn tails and done with it. The outlook today is not hopeful."

Some Mistakes of S. T. Byington.

No doubt the readers of The Firebrand had enough of the controversy about some alleged "biblical facts" between two learned scholars such as Comrades Byington and Loveridge. I have not the least intention of meddling between these eminent controversialists; nor do I come to the rescue of the latter, as some might think; for he is well able to take his own part. I deem it as a right to show the incorrectness of some of Comrade Byington's assertions.

In No. 24 of The Firebrand he expresses the hope that Comrade Loveridge is yet aware of "the indisputed fact that the Gospels are older than the Talmud." This is erroneous, unless he has reference to a part of the Talmud which was written and collected years after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans. I wonder if Comrade Byington ever heard of the two Talmud collections called by the Jews, "Talmud Jerusalem" and "Talmud Babel." The Jerusalem and Babelonian Talmud, both of which must antedate the birth of Christ, as their names indicate, though not much of it is in existence at the present day because of the many persecutions that the Jews went through. Even Christ himself has reference to the Talmud when he reminds the Jews of his day for following the "teachings of man" rather than God's. And it is not at all improbable that Jesus had a good knowledge of the traditions of his day, for, as the Jews say, he was a scholar of the Sage Rabbi Hillel, a great talmudic authority of that day. I hope the foregoing will suffice to show that the Talmud as a whole is older than the Gospels.

In No 18 of The Firebrand Comrade Byington repudiates Comrade Loveridge's assertions that there can be no certainty about Hebrew literature anyhow because the vowels were not written," etc. I concur with the above assertion. It matters little how easy one can read at the present day both Hebrew and Arabic without vowels, without division of words and without sentences, yet, Comrade

Byington must admit that it was not so easy nearly sixteen centuries ago when the Old Testament was first translated from the original Hebrew, and most assuredly gross errors and misrepresentations resulted from that senseless Script. Unless he accepts with christian meekness the long exploded doctrine of the "Holy Spirit" guiding and directing both writers and translators of the Bible.

As a simple translation from the vowelless and unpunctuated Hebrew, I'll refer Comrade Byington to Gen. 3, 15, in a Roman Catholic Bible to compare with the Hebrew version; he will find that instead (אין) "He" shall crush thy head, it reads (אין) "She" shall, etc. The mistake is obvious!

Not because Hieronymus was not a good scholar, but because of the uncertainty of the vowelless and unpunctuated Hebrew of his day, that he could not help himself translating the above as he did, for the Hebrew letters comprising the words he or she are identically the same with the exception that the former has a modern period in the second letter.

Now, Comrade Byington can't reply that the above translation savors of "Jesuitical fraud" for he will stand accused of being partial. Almost similar was an answer I got from a Catholic Priest years ago. When asked how it is that the Catholic translation of the above passage is virtually so different from the Protestant, and that the latter is exactly like the Hebrew, he replied that they (the Catholics) have the original translation and that Protestants or Jews must have tampered with that passage.

Of course it is immaterial to us if the Gospels are older than the Talmud or vice-versa; the same also if a "he" or "she" shall crush the serpent's head. We can leave that altogether to the "upholders of the faith" who are sore in need of defending the same, but for the sake of clearness and of truth I penned the above criticism. F. M. RADICH.

Note and Comment.

THE FIREBRAND force is in the hop fields, and present and the following issues will not contain current receipts, but they will be published in the issue of September 27, on our return. If correspondence gets behind, or anything else "goes wrong", we ask comrades to remember the circumstances and be lenient. We will try to make up for all shortcomings if given time.

A RECENT personal letter from Comrade Andrews, of Australia, gives some interesting information as to our interests over there. Comrade Andrews has been forced to abandon, at least for the present, the publication of "Reason", which is a matter very much to be regretted, as it was one of our brightest and ablest English exchanges. He cannot remain inactive however, and is now getting out his "Handbook of Anarchism", for the publication of which he was once imprisoned. He is also engaged on an Anarchistic novel. The Firebrand hopes to notice these works in detail at a later date. Comrade Andrews' propaganda has resulted in the formation of a group in Sydney, N. S. W., who issue "The Anarchist", a manuscript journal, for secret, hand-to-hand circulation. We have a copy of the journal, and also a splendid letter from the group.

WE are informed that at the close of the international congress in London, the Social Democrats held a propaganda meeting and had an audience of about five hundred. The (Communist) Anarchists also held a meeting and attracted an audience of four thousand. Mr. Tucker has been telling us how Anarchist-Communism is dying out and its adherents going over to State Socialism in England. Much consolation may be found in these figures.

WE western Anarchists have been inclined to smile at the efforts of our European comrades to gain recognition in the International Socialist Congress. Indeed, The Firebrand has published some rather unsympathetic criticisms of their action. But Comrade Turner thinks we do not understand the situation, which, we grant, is altogether possible. In a private letter, written from Omaha, he says:

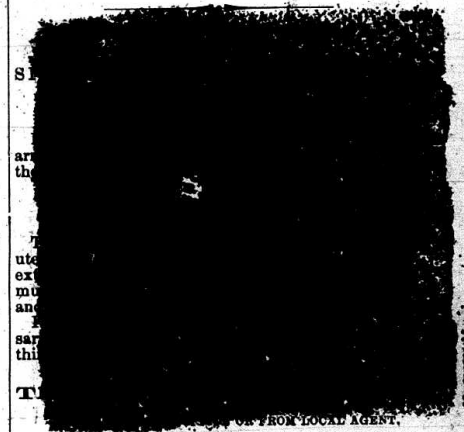
I do not think you are in position to judge of the London Congress. From papers and information from Comrades our comrades have done more than I could have hoped. It would have been more than a blunder to keep away—it would have been a crime toward European propaganda. The Trade Unions are not likely to co-operate again, and the Social Democrats will be forced to come out in their true colors, and call a Social Democratic Congress, which is all we have contended for. We have gained in every way by what comrades have done. It has proved that the Marxists are but an intruding clique in the world of Socialism and that the Anarchists are rapidly gaining ground everywhere.

The reports were that the Anarchists broke down the doors and forced their way into the congress, which, of course, caused our people to smile. We cannot answer for the truth of these reports, but it is true that all delegates who did not believe in political action were

excluded from participation, and held a congress of their own. We learn from "Der Socialist," Berlin, that meetings were well attended, and won the sympathy of many of the more liberal and progressive of the leading Social Democrats. Kier Hardie, for instance, made a speech condemnatory of the action of the Congress in excluding the Anarchists, in which he avowed disbelief in the machinery of the State and declared that if Anarchism was nearer the truth than his own ideal it should win. The greatest interest was manifested in the questions of political action, trades unionism, agrarianism, and the general strike. The discussions are to be collected, condensed and translated for the international Anarchist press. J. H. M.

"TYRANNY begins her argument by fettering free speech. Begin your reply by breaking your fetters."—[Mirabeau.

THE object of life is to be happy, the place to be happy is here, the time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others happy.—[Ingersoll.



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