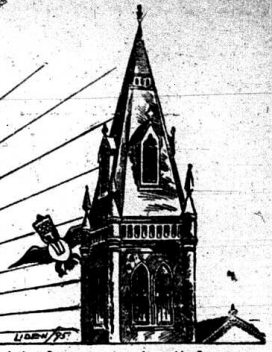


The Firebrand

THE ORGAN OF THE COMRADES 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.

VOL. II.

PORTLAND, OREGON, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1896.

No. 35.

THE FIREBRAND

Published Weekly. — Communicate in any of the European languages.
50 CENTS A YEAR.

Address all Communications and make all Money Orders payable to The Firebrand, P. O. Box 417, Portland, Or.

Admitted as second-class matter at the Portland, Or., postoffice.

Anarchy.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal; absolute individual liberty.—Century Dictionary.

Influencing the Capitalists.

COMRADE MORRIS appears to think this is hopeless. I think that fear is a conventional fear. The greater number of capitalists do not enjoy the true amount of comfort and convenience, besides necessities, produced by the average exertions of one man; they are surely as well capable of understanding that they have no chance worth considering of becoming able to spend large fortunes on personal gratifications, as the workers of understanding how much chance they have of doing the same, and the difference is not much in this respect; they are not secure in the positions they occupy, and whatever reduces the aggregate purchasing power of the workers cuts off profits from them or destroys their capital; the same condition which threatens the workers with starvation threatens them with ruin and starvation afterwards in the capacity of unemployed; except a handful of criminal lunatics whose peculiarities the system has favored, they are ordinary persons who are in the position they occupy by the mere chance of events. Certainly, it is hardly to be expected they will give up capitalism in order to become wage-slaves and outcasts; but the unemployed might argue that so long as the opportunities of subsistence are locked up in the way they are, justice among the workers demands that those opportunities which are available should not be monopolized by some members of the working class to the exclusion of others; and because those who have billets do not throw them up, they might contend with equal validity that it was useless to try and agitate among employed persons, who might become in earnest over the solidarity of the working people, but only after becoming unemployed. On the contrary, the interests of the employed themselves would lead them to welcome a change of system if they saw clearly that the new principles were correct, and how the new methods would operate and be operated. In the same way, the majority of capitalists when they realize, as they are doing, that the present system is to their detriment, will be eager to bring about any change which recommends itself to their understanding, even if they will not let go the means of support that they possess right up to the moment when they can see their way to set about changing—and in this they are no worse than the workers, who are supporting capitalism for their own immediate convenience every time they work for a capitalist or buy capitalist-owned goods, and who are not likely to voluntarily cease doing so until the moment they see the way to support themselves under a different system. The point I take is, that the

average capitalist is not benefiting at the expense of the worker, but is really suffering at the expense of the worker; that he does not get the materials for enjoyment, let alone the social means of enjoyment, under the present system by robbing the workers, which he would get as an honest worker in Anarchy; that for what he does get, he has to submit to worries and anxieties which are often undermining his constitution during the greater part of his waking hours, and that he has no greater security for his position than has the worker, the same disastrous causes influencing him in the same way, with the only difference that he has resources which prevent him for awhile from feeling the pinch quite so acutely; and that if he understands this well, and also understands Anarchy, then if an easy opportunity for peaceful evolution presents itself he will take advantage of it, and if warlike revolution breaks out, he will at the critical moment be found on the right side. It is to be remembered that few men are heroes, but nearly all will face the greatest difficulties and dangers when moving as a mass. There are also many people who will help to make up the mass if they know why they should, but not otherwise. I contend that the capitalist needs the social transformation about as much, taking things all around, as the worker does; the worker is often fool enough not to see his real interests, so is the capitalist; and that is the only difficulty I see about it. If the capitalist really benefited himself by the present system it would be another matter; but he doesn't and can't, and I put him on the same footing towards the worker as the employed worker towards the unemployed—simply a slave to the system, who has in some respects, by the accident of circumstances, a little less rude suffering. Anyhow, I would consider it better work to convert one capitalist than a dozen of the unemployed, for the simple reason that one man logically convinced against his immediate interests based on the System, is certainly convinced; whilst a man who is open to conviction under the necessities of the moment may simply be driven by exasperation to acquiesce in or express doctrines which as soon as the exceptional provocation is withdrawn, he regards as mere extravagances. It must also be confessed that, as capitalism has been considered by the public generally up till recently as perfectly moral, it has really been superior energy and ability, and not merely greedy cunning, which has enabled many people who are capitalists to become and remain so; and on the other hand that whilst the system produces degradation as well as poverty for which the degraded and the poor are not personally responsible, there are a great many people at the bottom of society whose own defects have thrust them down or kept them down; consequently with all due allowance for criminal lunatics, etc., among the capitalists, there is every reason to suppose that they should be good material for converts and quite as well worth trying to influence as the unemployed, etc., to whom it is the fashion of agitation to appeal. That is considering them as men; but there is also

the very powerful argument in favor of doing all that is possible to enlighten them and make them sympathise with us behind their immediate interests, if they won't sympathise in front of them—that when the critical moment arrives and is recognized, and the immediate interest of everyone is above everything else one or other of the possible issues, every owner of resources who has been prepared to range himself on our side means so much of resources which we have possession of from the commencement—a very considerable item whether for peaceful reform or for war. Even if on this ground alone, I think that—without neglecting efforts in other directions—every possible endeavor should be made continually to impress upon capitalists the truth and desirability of Anarchy, and the fact that the choice between it and the present system is not at all indifferent for them; that for them as for us Anarchy is an escape from evils to benefits.

J. A. ANDREWS.

Warren Replies to Me

In The Firebrand of August 16th, a copy, of which some one has kindly furnished me, is an article by J. H. M., entitled "Judgment without trial", to which I beg leave to offer a brief reply.

To begin with the title to the article, I remark that it exhibits more of displacency than does the article itself, and does not truly indicate either the character of my reminiscences, or of the writer's criticism of them; for on the whole, the criticism shows too little real disagreement between Mr. Morris and myself to justify controversy. Some of his quotations, however, are inaccurate, and like his title, misleading, and the reader is likely to infer that, in Mr. M.'s opinion, my conclusions as to the lessons to be drawn from the Berlin Heights experiments are quite unworthy of consideration.

To be as brief as possible, I will mention only one of these misquotations. I did not say that "The conclusion from the experiments at Berlin Heights, and all the experiments everywhere, is that Communism is impracticable; for this would have been contradicted by the experience of the Shakers, and by numerous other examples. It is true that I assumed, that all such experiments had failed; but I did not mean that they had ceased to exist, nor that they had been invariably abandoned as impracticable. I only meant that they had failed to satisfy the aspirations of freedom loving men and women. What I did say, which Mr. M. should in fairness have quoted in full, was that conventional Communism, as a system of organized industry, can never succeed, except at the sacrifice of individual freedom and aspiration. This is the lesson to be drawn from all the experiments at Berlin Heights—from all the experiments everywhere.

The insinuations of my critic as to the ignorance of the Berlin people, concerning the principles of Communism, will cause a smile on the countenance of Frank Barry and the veterans of that celebrated movement. Mr. Morris, however, is not alone in attributing to ignorance whatever seems to antagonize his own theories; and the rudeness is partially atoned for, in his subsequent remarks, criticising what he is pleased to term the old Communityism, as distinguished from real Communism.

But what he calls Communityism, I called Communism, in my reminiscences, and the world has all along

agreed with me. And so, before pitching into me, he should have explained to his readers, that I had not attacked Communism at all, but only Communityism, and that so far as that was concerned, he had no fault to find. Instead of doing this, he accuses me of ignorance, and then goes on and devotes the bulk of his article to the support of my position. Communityism, he agrees with me, is a failure. I did not call it by that name, but that is of little consequence. I suppose that Alexander Longley and Frank Barry and I will still be allowed to call it Communism.

Of course, we have no objection to the Anarchists putting new definitions to words, if they prefer to do so. But in this instance, I am no more a Communist than I was before. From other articles, written by Mr. M., I learn more definitely, what the new definition is. Anarchist-Communism means simply "free consumption". Unrestricted production will make commodities so plentiful that commercial value will disappear, and each individual will be free to help himself to whatever he needs, or thinks he needs, as we now take a pin or a match, without regard to ownership.

Of this kind of Communism I have two remarks to make. One is, that it is not original with Anarchists, unless Josiah Warren is to be so designated; and he did not claim the name; nor did he name the theory Communism. The other is, that both Josiah Warren and the Anarchists are, no doubt, mistaken as to the effects which would follow the removal of restrictions upon industry. They are all too sanguine. Of course there can be no objection to free consumption, under the conditions predicted; but it cannot be assumed that, with all restrictions removed, each and every individual will produce more than enough to supply his own wants. On the contrary, there is serious doubt that the aggregate wants would be any nearer supplied than at present. Human wants are never supplied. As fast as one is supplied, others spring up. It must be so, else life would lose its flavor. Nor is it demonstrated that with the removal of restrictions there would be any increase of production. Ease is one of the wants of human nature; and it is one for which the average individual will sacrifice very many other good things. This has been abundantly shown, in every communistic society. How can it be shown that, with adequate opportunity, all men and women will work with more energy than they do at present?

The theory is not true, and those who trust in it are doomed to disappointment. So I think; and so I am not a Communist, even in the most modern sense of the word. Neither am I an Anarchist, though Anarchy, too, is to have a new definition. It is now said to mean, not disorder and confusion, but simply equal freedom. Well, that is just what I do not believe in. The freedom which I claim for myself is absolute. A limited freedom is not freedom. There is no natural limitation. Nature knows nothing of rights, except such as are assented to. I am, therefore, free to control the conduct of others, if I can, and if I deem it expedient to do so. We all do this, in the case of children, idiots and insane persons; and for similar reasons we may do so by all who differ with us. This is the basis of government, and the question is, therefore, not whether or not we shall have government, but rather how much, and whether equity or greed shall rule.

A. WARREN.

If my friend Warren said things that he did not mean to say in his "Berlin Heights" article, he should not blame me for it. But he did pronounce "all" communistic efforts failures. I am quite ready to agree that what he calls communistic experiments always have been and always will be failures, and for the sole reason that they are not communistic. Like "limited freedom," limited Communism is not Communism. Even if I grant his correction of my quotation of him (though I pretended to quote only the spirit and not the letter, and his correction does not alter the former), it doesn't alter my opinion (for such is my opinion, and I meant the reader should so understand me) that his conclusions as to Communism are unworthy of consideration. This principally because (and I also tried to make this fact plain) he has no conception of Communism. The fact that Mr. Warren attempted to judge a system without trial called out my criticism. Had he called the experiments by their proper names I could only have agreed with him. Here I may remark that he will be allowed to call black white if he chooses, but I shall take the liberty to tell him he don't know what he is talking about whenever I have no other

amusement on hand.

Mr. Warren's own language furnishes the basis for my conclusions—not "insinuations"—as to the ignorance of Communism on the part of the Berlin Heights experimenters, since his account is all I know of the matter.

But as there is "too little disagreement" between us "to justify controversy," Mr. Warren must needs give it some other turn, because controversy is inevitable. So he attempts to criticize Communism, only to furnish me with a better opportunity of pointing out his ignorance of the subject.

Anarchist-Communism, to begin with its first break, does not mean "simply free consumption." He must recognize this when he has immediately to go back and restate the proposition. Whether he does or does not recognize so glaring an error, mere color-blindness may be classed as a minor fault, and my time would probably be wasted on him. Neither is it claimed that each individual will produce more than enough to supply his own wants; because in such a case products would only be accumulated uselessly and allowed to perish wastefully. Communism does not contemplate any such imbecility. It is expected, however, that the individual will be unrestricted in supplying his wants, and that in doing so he will necessarily exercise his powers of production—not only because the exercise of these powers is necessary to the satisfaction of other needs and wants, but because the exercise of every faculty and power is a natural want. Whether under these circumstances production would exceed that of the present is an entirely irrelevant question. The point is that people shall be free to produce as much or as little as their wants dictate.

As to the insatiety of human wants, I agree with Mr. Warren [see Firebrand No. 25]. Anarchy does not mean "equal freedom"; or if it does I agree with Mr. Warren that it is undesirable [see Firebrand No. 33]. My demand for absolute freedom does not mean that I want greater freedom than my neighbor or that I want to control his action—that is another principle altogether. My desire for absolute liberty is in order that I may freely act for the satisfaction of my own wants; controlling the actions of another would be directing his actions to the satisfaction of my wants, and so far from being the principle of liberty, it is the opposing principle of government. To assume that the logical conclusion of absolute liberty is the principle of government, as Mr. Warren does, is an absurdity really unworthy of notice. Those who talk about "equal freedom" appear to have the same notion, and Mr. Warren's equity proposition is their own in different language. The idea is that beyond a certain point liberty is invasive (the principle of government) and to remedy this, liberty is to be regulated, limited, "equalized". That Mr. Warren's idea is essentially the same is apparent. It is very evident that if we can regulate the amount (say "how much") and determine the quality (whether of "greed or equity") of government, we can also abolish it completely if desired; and the fact that some of us do desire it would seem to make the one proposition as much a question as the other. Besides, if absolute liberty is the principle of government, limiting the government, i. e., saying how much, would be limiting liberty; and liberty limited is not liberty, according to Mr. Warren. There never has been and never can be any question of equity in rulership. Might alone, as Mr. Warren recognizes in a former sentence, rules. Equity is the absence of compulsion—absolute individual liberty.

J. H. M.

The Iron Law of Wages.

By "the iron law of wages" is meant no natural law, but a law incident to our present economic system. This law of wages is claimed to have been discovered by Ferdinand La Salle, but Engels denies it by announcing himself and Marx as the true discoverers.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, whether Marx, Engels or La Salle was the discoverer of this law does not alter its grave significance. Hence, this law of wages, meaning simply that there is a tendency in wages to decrease just in proportion as the cost of reproduction of the laborer decreases, loses nothing of its value to the student of economics by the fact that

(1) See "Mystery of Philosophy", by Marx, Russian edition.

all or neither of them were its discoverers.

This law is no economic fiction; it is a stern reality, substantiated by facts too numerous to be specified in this short article. When there are millions of men, women and children who are slowly but surely starving to death; when there are hundreds and thousands of those who work early and late and cannot earn enough to keep a roof over them, a bed under them, rags upon their backs, fire in their stoves and sufficient food in their stomachs to sustain themselves in good health; who can doubt this cruel law of wages? Let others say what they will, but as for myself, I say this iron law of wages does exist and result most cruelly to the laboring masses. They who work in the factory and in the mine, they who do the hardest and most dangerous work, those who are the most useful members of the community, go about without clothing or shelter. Is it because they do not deserve comfort that they suffer in poverty? No. Even the meanest politician will tell you that if there is any class that deserves comfort it is the wealth-producing class. And yet they who do all of which civilization boasts go around with empty stomachs, not because they do not deserve food, but because the law of wages does not permit them to have it.

Now the question likely to occur to every intelligent person is, Whence comes this iron law of wages? Why do wages tend to fall so low that hundreds and thousands are driven to the most desperate crimes? Why do wages (the compensation for toil, as some politicians are proud of putting it) tend to fall to that point at which it is much the same to the laborer whether he works or not, starvation being his portion in either case?

These questions are easily answered as soon as we understand that all this talk of men being free and independent is not true. Wage earners are not free and independent. When land and the instruments of production are monopolized, and those who have all the wants of a human being have nothing save their labor power to gratify them, it is absurd to speak of them as of free and independent men. No man is free who has no access to the soil upon which he chooses to make his livelihood. No man is free whose livelihood depends on others. As a well known economist has said: "Without land man is almost helpless; without tools he is dependent, and without both he is wholly dependent—he is a slave. And this is precisely what our industrial system has made of the laborer. The capitalist does not own the laborer, but he owns that without which he cannot live. And this, as we shall point out later, is how the laborer comes under the "iron law of wages."

Had the laborer been free and independent, as the prevailing notion is, that is to say, had the laborer had free access to the soil and machinery, his wages might have been established by the fruits of his labor. The iron law of wages could not hurt him, because if his wages were not as high as he could earn for himself, he could refuse them. He could work for himself and dispose of his commodities by selling or exchanging them with those who were in need of them. But, under the present system the laborer can not afford to refuse wages no matter how low they may be. He must accept the wages offered to him or commit suicide, because the laborer of today has no land, no tools, and cannot employ his labor-power without selling himself for exploitation. The laborer of today, I repeat, has no tools, and has no land. He sleeps in another man's house; he works in another man's shop; he uses another man's tools. He can exercise no will of his own with reference to the compensation for his toil; the present industrial system has rendered him helpless. What monopoly in land began, monopoly in machinery has finished. Thus comes the laborer of today under the biting pressure of the iron law of wages.

But, as we grow accustomed, the hardest drudgery is borne with impunity. When a man feels that a thing is inevitable he ceases to complain, even though it may be an evil of the most painful character. Hence the necessity to labor for a bare living, just as the necessity to die, is being looked upon as a very ordinary thing. Work seems to the toiler the greatest boon in life. The meanest and the hardest drudgery is always welcome to those whose lot has

been made miserable by our existing capitalist system. And with multitudes of men falling over each other in the struggle for an opportunity to work, what becomes of those who refuse to work for low wages? Under such pressure there is no downward limit to which wages may not be pushed, except that beyond which the laborer cannot reproduce himself.

Now I hope it will be clearly understood why all but the most skillful laborers are forced under the law of wages without regard to their personal merits or demerits, without regard to the multiplication of the effectiveness of their labor powers. And when industrial training schools make all workmen skillful, then what we call skilled workmen will be just as poorly paid as the rest. The only point in determining the "compensation for toil", is, how little can the laborer live on? When this is decided you have also decided the workman's wages. And so, anything tending to reduce the standard of living tends to reduce wages. This is just how the law of wages operates. Why do men work for children's wages? Because children take the places of men. Why, then, are children's prices lower than those of men? Because it costs less to reproduce a child than a man. It is true that, with the aid of machinery, a child, or a woman, can produce as much as a man, but they can live on less and can offer their labor power for sale at a lower rate of wages. Thus everybody's wages tend to come down to the lowest point of anybody's wages. Such is the iron law of wages. But, as we mentioned at the outset, this is not a natural law. It can only operate as long as men are landless and toolless. But as the laborer is landless and toolless everywhere, under all forms of government and all monetary systems, it operates everywhere the same way. Hence, for the purpose of making the law of wages ineffective, it is necessary to regain our lost foothold on the earth and our lost implements of labor. Till this is done we shall always be slaves to those who own the means of life. Till the opportunities of labor have been set free we shall always have our wages cut lower and lower; that is, we shall always get a smaller and smaller part of our products. There is no political freedom without economic freedom; neither is there economic freedom without political freedom. One cannot be truly free until he is both politically and economically free.

H. A. KOCH.

Kind Words for Berkman and Eich.

MR. FULTON in "Age of Thought" goes the length of calling Berkman's attempt on Frick's life "a cowardly or at least damphool act". For my part I think Fulton wrong there. Berkman is certainly not a coward, he had reached that stage that he was willing to seal his devotion to the cause with his heart's blood; he knew that if he succeeded his life would pay the forfeit, and he walked boldly where his star led him. We will have plenty need yet of such men as Berkman, as Louis Lingg and Engel and Fischer, ere the "iron jaws" of monopoly are broken, and I am glad to see that the Firebrand comrades are not afraid to face the issue, be it either with the banner of peace or the weapons of war.

I have just received the last No. of The Firebrand, telling us of the brutal murder of Herman Eich. And so another true soul has passed into the "great Unknown", one of the immortal few, who refused to be a prostitute. I had read with interest the notice of his proposed trip east and had intended to say in my next letter to you, that if you were in communication with him, to inform him that we would be glad to see him if he came this far, and that we would give him a friend's welcome, but I was too late with my offer of friendship, and he will never know that away in southwest Missouri he had friends who mourn his sad fate and cruel death.

Do you know who buried the poor fellow?(1) It is hard to think of him lying in an unknown grave, far from the friends who knew him. These few lines to Spies may well apply to Eich:

Immortal! aye! the life lives on forever,
For all that made thee what thou were and art—
The thoughts that welled up from thy loving heart,
The deeds that from thy life's course none may sever,
The burning words that made thy life a lever
Unto the lowliest soul, hope to impart—
Still live, and through a wider radius dart

(1) The body was buried at Salt Lake City, by a friend there.

To pierce our listless souls with thy endeavor,
In all that memory to thee doth bring
In all thy name calls forth in tollunbed mind,
In all that makes thy life a ceaseless spring
Of strength and hope, death hath no power to bind,
Immortal in our hopes thy life still lives,
Immortal in the strength thy life still gives.

KATE AUSTIN.

Misconceptions.

In your definition of Communism, in your last issue, you say, "For supposing the community to be governed by the representative system, it is evident that some will have more to say than others in the management and disposal of the 'common property'. Thus we see the 'common' principle has been violated," etc.

The objection you make to representative government appears quite natural, so it seems to me, provided absolute liberty be the great desideratum, in fact, it is difficult to imagine any sort of society whatever, without a surrender of liberty to some degree. But, the question is, is absolute liberty the real ideal which actuates us, and if so, to what extent are we propelled by it? On the contrary, if we are to sacrifice our liberties, to what extent is it desirable to do so? You seem to place a good deal of emphasis on the word liberty, and yet, from your concluding remarks in the same article, I judge you recognise the necessity of curtailing individual liberty to some extent, still is it not true that too much importance has been given that word, altogether? (1)

It seems to me that the true object in life, the end to which we all strive, is to live and enjoy life with the least possible friction, and in putting it that way I am not forgetful of the fact that we may enjoy a certain amount of friction and be improved by it, indeed it seems a necessary adjunct of the struggle itself, involving, as it does, education. Looking at the matter in that manner, does not the surrender of a certain degree of liberty become, not only logical, but a matter of necessity, and altogether desirable? I think so. As I see things, the only question which remains is, upon what terms shall the surrender take place, and therein is "the milk in the cocoanut."

Now if one makes a surrender to society it must be evident that unless society renders a full equivalent in some shape or form (and the return may not consist of liberty), society or portions of it becomes the master of the situation, as at present. On the contrary, if an equivalent is rendered a balance is maintained and for that reason I believe we waste much effort in our contentions regarding property and government. The ideal (liberty) is at fault, I am persuaded. Equivalents are what are wanted.

To those who recognise not only the desirability but the absolute necessity of certain social habits, such for instance as association, either for recreation, instruction, or production and distribution, both property and government are essential. The term government being used in its larger sense, of course. But, with equivalents rendered where can any reasonable objection arise to either? Is it not precisely because equivalents are not rendered that both are so obnoxious to day? (2)

Now, to secure such equivalents I confess I can see but one method, i. e. by employing the natural law of competition, and that involves organization — of groups if you please. But, our inability to organize, combined with the ease with which we have been robbed, marks us or at least the great body of us, as the "incompetent", precisely as charged. I can see no special object in either property or government, except as they can be used as a means to exploit, and by competition exploitation can be eliminated. No object, one way or another, pro or con. (3)

The country is full of communes and co-operative colonies but the object of each and every one of them is to exploit, hence they are all certain to meet with ultimate failure, for individuals and societies alike, must preserve some degree of balance. The worst of it is, such failures set up, of themselves, if we may judge by history, no remedial forces, and never will, it is safe to say, as long as selfishness is confined to the individual. With all our boasted progress we stand in need of equity as much today as ever.

Again, I ask, is there anything but competition on a proper basis, not for profit — which will furnish a remedy for this state of affairs. You will admit, I believe, that we must have such things as railways, for example, and yet railways must have both property and government. Such institutions can scarcely be operated by every individual member of the corporation, or commune, without endless confusion and dis-

ruption. But, let competition appear, and profit disappear, and where can either be used as a means to exploit?(4)

Again you say, "restriction of opportunity is a necessary adjunct of markets and commerce". This is far from clear. What have markets and commerce to do with monopoly? I may be wrong, of course, but there seems considerable confusion here, and I believe that confusion arises from failure to realise the part that profit plays in the game of life. I know it is common to regard property as a static force, but I believe such conceptions are most confounding and would strongly urge further consideration. I confess, as an old time single taxer, I had a good deal of difficulty with this question myself, but have long been assured that property is not the factor it is so often considered, there is no time to explain now. I may say however, that with transportation facilities at cost, and exchanges on the same basis I am certain there would be no property, in the sense generally employed, and that property would lose all value, except for actual use. In placing objections before markets and commerce, you surely make a great mistake. (5)

I now see what you mean by "free consumption", but let me ask you, would there be a surplus under free production? As a general proposition I think not, for who desires to create a surplus, and where is the limit to consumption? Under such circumstances who would part with his product but for an equal product, or price, as determined by competition, the only thing under the sun, so it seems, which can determine prices with justice.

I live in the hope that reformers may be able to get together somewhere, for I believe that even a few, comparatively, by utilizing natural laws, and especially the natural law of competition, may exert much more force than they conceive possible, at present. Were the early methods of present monopolists better understood such a statement would probably possess greater lucidity, but we must not extend, I will content myself by saying that many a time I have been offered luxurious accommodation "on the ground floor" for the small consideration of a few hundred dollars, and the offer might have been taken advantage of frequently, with great personal profit. It is not capital which does everything, useful as it unquestionably is.

G.

(1) If we "must" sacrifice our liberty, there can be no question as to how far; to the extent to which we must, is the only limit. If we may surrender or not at will, then each may determine for himself "how far". In voluntary association there is no sacrifice of liberty, because liberty is only the right of choice. I have said nothing to indicate that I consider the curtailment of individual liberty necessary or desirable in any degree.

(2) But if liberty is the right or power of choice, there can be no equivalent for its loss, and certainly no choice as to equivalents. The fundamental error here is a misconception of liberty. Perfect liberty exists until the individual is subjugated in some degree; and it is absurd to say that men cannot associate except in the relation of master and slave. Government is the opposite of liberty, and cannot exist without property. There is no "larger sense" in which the word government can be used than the sense of the subjugation of one individual or a number of individuals by another individual or number of individuals.

(3) "Competition involves organization"; organization is government; government is exploitation. So, by exploitation "exploitation can be eliminated"

(4) No, I do not admit that we must have railways if railways are proven to be incompatible with liberty. If they "must" have both property and government, then they must go with property and government. The question of liberty has no more to do with railways than with pack-trails. Under liberty the man who wants a pack-trail will blaze it out, and those who desire a railroad will build it.

(5) What restriction has to do with markets and commerce is, that without the one the other cannot exist. If the owners of natural opportunities, coal mines, for instance, should set all applicants to work, they would kill the commerce in coal in ninety days. They create a market, when coal becomes a drug, by shutting down, restricting the output. Now commerce rests upon the power to compel the payment of more than the cost of pro-

duction for an article. This is only possible through monopolization of natural opportunities. For instance, the factory hand produces an article of general use, receiving a certain sum therefor. He cannot take the article produced for his pay, but must go to the merchant and pay, perhaps, one and a half times what he received for producing it. It is as if he had taken the article direct from his employer, agreeing to produce for him one and a half articles in return. Thus we find the producers in perpetual bondage for the use of the articles of their own production. Commerce can rest upon no other basis. With opportunity to produce for themselves, men would refuse to pay more than the cost of production, and the employer and the merchant could not exist. J. H. M.

Massmeeting, Entertainment and Ball at Tacoma.

In order to make our voices heard here in the public debates on the national issues, some of us thought it appropriate to arrange a massmeeting, where we will be able to explain our position, and our attitude toward different political parties.

We feel the necessity of explaining ourselves to the people at large what Anarchy really is, and what it is not. One of our main efforts is to be clear and concise in stating our aims and desires.

It would be very gratifying for us to see also comrades come from Seattle and smaller places around where the Firebrand is burning the superstition and ignorance, to shake hands and have a good time with us.

We want to show to the people at large our conceptions of education, politics and economics.

We made arrangements for Germania Hall, where most of the stumpspeaking is going on. The program is very elaborate and will be a surprise to our enemies which are supposing that we "cut no figure" in the locality. We are going to have Prof. Jensen's full orchestra which is a first class one. An address delivered by A. Klemencic on National election and the Social problem.

The Tacoma Zither Club assisted by Mr. Rotschek, Miss Rotschek, Messrs Karasek and Jensen; a song by Mr. Harry Harkins, a duet on the piano by Mrs. Joyce and Miss Podlasek; and a violin solo by Mr. J. T. Davis. In connection with the concert is going to be introduced the "Grape picking" entertainment where it will be allowed to steal, but will be fined if caught. In this Messrs Thurell, Gregelson, Burh and Bishop will act as Guardians, Mr. Hardy as Burgermeister and V. Klemencic as Jailor. (The slickest thief will get the premium.) After this will be the ball.

The benefit is going to be divided half for the Firebrand press fund, and half for other anarchistic literature for distribution. The entertainment will take place Saturday, October 17, at 8 o'clock.

A. K.

Note and Comment.

The New York raffle (for the encyclopedic dictionary) has again been postponed—the date being set for November 7.

To demand the right of self-government is not demanding the privilege of inflicting injury on others; to grant the right of self-government is not granting another the privilege of injuring you. The right of self-government and of self-protection against invasion are equally inalienable.

WITHOUT taking exception to anything Comrade Andrews has to say concerning converting capitalists to Anarchy, I hold to the opinion formerly expressed. My experience is that there is no essential difference between the average capitalist and the average workingman. One can see about as far into a millstone as the other. It is difficult, as comrade Andrews says, to induce the employed workingman to see beyond his job at so much per day. How much more difficult, then, to reach the capitalist, who can see no farther ahead and who thinks he has so much farther to look. So difficult does it appear that I think it will require something more than words to awaken the class. Anarchism knows no class, however, and I certainly should not object to the means with which the capitalist would be able to endow the movement. J. H. M.

The S. L. P. leaders are working for principles only, but it is a little funny how they have so much money

for the campaign against the populists and Bryanites, while constantly complaining of the smallness of their paying membership and the poverty of their followers. They yell themselves hoarse about the Anarchists, calling them police spies, etc. But that reminds me of the legend of the man who ran, crying stop thief, with the plunder in pocket.

Not only are there tons of literature being distributed gratuitously, but all papers who will use them are being supplied free with plates or ready prints for campaign purposes. Everything that can be thought of is being done to "educate the voter" on "sound money" and on "free coinage", but there is not one word in all this mass of campaign "educational literature" but what is calculated to mislead the reader and befool the voter. But it serves its purpose just the same. It keeps the deluded wealth producers quarreling among themselves and perpetuates the power of the robbers.

VOTE catching is a fine art. An illustration of how politicians can immediately and without apology change their demands and their attitude on "vital questions", was nicely illustrated at the Chicago Convention. Freedom of contract, personal liberty and State rights are time honored demands of the democratic politicians, but the populists demand government monopoly of the issue of money, so to please the pops, and catch their votes, the democratic politicians put the populist demand that "all money be issued by the general government only" into their platform. And the pops are caught. H. A.

Proposed Convention.

It has been the custom in the past few years for the Jewish Anarchists of New York, Boston, New Haven, Jersey City, Philadelphia and a few other neighboring towns perhaps, to send once a year, delegates into New York City for the purpose of meeting and discussing the Anarchist movement in the United States. This has been termed an "annual convention". At the last meeting a committee has been appointed to arrange and call the next convention, which is due January 1st 1897, and we thus take the opportunity to propose a general and real convention of all the Anarchists of the United States, to be conducted in the English language. It can not be that the Jewish section will object to this at all, on the contrary, we think that they will feel gratified when this is accomplished because they know of the usefulness and real necessity of it. And it is hardly necessary for us to emphasize on the importance of such a convention. Everybody will admit the great impetus it will give to the propaganda; it will start new men working and will stimulate and encourage the old ones. It is evident that the Anarchist movement in this country has become stagnant, some are losing hope, others courage, and many are becoming indifferent. This is so because we come together but little, we but rarely consider matters conjointly; we are divided rather than united. We need yet to arrive at a common understanding, we need yet to perfect the ideas and principles of Anarchism, it remains yet for us to unite our efforts and work in unison. All this can be accomplished only through conventions.

At present the political aspect of the United States is rather extraordinary, and we are sure a discussion on this subject would be interesting, perhaps some one will indicate the position Anarchists are to occupy in diverse political movements.

Moreover now that Comrade Turner is in this country, and we hear on good authority that Comrades Louise Michel and Kropotkin are to arrive here shortly; it would be an eventful convention as well as most prolific of much accomplishment.

We feel assured that nobody will oppose this measure, yet we do not wish to be presumptive in the way of calling a convention without general consent, and we ask the opinion of all on the matter, to be expressed through The Firebrand, and from that the committee will judge whether to call one or not. All will agree that a general convention is of the utmost importance, indeed, an imperative necessity; all will agree that much good would result therefrom, and that the movement in general would be greatly advanced thereby. And almost every group can get together a few dollars to send a delegate. So that any one who opposes this proposition will kindly state his reasons for so doing. Many comrades in New York and Boston have given their opinion that much more can come out of it than out of a year's agitation, and that it is worth spending more money for than many other things. They have also mentioned several subjects that need to be discussed, which in itself would necessitate a convention.

We therefore hope that all comrades will take an active interest in the matter and will not hesitate to express their opinions (in The Firebrand) in due time so as to give us ample time for making arrangements. All other communications to be addressed the secretary, Miss F. Smirnow, 236 Wooster St., New Haven, Conn. Anarchist papers will please copy.

THE COMMITTEE.

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