

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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NOTES.

The Crisis and the State.

The world of Labour begins to move very fast. The state of the country at the present moment resembles more a nation preparing for a siege than anything else one can imagine. This condition of things is something more than a mere symptom of Labour unrest. Labour seldom or never is at rest, in the strict sense of the word. But the threatened coal strike, following on the unprecedented Labour revolts of last summer, signifies something far more serious than mere unrest.

The simple fact is that organised Labour is at last face to face with the State. A million men in one industry, with many thousands more at their back, can neither be ignored nor coerced. When this vast army of Labour understands that the mines should be worked by them as free and equal human beings for the benefit of the whole community, then the nation will recover its stolen wealth and many developments would follow. The great social problems begin to loom very large on the horizon of the near future, and the present moment is pregnant with possibilities.

Socialisation the Remedy.

Every one is discussing the coal strike, but no one seems to be putting the one vital question: What right have a mere handful of men to "own" the mineral wealth of the nation and to make a profit out of it as against the interests of the community? This question can be asked in many directions, but in none more pertinently than in the ownership of our mineral resources. It should be voiced aloud throughout the country that the mineowners have no claims except those founded on legalised robbery, called property. They have defrauded the English people of their rightful inheritance, and to the crime of theft they add the vice of hypocrisy by pretending they have no means—as some are doing—to pay the minimum wage. The Anarchists are, of course, "enemies of society," and not entitled to be heard. Nevertheless, we see clearly how coal could be supplied abundantly to all who need it, without the fear of strikes. Let the miners take possession of the mines; let a few intelligent men of goodwill—say from the Wholesale Co-operative Society—organise the distribution of the coal, so eliminating the middlemen; let Mr. Asquith pay the fares of the "mineowners" out to Canada, there to do a little pioneer work, since they are such geniuses at organising (?) industry; and we should have a solution of this immense problem. True, it would mean the beginning of the end of this damnable system of monopoly. But who would weep for that?

The Minimum Wage and Capitalist Robbery.

The discussion of the miners' grievances and claims has brought into prominence the extent to which the whole community is plundered by the coal monopolists and the landlords and middlemen. While it is possibly true that in some cases collieries are unprofitable (*we shed no tears*), it is a fact that the majority return in a short period of years the capital invested in them. In a pamphlet entitled "Profits and Wages in the British Coal Trade," by Messrs T. Richardson, M.P., and J. A. Walbank, F.C.A., it is stated that the average dividend paid for 13 years from 1898 to 1910 by joint-stock colliery companies was 9.6 per cent. per annum. And in all cases the unscrupulous exploitation—in the shape of "royalties" and "wayleaves" and coal-ring speculators' profits—continues. The miners face the most awful form of death besides accidents, sickness, disease

and premature old age. The minimum wage will not alter these things, but it will at least do something in the case of "abnormal places" where the miner has to work days and even weeks at a stretch, almost for nothing, cutting through the faulty strata at the risk of his life. The whole nation, in our view, should rise in revolt against this abominable injustice.

The Value of Direct Action.

The coal-miners by their resolution to enforce their demand for a minimum wage have demonstrated to the world the fact that the workers possess the power, if they will but use it, to obtain either an alleviation or a remedy for the social evils and economic injustice from which they suffer. Last year the House of Commons listened to a moving plea for a minimum wage, and for all the sympathy with which, we are told, the speech was received, nothing happened. Now, to the rage and dismay of the politicians and capitalists, at least one considerable section of the working class in this country is taking action to put the principle into operation. And in spite of every effort to split their forces—and these efforts have been very numerous, and even joined in by their own paid officials, in some instances—the miners themselves are disposed to insist upon a national settlement. Again, as in the case of the railwaymen last year, the men who are working under the most favourable conditions are ready to enter the fight on behalf of their more unfortunate brethren. We applaud the tendency to self-help, mutual aid, solidarity, and internationalism which the miners' movement has developed, and hope that the lessons will not be lost upon all men and women who are striving for the abolition of landlordism and capitalism. The press very truly describes this tendency as "anarchical," and in these days when the blighting influence of the State is so marked a feature of our common life, we are filled with hope and confidence when we observe this "renaissance" in the world of Labour.

An Unsocial Socialist.

The February issue of the *Socialist* contains a very churlish reference to some comments made by one of our contributors on a debate in which a speaker belonging to the Socialist Labour Party was engaged. It seems to us a pity that a courteous reference to that party should be received with so much ill-humour. The writer in question prides himself upon being a mudslinger, and without doubt is well qualified for the literary department of the electioneering organisation which his party hope to form. But this is part of the foulness of political life, which, we contend, is antipathetic to the nature of true Socialism. He terms FREEDOM's protest against the mean and cowardly slander upon Emma Goldman a "howl" (a word more accurately befitting his own style of writing), and professes indifference towards it. We are told that we employ "capitalist methods," because "three-fourths of the literature advertised in FREEDOM is from Kropotkin's pen"! Any reader may count the list for himself, and it will be seen that even if we are not able to teach this grandmotherly person how "to suck eggs," as he (or she) says, a lesson or two in elementary arithmetic would not be amiss. In his own paper there is a much longer list from one pen. His logic is on a par with his arithmetic, for he says that Anarchists "belong to the forces of reaction"! Probably he thinks he knows what he is talking about, but really he is much to be pitied.

A PUBLIC MEETING

TO COMMEMORATE

THE PARIS COMMUNE

WILL BE HELD AT

BARNSBURY HALL, BARNSBURY STREET, ISLINGTON, N.,

ON MONDAY, MARCH 18, AT 8 P.M.

Speakers: E. MALATESTA, W. D. PONDER, A. BARON, A. RAY.

Are you a Subscriber to the
Weekly Paper?

RECOLLECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

By FRANK KITZ.

(Continuation.)

Almost the first meeting in our new quarters (over which the late G. Shipton presided) was that held to protest against the Liberal Government's policy of coercion in Ireland. We organised a large contingent from this club to attend the immense Anti-Coercion Demonstration held in Hyde Park. Our revolutionary banners (which included one with the well-known lines, "Blessed be the hand that waves the regicidal steel") roused the ire of O'Connor Power, and he incited a section of his followers, Roman Catholics, to destroy them. We were soon to experience Governmental persecution ourselves.

The passing of the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany in 1878 tried our resources to the utmost. The club was crowded with refugees: our hall at times resembled a railway station, with groups of men, women, and children sitting disconsolately amidst piles of luggage. To vast numbers expatriation meant utter ruin; it inflicted suffering and hardship upon all. Shortly after this influx of refugees the sections jointly issued a pamphlet, written by J. Sketchley, entitled "The Principles of Social Democracy," thus taking advantage of the interest awakened by the operations of the coercive measures of the German Government. Many thousands of this pamphlet were sold, the German section bearing the major portion of the cost, in order to aid propaganda among our own working class. The English section undertook the reissue of two pamphlets on Communism by H. Glasse; they also published an address to the amnestied Communists of Paris, and 50,000 copies of this leaflet were distributed.

The expulsion of the revolutionary Johann Most from Berlin, after serving a term of imprisonment, and his arrival in London, were the signal for renewed activity amongst the German Communists here. His fiery eloquence and poetic fervour enthused their somewhat flagging spirits. The *Freiheit* was established and proved a thorn in the side of the German despots. Despite their vigilance, large quantities of this periodical were smuggled into Germany. As the title was changed from week to week, each issue demanded a fresh prohibition by the authorities. (One issue bore the title of *Lehmann*, the name assumed by Prince William when temporarily a fugitive during the Berlin rising.) On several occasions, however, we were puzzled by the fact that the German Government was aware of the new titles before the paper reached Germany, and thus forestalled us. Johann Neve and I set to work to find out the cause. Suspecting a member who had recently joined, we supplied him with a specially printed copy of the paper, bearing a title different from the one we actually intended to use. The bogus title was prohibited, but the other escaped. I regret to say that this member met with a serious accident when attending a fete held in support of the *Freiheit*.

The State Socialists of the Marxian school pursued Most with bitter animosity. The usual charge of police spy (imitated by their English prototypes recently in the case of Emma Goldman) was made against him. Seeing that he passed altogether ten years of his life in prison and that Johann Neve, his friend and colleague, was, as I have previously related, murdered in a German prison, this kind of espionage does not seem as profitable as the publishing of treatises at so much nett! Serious conflicts took place between the adherents of the old school and those who shared the opinions of Most, and eventually resulted in a split. The State Socialists seceded and established themselves in another club, retaining the title of "C. A. B. V.," which is, I believe, still applied to a restaurant in the West End.

I now have to deal with a historic event which had far-reaching results. Russia was then, as now, groaning under an intolerable despotism; every attempt made by the intelligent few to improve the condition of the mass was repressed with ferocious brutality. Alexander II. and his satraps executed or imprisoned all who tried, by even the mildest methods, to rouse the people to a higher conception of life, until at last the Party of the Will of the People determined to meet force by force, and on March 13, 1881, Alexander was assassinated. The British Government (under that saponaceous old word-spinner, Gladstone, who styled the bloodstained autocrat "the divine figure of the North") arrested Most and seized the printing plant of the *Freiheit*, owing to the publication of an exultant article upon the death of the tyrant. The method of the seizure and all the subsequent arbitrary proceedings (which ended in the infliction of a sentence of sixteen months' hard labour upon Most) were Russian rather than English. It is worth noting, in passing, that Anglo-Russian ententes are always fostered when a Liberal Government is in power in England.

Whilst a great amount of indignation was aroused, and vigorous protests made against this infraction of the traditional policy of England in regard to political refugees, it was not comparable with the storm which caused the fall of Palmerston for his betrayal of the brothers Bandura. We have seen the last vestiges of the right of asylum destroyed by a Liberal Government, so far as revolutionaries are concerned. The hunting of the members of the Duma when here, and the handing over, under the Aliens Act, of refugees, to be executed or imprisoned, has completely exploded the belief that England is a refuge for the oppressed.

The Party of the Will of the People addressed an unavailing appeal to the new Tsar to change the policy of, brutal repression and

enter on a path of reform. They said: "You have lost a father, but we have been bereaved of parents, children, and all we love by the murderous agents of your power." More executions followed, including the hanging of Sophie Perovskaya for alleged complicity in the assassination of the tyrant. It will be remembered that the death of this heroic girl inspired the stirring verses of Joaquim Miller in her memory.

To return to the *Freiheit*. A strong committee was formed to defend Most. The English section took up the challenge of the Government and issued a manifesto, which sold in great numbers on the streets and was copied *in extenso* by the *Times* and other dailies throughout the country. The section also published an English edition of the *Freiheit* ("Freedom"), of which I was the unpaid editor. There was much speculation as to whether we would publish the incriminated article in English. Poland, who prosecuted for the Government, had to read a translation of the article to the magistrate at the preliminary hearing. Thereupon I published it in the English *Freiheit* as an eloquent speech addressed by Poland to the magistrate, thus defeating their object of enmeshing me in the prosecution!

(To be continued.)

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM.

Anarchists must regard Industrial Unionism with deep interest and sympathy, if only because that movement insists so much upon the axiom that "they who would be free themselves must strike the blow." Industrial Unionism has already done good service in the Labour struggle both in the United States of America and in Great Britain. The Labour upheaval of 1911 was by no means the unintelligent strike fever which so many people imagined it to be. It is true that the rise in the price of commodities during the last ten years, which had effected a considerable reduction in the purchasing power of wages, and the prevalence of personal tyranny in the industrial world, were to a large extent responsible for the revolts which have taken place; but the education of the working classes in economic matters had been steadily going on, and though many weary years have passed since the task was first undertaken, it has not been unsuccessful, and the first-fruits were the striking demonstrations of discontent and united revolt we witnessed during last year.

The propaganda of Industrial Unionism contributed its share in this awakening of the toilers, a propaganda which found eager sympathisers in very many quarters outside the circle of its avowed adherents, although the work which was being performed was done by people who did not enjoy the limelight of publicity and did not pose as "leaders of men." But the principles and policy of the movement include so much which Anarchists have themselves taught that they are bound to consider the part they should take in its development.

Industrial Unionism insists that the workers must recognise the necessity for combining as a class in order to meet the employers in the most effective manner, and it alleges that the old-fashioned Trade Unionism, by the divisions which it necessarily produces in the workers' ranks, and by the power which that form of organisation places in the hands of officials and "leaders" to make terms and agreements over their heads, no longer possesses the necessary qualities for useful service in the present phase of the Labour struggle. There should be one Union only, including every kind of worker of both sexes, old and young. This is rendered necessary by the fact that one employer or a body of employers may employ the workpeople of fifty or a hundred different crafts, who, divided and hindered in their action by their various organisations, are unable to combat the aggression of their employers by prompt action in one solid body. The general strike would be used whenever necessary, and, as a matter of course, would not be restricted to a section, but include all those workers whose labour might in any way be used to defeat the efforts of those who were directly concerned in the dispute. The interests of each are to be considered as the interest of all.

The above, in brief, are the methods. The objects of Industrial Unionism are to seize and hold all the means of producing wealth. These are to be held as the collective property of the organised working class, and they will directly control them. But ultimately a Parliament of Industry, which is to be the central directing authority, is advocated by some Industrial Unionists.

International unity and economic organisation are regarded as imperative necessities in the struggle of Labour against Capitalism. But in this economic struggle a political shade or ghost, as it were, is to attend its progress—as the doctrine is promulgated by many of its advocates—and a Parliamentary party is to be formed to defend and legalise, if possible, the action of the industrial revolution. There is humour in the idea, and we do not see very well how it could be done. But there, Anarchists are so unpractical! Naturally, the necessity for the political ghost is not recognised by many Industrialists, and so a large number have discarded it altogether.

However, it is not our intention to dwell upon differences of opinion inside the movement, but rather to discuss its proposals and its influence generally. We have said that Industrial Unionism has already exerted considerable influence upon the minds of working people in this country, and amongst the effects may be noticed the active efforts in many trades for the linking up of many small sectional Unions in larger combinations wherein united action may be more

easily arranged. Mere size, of course, is not the object, nor is it necessarily advantageous, but the abolition of many small and expensive organisations makes simultaneous action for common purposes easier of attainment. Also for years past the tendency to federation of Unions and industries has been growing (though we regret to say that this method makes the Labour "boss" an unpleasant possibility). Now this desire and effort for a closer union amongst working men has come from the men themselves. Industrial Unionism has been whispered from end to end of the country, and at a number of conferences, Labour and Socialist, the official wirepullers have had to use their wits to keep it in the background. For without doubt the more such ideas make headway, the more the scope of the leader and the politician diminishes.

Happily, the Anarchists are untroubled by those considerations, and we are at liberty to approve and assist the good side of the movement, and to point out what appears to us to be the evil part. Each one, of course, must decide for himself; but we think that Anarchists, generally speaking, approve of united action on the part of the working class in efforts to resist capitalist aggression and to effect their economic emancipation. It is no doubt true that Trade Unions, which have played a useful part in the workers' interests in past times, are, on the old lines, to a great extent played out; but it is possible that working men may adapt them, or some of them, by necessary internal changes, to a revolutionary purpose, even making them a portion of the revolutionary Union (of the working class) desired by the advocates of Industrial Unionism.

But is there not a danger that when we have our one solid Union centralisation in control may check the local initiative, and, combined with the dead weight of the slow-moving majority, the Central Council, may hinder that revolt for which the founders of the organisation laboured? It is bad enough in the Labour organisations now, as witness the difficulties against which local rebels amongst coal-mines and railway men contend. We do not maintain that these difficulties cannot be overcome; but if they are to be overcome, then it seems to us that the power and opportunity for action must be decentralised, or the class Union will impose a new form of tyranny upon its members. Moreover, the power of a reactionary section, who, well organised, had got control of the organisation, might easily paralyse its action or render it abortive. So far as we have been able to see, there is no more safeguard in the proposed new form of Labour organisation than in the old—indeed, less—except that Industrial Unionism, as at present expounded, would reduce the purely official element to a minimum. But the workers' opportunity to revolt is little enough now, and it is imperative that this contingency should not be overlooked, even as a matter of theory. Speaking frankly, we think that no central body could respond to the multifarious needs of all sections of Labour in every part of this island. They who suffer know best where the shoe pinches, and the best part of the teaching of Industrial Unionism is that which enjoins upon the workers the necessity of responding at once, in a body, to the cry for help of their oppressed brethren. Centralisation would hinder, not aid, such action.

It seems to us that knowledge is far more important than the form of organisation. Workers possessing the necessary knowledge and sympathy with their fellows may act, as they did last year, in advance of, or apart from, or even in defiance of, the organisation. But without knowledge, sympathy, and the spirit of revolt they are helpless and hopeless.

With regard to the political ghost, we notice that many Labour and Socialist politicians are saying: "Industrial Unionism—oh! very good. But you must allow us to organise you on the political field." Their audacity in this respect is amusing. On the one hand we have a statement of principles which declares that the vital necessity of the time is the economic organisation of the workers for purposes absolutely contrary to the political Constitution and authority, and which proves that a revolutionary attack upon capitalist society is necessary; and on the other hand, a number of politicians who can by no stretch of reasoning harmonise their Parliamentary efforts with a movement which must absolutely set aside both them and the institutions to which they belong as of no account in the life of the people—except as enemies. They are to do something—what, no one knows. But these human Providences must thrust their services upon some one.

As regards the ultimate Parliament of Industry—the new central authority—we need only point out that it would be no more capable of managing the industries, etc., of forty millions of people in this country than the central political cliques with their highly paid "experts" (the dream of the State Socialists). In the age of Common Sense people will decline their services (politely or otherwise), and manage their own concerns better and more cheaply for themselves.

That Industrial Unionism seeks the overthrow of Capitalism; that it places above all else in importance the economic struggle; that it seeks to remove the petty differences of "craft" and to destroy the power of those who mislead and divide the workers on both the political and industrial fields; that it teaches and promotes the international solidarity of Labour; that it advocates the General Strike and Direct Action by the workers for their own emancipation—are all ideas with which we may sympathise strongly; but we submit that it is the function of Anarchists, whether in that movement or out of it, to keep boldly before the eyes of mankind the necessity of removing that great obstacle to their happiness and their development, that relic of the ignorance and slavery of past ages, *i.e.*, government of man by man.

LIBERTY AND FAIRPLAY.

What strange things have been done in the name of these! One of the most extraordinary is that these names are generally given to papers devoted to despotism and privilege of every kind. Free copies are to be found in most of the free libraries, though they generally denounce the very places that give them shelter and find most of their readers. *Liberty* is the title of a paper of this character, devoted to defending every form of legal robbery, and edited by a man who was a failure as a Freethought lecturer. Monopoly of every kind, protected by law, finds at times a forcible-feeble and at others a frenzied advocacy in its columns. But it never varies its denunciation of every attempt on the part of the wage-earners to secure a trifle more liberty and independence—a little more bread. How anxious it is for the "liberty" of the well-to-do, those who by the aid of the law strip Labour bare.

When these legal thieves meet together to devise ways and means against the rest of society, even if they decide to crush out some of their competitors in the process, that is business, commercial and industrial development, social progress! But if the working victims should try to organise, decide on applying mutual help in case of being unemployed, agree upon minimum conditions of employment, instead of leaving economic necessity and blind chance to settle these things; if, in fact, the wage-earners dare to try and bring some (blundering perhaps) human reason to bear upon their otherwise helpless position, then, according to this organ of "*Liberty*" (for the privileged) that is Socialism, Anarchy, conspiracy.

Fairplay is the title of another paper of the same tribe, devoted particularly to the interests of the shareholders in the big shipping lines. It is the champion of the Shipping Federation and free labour. For years these folk were able to thwart the efforts of the most intelligent among the Seamen and Firemen to improve their working conditions of employment, by playing off the ignorant Judases in their ranks against their fellows in every attempt made. Somehow the Anarchist idea of solidarity amongst the workers as a means of improvement caught on, as the Americans say, with these men; and poor *Fairplay* has not been able to recover its logic-chopping, abstract love of liberty since. It seems to have crumpled up, like the Shipping Federation when it could not secure any seamen and firemen to betray their fellows. It now wants to abolish picketing, and to have the law strengthened against those who would interfere with "freedom of contract" between the hungry man and law-protected monopoly. Oh, what devoted lovers of "liberty" and "fairplay" they are!

Then, too, I seem to remember something of the kind leading up to and during the Boer War. What hatred of Boer tyranny there was to be sure. It was, no doubt, partly true. The Boers were not Anarchists by any means; but neither were they such powerful tyrants or such miserable hypocrites as the bunch of cosmopolitan financiers and politicians who provoked that wholesale murder and devastation. And how loudly the leaders of the political party responsible for that organised infamy talk just now about the tyranny of those in the saddle to-day. Does a single intelligent thinking worker believe, however, that they have any desire for liberty for him or his class? If he does, he is to be pitied.

Social and industrial progress, especially among the workers, does not go forward guided by abstract theorising, but blunders along, clumsily groping its way toward the light. It is not for Anarchists to do the dirty work of the tyrannical privileged classes, to lend themselves to the sophistry of their hirelings, or to worry about the Judases of Labour. Rather they should urge upon these latter to emulate the example of their classic prototype, only to do the deed before, and not after, betraying their fellows. They might die happier, if not easier.

I am prompted to these lines by the letter in February *FREEDOM* signed Robert Bingham. That letter seems to me to suggest that the wage-earners, for fear of infringing some abstract theory of liberty, should do nothing to prevent the existing economic and political system grinding them to powder.

A good deal of the trouble in Lancashire is due to the attempt of the Catholic Church to organise its ignorant and superstitious followers apart from their fellows. Of recent years it has begun interfering with the secular education resolution at the Trades Union Congress. It will; unless checked, divide the workers here as it has tried to do on the Continent. Does Robert Bingham believe the Catholic Church is on the side of Anarchism? If he does, like the workman who believes in Parliamentary politics, he is to be pitied. Though the Catholic Church, like the politicians, may pretend to sympathise with the poor, may even shout for "liberty and fairplay," it will deliver its devotees over to privilege and reaction every time. Anarchists, of all people, should not be so easily gulled.

It is a solid positive liberty we are after as Anarchists, not the shadow offered by privilege, or the pretence given by politicians. Neither at this late day are we to be satisfied with the wordy sophistries, leading nowhere, of the childhood of the Anarchist movement. While generally guided by the compass of first principles, we have learned to alter our course when we clearly see rocks straight ahead.

TRADE UNIONIST.

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The Leeds Conference.

The growth of the Anarchist movement and a desire to extend the work of propaganda principally by means of a weekly paper resulted in the call for a Conference, which was held with a fair amount of success, in the Clarion Institute, Boar Lane, Leeds, on Saturday and Sunday, February 24 and 25. About forty-five comrades gathered from the chief cities and towns of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Comrade Kitson, of Leeds, took the chair, and the Conference got to business on Saturday afternoon.

The first business was in connection with the new weekly Anarchist paper, which is to be issued from Glasgow on May 1. A long discussion took place with regard to the title of the paper, many alternative suggestions being made. Some of the comrades argued that the use of the word "Anarchy" in the title would militate against the success of the paper because of the prejudice which exists in the public mind owing to the misrepresentation that Anarchists have been subject to from the capitalist press; others expressed the sentiments of their various groups as being entirely in favour of the use of the word Anarchism. Suggestions were put forward to call the paper *Free Society*, the *Free Worker*, the *Commonweal*, etc. It was ultimately decided by general consent that the name of the paper be the *Anarchist*.

Comrades from Manchester afterwards introduced the question as to how to organise the propaganda of the various groups, and by the interchange of speakers to be able to render propaganda more effective. It was suggested that for this purpose the country could be covered by three federation areas. One area to embrace the Scottish groups from Glasgow to Edinburgh; another area to include the groups of Yorkshire and Lancashire between Hull and Liverpool; the third area to link up the groups across the South of England from Bristol to London. This plan was adopted, and names and addresses were exchanged of comrades in various groups, the work of each area to be arranged between the groups respectively. This concluded Saturday's sitting.

On Saturday night a public meeting was held in the Victoria Square. Comrade Pollock, of Huddersfield, acted as chairman, and was followed by Matt Sollitt, of Leeds, Max Seltzer, of Manchester, W. D. Ponder and J. F. Tanner, of London, Bessie Ward, of the Potteries, and George Barrett, of Glasgow, who answered questions. A good crowd, probably averaging 2,000, stood to listen during the whole time, from 7.30 to 10.30; 16s. was taken up in collection, and 13s. worth of various pamphlets and FREEDOMS sold.

The Conference again met on Sunday morning, when the subject of general organisation was raised. The general feeling was to emphasise to comrades, both present at the Conference and those not present, the importance of keeping in touch with each other, and when at a loss for information to write to FREEDOM Office.

The question as to whether the Conference be held annually was broached, and many hopes expressed that this should be done; but it was thought premature to state definitely the time or place of next Conference, so the matter was left to the group federations.

Comrade Stewart then gave a report of the business side and finance relating to publishing the new weekly paper. He submitted a balance-sheet showing income and expenditure relating to the newspaper fund, expenses of G. Barrett's tour, and expenses of Conference. About ninety comrades had subscribed

10s. each without counting London, and counting up subscriptions received and promises it was estimated that about £90 was already guaranteed.

Suggestions were made that groups make special efforts to advertise and circulate the new paper. The responsibility for its success rests on the comrades, and it is imperative they should take upon themselves individually the responsibility for a certain number each week. This was the general feeling.

In the afternoon the delegates visited Harehills Socialist Sunday School, where the scholars entertained us for an hour or more. A public meeting was again held on Sunday evening in Victoria Square.

One of the comrades took a report of the Conference proceedings in detail, and it will be available for future reference if required, the object of the present report being to convey a general impression.

I think most of the comrades will feel that they received nothing but good by visiting the Conference. It is good for people holding the same ideas to feel the confidence which comes from association, and comrades will no doubt look forward to such another gathering. To those who could not attend the Conference, may we suggest the necessity of keeping in touch with the movement, especially now that success seems to smile on our efforts, and to spare no pains to keep the new paper going once it is started.

A very pleasing feature of the Conference was the number of young men who have not been long in the movement, but who are enthusiastic and imbued with the proper spirit. Dear old Matt Sollitt, of Leeds, is very much alive still, and scathing in his denunciation of the forces of reaction.

Before concluding, a word as to the reason of our being refused halls after having engaged them seems necessary. That some pressure had been put upon the proprietors by the authorities is clear enough, as the same thing has been tried elsewhere. Although we may congratulate ourselves that our open-air meeting gave us an audience many times larger than the hall would have done, in future steps must be taken to prevent this arbitrary action of the police.

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION.

Some ten days ago the United States Press worked itself up into a fever over the report that a couple of Los Angeles men were proposing to sell Magdalena Bay to the Japanese Government. It appears that these gentlemen lay claim to more than 5,000,000 acres of Mexican soil, their alleged property having a sea frontage of 500 miles. At this moment the United States Press is in hysterics over the discovery that the entire Mexican nation is in arms for the recovery of its heritage. Ten days ago the Los Angeles speculators were cursed by everybody as unpatriotic, and they found it necessary to rush into print and deny the rumoured sale. To-day the Mexicans are the target for the entire newspaper vocabulary, from "Anarchists!" downwards. Nobody appears to have thought it at all objectionable that foreigners should gobble up what is an empire in itself, and nobody appears to think that Mexican revolution may have its root in a natural objection to being gobbled.

The workers of the United States, it will be said, have enough troubles of their own; and, in the face of more than fifty indictments against Labour leaders for alleged complicity in dynamiting, of the Lawrence strike, of the sufferings of the unemployed, I should be the last to combat that argument. Nevertheless I put forward with the utmost confidence the opinion that all these combined shrink into insignificance when compared with the conflict now looming up between the United States and Mexico. To say that every worker in the United States will be affected by it most profoundly is to understate the case. The whole world may be affected, for it is quite within the range of probabilities that it may bring to an end one scene and put on the stage another scene in the never-ending drama of social evolution. Not because I am connected with *Regeneracion*, but because I consider this the most important subject of the day, this letter will be devoted exclusively to the situation as between the United States and Mexico.

The Atlantic fleet has been ordered to Mexican waters; fifty thousand troops are being sent to the Mexican border, to "preserve order"; the War Office has completed plans for the immediate mobilising of an army of one hundred thousand. All that sounds fairly big, but that is not by any means the really big thing. The really big thing is that, as now acknowledged on all sides, the people of Mexico are in universal insurrection to recover what they consider their stolen lands, and that the United States Government apparently intends to put down that insurrection and prevent that recovery.

That, in my opinion, is the really big thing—a thing so big that it will take the most thoughtful and far-seeing much time to grasp it. It opens up an enormous horizon of probabilities, and I address myself, first and directly, to what seems to me incomparably the most

important of them all. I believe that if the United States invades Mexico the people of the world will have set before them the entire social problem as it never hitherto was set before them. I believe the social problem will be forced into the middle of the stage, a grim, colossal, uncompromising figure that none can evade. I believe that the efforts of plutocracy to force land monopoly on an entire nation that regards land monopoly as its deadliest enemy will compel the world at large to consider and determine whether this magnificent earth is to be for the use of all or for sale to the privileged few. That is the problem with which humanity has been laboring for years, and it may well be that the invasion of Mexico by the United States will strike the hour for its solution. If so, one of the most remarkable chapters in human history will have been opened.

Of course, such an argument will be set down as the vapouring of a wild-eyed dreamer, nevertheless he is bold enough to hold that facts are with him. He thinks the American public pitifully deluded if it fancies that the conquest of Mexico will be an easy task, and he reminds readers that British military authorities have declared the task far harder than was the subjugation of the Transvaal, to which Great Britain had to send nearly half a million soldiers. He thinks half a million soldiers cannot be raised in the United States without conscription, which will lead to an immense anti-military crusade and an infinite deepening of social discontent. He thinks that the resistant capacity of the Mexicans—a nation of 15,000,000—is being grossly under-rated, inasmuch as a large percentage of the people is now excellently armed, has all its naturally keen fighting instincts roused, is peculiarly adept at that guerilla fighting to which the mountainous character of Mexico so readily lends itself, and has in its favour a climate most deadly to the Northerner but to which the native is inured. These considerations are submitted without argument, to stand or fall by the test of events.

Furthermore, it is a fact that the Anarchist revolutionary movement has had, for years, its stronghold among the Latin races, and for thoroughly sound, fundamental, racial reasons. The Latin does not love work for work's sake, as so many of the Anglo-Saxons seem to do, in accordance with the philosophy of commercialism, which is that the production of commodities is the one end and aim of life. The Latin may love money, but he loves pleasure more. He may profess devotion to law and order, but he has an instinctive antipathy to strong, centralised Governments, preferring to be his own policeman both in defence and attack; for which reason he is generally looked on by the Anglo-Saxon as a may-be-violent and undesirable citizen. But I regard it as certain that these racial traits will bring him into sympathy with the Mexicans, to whom he is also bound by the great tie of a common language, spoken from Texas, in North America, to Cape Horn. It is submitted, therefore, that, even if racial war should not spring from this most pregnant situation, there will develop an intensity of feeling as between the two great divisions of the European family, each of which has marked characteristics of its own. Both the international Socialist and Anarchist movements will be affected most profoundly, the former leaning toward government as the restorer of peace and the latter condemning it, far more tremorsely than it does to-day, as the natural ally and champion of monopoly. The effect on the Labour and emancipation movement of the world will be very great.

From small acorns great oaks grow; all conflagrations start with a spark. Of late days even the most optimistic have been fain to admit that society is sleeping on a slumbering volcano, and the awakening may be nearer than many of us, rendered sceptical by years of disappointment, have supposed. For a long time past the situation has been exceptionally tense, and the revolution in Mexico adds incalculably to the tension.

WM. C. OWEN.

THE GENERAL STRIKE IN LISBON.

TO THE COMRADES OF THE WORLD.

As reported in several revolutionary and bourgeois papers (invariably in these latter with reactionary intentions, the news being consequently more or less adulterated), the General Strike was declared in Lisbon and other parts of Portugal. This strike was not of an economic character, but was intended to be an act of solidarity, and finds its origin in the strike of the rural workers of Evora, which compelled attention by reason of the drastic methods by which the authorities sought to quell the movement, such as the closing of the headquarters of the workers' associations, the demented attack by armed force and the murder of almost defenceless workers assuming a peaceful attitude—a strike which was all that was just and reasonable and which affected some tens of thousands of workers, being simply the outcome of the refusal on the part of the masters to comply with an arrangement previously agreed upon in respect to an advance in wages.

In the face of the last stage of the conflict, prior to the declaration of the general strike and with the object of avoiding it, a deputation representing the Federation of Trade Unions approached the Government, which at first declined to give them a hearing, but afterwards received them rudely and menacingly. It was therefore inevitable that the great movement which followed in the early hours of January 29 should take place, and would only cease after the following demands had been complied with: (1) Reopening of the Associations

which had been closed; (2) immediate liberation of the worker arrested in connection with the strike; (3) dismissal of the administrative authorities of Evora.

Work was entirely paralysed in Lisbon, Setubal, in the whole of Ribatejo, and in several villages of Alentejo, the only act of violence that happened being a necessary protest demonstration by the workers against a few blacklegs working on the electric tramways, at which a bomb was thrown, damaging one of the cars. From then onwards, however, everything went on in the most peaceful and orderly manner; the strike was being largely adhered to, and the Trade Unions were in permanent session; while the Government was beginning to give way. The movement had been won. The first two demands had been granted, and the third depended upon the report of a commission of railway men and strikers as a result of an inquiry into the events at Evora.

The Cabinet, however, suddenly ordered the suspension of guarantees, placing the Government in the hands of the military authorities. And although everybody may say so, and it may be spread far and wide by the Press, this suspension was in no way caused by the general strike, which, in reality, had already been settled. On the contrary, these extreme measures were but the straw at which the Government desperately clutched, as a precaution against falling or being eliminated by a movement of revolt, with merely political aims, of certain sections of the Republican Party (it even having been stated that on this account the diplomatic body had prevailed upon the Government to take this step).

However, as it was necessary to destroy the inevitable victory of the workers, it was seen to that they should be persecuted and bullied as much as possible. Numerous military contingents (infantry, Republican Guards, cavalry, artillery, civilian and judiciary police, carbonarios, and voluntary battalions) surrounded the headquarters of the Trade Unions at two o'clock in the morning on January 31, and ordered the workers to surrender at the peril of the house being shelled. They did not offer the slightest resistance, but left the building in groups, being immediately arrested and marched to the holds of the warships in the Tagus. On the way they sang the "International" enthusiastically.

Besides this series of crimes committed by the young and "kind" Republic, there is still to be added the "humanitarian" way in which the prisoners were treated. They were herded together in dozens in holds where they could hardly breathe, and had to go on deck in turns to get a little air. The blankets supplied were not sufficient to cover half of the prisoners, who are already over 1,000 in number! As they could not all be quartered in the Marine Arsenal, some of them had to be taken to Limoeiro (civil gaol), the penitentiary, and the military forts. The first meal given them (and we must bear in mind that we are speaking of badly fed men, weakened by recent fatigue, and who had not slept for four nights) consisted of a *hard biscuit and water!*

But the Government did not appear to be quite satisfied with the arbitrary and treacherous raid upon the Trade Unionists' headquarters, or with the imprisonment and ill-treatment of the workers. All this was evidently not enough; it was still necessary to resort to foul calumny. And so it was officially stated, and made the subject of gossip throughout the bourgeois clubs and cafés, business houses, hotels and restaurants—in short, everywhere—that the strike was plotted by the Trade Unionists with the collaboration of the Anarchists, and was hired and impelled by the monarchical and clerical elements. And as a climax, following the example of Maura, it has been proposed and approved in Parliament that all the prisoners be tried by military tribunals, it also being suggested to dissolve the Trade Unions as an *association of ruffians (sic)*. This measure proved repugnant to the President of the Republic himself, who said that he was signing the decree under compulsion, so as not to be obliged to resign, which step, at the present moment, would still more increase the "anarchy" amongst the present rulers!

We make this appeal to the comrades of the world so that a movement of revolt be raised as a universal protest against this despotic Republic, the political parties of which, when it is a question of disputing the power or nice and comfortable jobs, divide in the vilest manner conceivable, but do not hesitate to criminally unite in order to crush those who demand bread and justice.

Lisbon, February 4, 1912.

NOTES BY THE WRITER.—It should be remarked that as there had not been any breach of public order which would justify the suspension of guarantees, several bombs exploded and were attributed to the workers; but, being from a suspicious source, they might just as well be called Governmental bombs. The few bombs that have been seized, and others that may not yet have been found, are still of those that the present rulers gave to the people when the revolution of 1910 was being prepared. In the time of the Monarchy quite a number of the present Ministers were in favour of dynamite and attempts against individuals.

P.S.—Would it be possible for a subscription to be raised in England for the benefit of the families of the comrades arrested?

The above letter was sent us by a group of comrades, with some of whom we are personally acquainted. We withhold their names as a precaution against persecution by the Portuguese Government. Donations will be willingly received by FREEDOM and immediately forwarded.

SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

What an abominable deception lies in this phrase, which is a favourite one, used alike by social reformers and social reactionaries. It is a glaring untruth. There is no such thing as "society as a whole," for the simple and sufficient reason that while social, political, and economic inequality exists, society is composed of classes, split by antagonisms, and therefore cannot be treated as a whole.

The law which exists was made in the interests of a propertied class, and is administered in the interests of that class. There is no such thing as equality before the law—that phrase with which the Liberal capitalists have sought to hypnotise the proletariat. Contrast the treatment meted out to Carpenter, of the Charing Cross Bank, with the vindictive sentences passed upon those poor devils who may be "had up" for begging or stealing food.

Whilst education remains the monopoly of a few, how can we consider "society as a whole"? Whilst the workers are robbed of leisure, which alone makes education and culture possible, there is no equality and no likelihood of their being considered the equals of those who possess these means of mental recreation and enjoyment. Whilst these powers and privileges are the possessions of one class, due to their spoliation and degradation of another, there is no possibility of considering "society as a whole."

Some of the most far-sighted and hypocritical of the Liberal politicians have been struck with the effects of the recent strike movement. The railway strike upset their mental equilibrium. The result of the ballot on the Commission's Report has not reassured the politicians. The strike at Dundee and the lock-out in Lancashire give the lie direct to those social reformers who frame legislation for the benefit of "society as a whole." These industrial disputes have dislocated commerce. They threaten to make the manufacturers lose pride of place which they of Great Britain have held in the world's market. The foreigners will steal "our" trade. The growth of the sympathetic strike and the possibility and probability of a national general strike terrify these gentlemen. Say they: "It means chaos—it is the destruction of civilisation. Unchecked, it means civil war!"

So, just as the workers are learning to make the strike weapon effective, it must be relinquished. In rushes a crowd of political nobodies of the Will Crooks stamp, to ask for legislation to make strikes impossible. The name of that unholy lie, "society as a whole," is again invoked to rob the workers of their one efficient weapon for resisting the exactions of their masters. The Liberal Government that has the Budget, old-age pensions, the Insurance Act, Llanelly, and Liverpool to its credit will be again asked to add to its list of achievements that of attempting to legally perpetuate the social and economic equality of the wages system of slavery. However, these gentlemen who prate of the interests of "society as a whole," and who in the name of this formula would attempt to kill strikes, will find short shift made of their proposals.

Have these ignoramus forgotten that Trade Unionism was not killed by the Conspiracy Laws, the imprisonments, the transportations? Has State Arbitration in the Antipodes stopped strikes there? The strike weapon will not be lost because of Labour leaders like Crooks or like Philip Snowden, who in the *Revue Française* describes the recent strike movement as only "a passing form of madness"; or of their other friends, the Liberal place-hunters. *Reynolds's*, the Democratic paper, may try to pave the way for this kind of legislation by iterating and reiterating that such a course is necessary in the interests of "society as a whole"; but it won't do. The strike is an open proof that there is no "society as a whole." It is an act of war on the part of one section of society against the other section which lives upon its labour. The national strike is the beginning of revolt.

The sophism of "society as a whole" comes well from the Liberal politicians, for has not Lloyd George seen to it that fifty per cent. of the Welsh Members have obtained Government posts, and are not the other fifty waiting? Has not the Labour Party had its members selected for jobs, and have not regiments of the hoped-to-be M.P.s found salvation as officials in the Labour Exchanges and the Board of Trade? And when a Labour M.P. becomes a member of the Cabinet as Minister of Labour, won't there be more jobs? Posts also for the Insurance administration. A few more Labour M.P.s will follow in the footsteps of a Burns.

Later on, after a period of Liberal social reform, in the interests of "society as a whole," Socialist politicians will also begin to forget the social antagonisms. Instead of standing by the exploited and urging a frankly revolutionary method, with the Social Revolution as goal, they also will speak of Parliamentary measures of social reform, to be inaugurated for the welfare of "society as a whole"; and we shall know that they, like Millerand, Viviani, and others, have made their peace with the existing social "order."

As opposed to this lying hypocrisy, Socialists should proclaim the economic and social inequalities and antagonisms which exist. They should urge the workers to unceasingly combat their exploiters. There can be no peace whilst the workers, who produce all, have the major portion of their product stolen from them under the legal forms of theft called profit, rent, and interest; and who, as a crowning insult to their misery, have fresh armies of Labour Exchange, Insurance, Board of Trade, and State Arbitration functionaries, and also a new

Minister of Labour and his satraps, imposed upon them to maintain this abominable slavery of the wages system.

The Servile State is fast being erected! The quidnuncs of "scientific," "evolutionary" Socialism acclaim it! We are asked to submit to fresh exactions to keep ever-increasing armies of State officials, to be ruled, ordered, and exploited to a greater extent than before, and to give our support and encouragement to perpetuating our own degradation—all in the interests of "society as a whole"!

Let us combat this falsehood by preaching the abolition of classes and class privileges. The Social Revolution, by abolishing the exploitation of man by man, by the State, or by society, will make "society as a whole" possible. Only when men are free to associate and combine in all the multifarious ways that their habits and temperaments may dictate, free from encroachments upon their activity by others, or from encroaching upon the activities of others, can there be harmony. Harmony, from mutual agreement and free association and access to the means of life. Order, without force or functionaries. Societies, large or small, as their members desire. These groups in themselves would constitute a "society as a whole," where there would be no exploitation, no privileges, no antagonisms. And this would be Anarchy.

PLEB.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

On February 11 the funeral of Aernout, the soldier who died in Biribi in Algeria owing to the atrocious treatment of his superiors, took place. It was the occasion of a most impressive manifestation, as only the Parisian workers know how to arrange. There must have been between a hundred and a hundred and fifty thousand demonstrators who wanted to show their feelings of hatred of militarism and the terrible disciplinary battalions. But many had come out in the streets in a general desire to manifest their discontent with the present régime of reaction which is now sending so many militants to prison for having, as artist, writer or speaker, offended the authorities.

The details of Aernout's case would never have reached the public if Rousset, a courageous comrade of his in Biribi, that terrible place of torture for soldiers, had not dared to communicate them to friends in France. For this crime he was brought before the military court, but liberated, as public opinion had become too much directed to the doings of the military authorities in Algeria. But though Rousset had escaped them that time, their revenge overtook him on the first occasion. At a quarrel which broke out among some soldiers, one man had been mortally wounded. The military authorities decided that it was Rousset who had committed the crime, though the victim and one of those present declared the contrary. Notwithstanding all the proofs to the contrary and with the evidence of false witnesses against him, known to be false by his judges, Rousset has been condemned to 20 years' hard labour. They have succeeded in punishing him for his unforgotten act of daring in having denounced their ill deeds to the people.

A great movement has been started to save this young man; people of advanced opinion, the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (League of the Rights of Man), together with Socialists, Anarchists, and Trade Unionists, are working for a revision of the trial and to liberate this victim of military revenge.

United States.

As the McNamara confession has strengthened, for the moment at least, the hands of the capitalists, the latter evidently intend to make full use of this period of consternation among the general public to deal a definite blow at organised Labour. On the charge of being implicated in a long series of dynamite outrages, nearly fifty Labour leaders will have to appear before the courts; among them Ryan, the president of the Union to which the brothers McNamara belonged. Even Darrow, the lawyer who defended the McNamaras, is to be tried on a charge of attempting to bribe the jury. It is incredible that all these men will be condemned, but the object of the capitalists is probably to impress the public with the criminal activity of the Unions so that repression may be carried out the easier and without fear of protest.

One of the most frequent attempts at curtailing the rights of citizenship is the prohibition of free speech in the streets. Our comrades of the I.W.W. have had to fight a long series of cases, and, thanks to their determined attitude, very successfully. We read in their paper *Solidarity*:—"The Aberdeen (Wash.) Free Speech fight has been solved in the only way possible. The I.W.W. has won. The victory is unqualified, we have come out of the contest with banners flying, and have gained every point contended for." After several months of persecution of the I.W.W. and all who had come to help them to conquer the streets, the mayor had to confer with the men in jail and a settlement was reached. Now another fight for free speech in Vancouver (British Columbia) is on between the authorities and the I.W.W., whose dogged courage undoubtedly will again teach the authorities not to interfere with this most elementary right, that of free speech.

Our comrade Jay Fox, editor of the *Agitator*, has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment on the charge of "encouraging disrespect for the law." An appeal is to be made against this sentence on legal

grounds. As every Anarchist paper is published to encourage "disrespect for the law," if this conviction stands Anarchist editors are in for a rough time.

Argentine.

The following appeal to the Free Press of the world appeared recently:—"The comrades languishing in the prisons of the Argentine Republic and in Tierra del Fuego (Argentine's Siberia), for having fought for the emancipation of mankind, request Anarchist and workers' publications to send them two copies of each issue, which should be addressed to A. Barrera, Calle Alsina 1926, Buenos Aires, Argentina." The Free Press is requested to reproduce the above notice.

We gather, from news just to hand, that a general strike has been declared in Buenos Aires.

We also learn that comrades Denucio and Romanoff, arrested in connection with the throwing of a bomb at the Colon Theatre about two years ago, have been acquitted. Romanoff had actually been sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and payment of the costs of the trial; but owing to the untiring and disinterested efforts of two honest barristers, Argentine "justice" has been cheated of two victims.

CORRESPONDENCE.

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM AND ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—The line of argument adopted by Comrade Stubbs is rather peculiar. Finding himself getting into difficulties, he has gone off the original discussion at a tangent. He accuses me of assuming that because many members of the I.W.W. are Anarchists, that therefore all Industrial Unionists are Anarchists. He has merely made another mistake. Such an assumption would be, in my opinion, every whit as absurd as his own deduction that because some members of the I.W.W. are opposed to Anarchy, that therefore all Industrial Unionists are anti-Anarchists. The following quotation from FREEDOM of June, 1910, could hardly be cited in support of his deduction:—"But we were to be luckier still that day, for after some time members of the Industrialist League approached, courteously inviting us to their waggon at the very top of the ground, enabling us to view the whole range of things, thus giving us the biggest meeting in Bradford on that May Day afternoon. (It appeared that the Industrialist League speakers had not turned up, so they utilised ours as kindred spirits.)"

Let me state in a few words my position with regard to Industrial Unionism. I find that many Industrial Unionists are avowed Anarchists, and many others are virtually Anarchists without knowing it: the balance is fast becoming a negligible quantity, as it is being absorbed by the other sections. I hold, therefore, that all working-class Anarchists should join the I.W.W. It is the most advanced section of the organised workers, and affords a splendid field for propaganda.

In his first letter Comrade Stubbs said:—"There is nothing in their literature, so far as I have been able to discover, to lead one to believe that they are in any way sympathetic towards a non-governmental form of society, whilst there is abundance of evidence to show that they do not favour Anarchy." In his second letter he says:—"Failing, then, any definite statement as to whether Industrial Unionists are aiming at an Anarchical form of society, we have to judge by the general tone of their literature, and in this respect I declare there is 'abundance of evidence' that they are not Anarchists." Why has he altered the tone of his first statement? I appreciate at their real value his reasons for not producing "abundance of evidence." To judge by the general tone of their literature, I submit that the Industrialists are, consciously or unconsciously, propagating Anarchism under their own label.

I do not agree with "White Slave" that the Industrialist League's preamble is necessarily antagonistic to Anarchy. There is a striking similarity between his quotation from the preamble and the concluding paragraph of the article by Lucy E. Parsons which appeared in FREEDOM last month. That paragraph read as follows:—"The crisis has come between Capital and Labour. The day for Industrial Unionism is here. It is in the line of evolution; it is the logic of events and of conditions over the development of which no man or set of men have had control. The workers must at once organise industrially to meet the new conditions, or they and theirs will be threatened with the fate of becoming hopeless slaves!" It may interest "White Slave" to learn that I have been a member of the Industrialist League for a considerable time. The other members with whom I happen to be acquainted are also Anarchist Communists, and include some of the most influential members of the League.

I have written this letter under a different heading to prevent a possible misunderstanding. It is not my aim to advocate Industrial Unionism in preference to Anarchist Communism.—Yours fraternally,
INDUSTRIALIST.

RUSSIAN ATROCITIES PROTEST CONFERENCE.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—I am requested by the Committee of the above Conference to draw the attention of your readers to the formation of a Russian Atrocities Protest Agitation. The Conference in question is at present composed of over twenty-two Trade Unions, political organisations, and educational bodies, and at its first meeting has unanimously passed the following resolution:—

"That this Conference learns with horror of the tortures inflicted on political prisoners by the Russian Government, of its ruthless repression of the most fundamental and primitive liberties of smaller nationalities, as is the case with Jews, Finns, Caucasians, etc.; of the barbarous treatment meted out against the Persian Nationalists, and resolves to protest by all possible means at its command against these barbarous practices as crimes against humanity and civilisation."

Initial steps have already been taken to this effect by arranging a series

of public meetings, by issuing at intervals short leaflets and pamphlets on these atrocities, thereby keeping British public opinion alive to the dangers fraught to the whole civilised world in allowing such medieval and inquisitorial practices to take root in this twentieth century of ours.

In conclusion, I may add that the Committee is ready to supply documentary evidence and details to any society, club, or journal wishing to take up the matter.—Yours fraternally,
A. SHAPIRO,
General Secretary.

163, Jubilee Street, London, E.

G. Barrett's Tour.

LONDON.—On Wednesday, January 24, Barrett journeyed to Woolwich, and held a very successful open-air dinner-hour meeting in Beresford Square. A very good crowd assembled and listened attentively for nearly an hour. Several questions were asked, and a small quantity of literature was sold. The open-air meeting was resolved upon in consequence of our inability to obtain the use of a lecture-hall in the locality.

The first of the indoor lectures on "Recent Strikes" was delivered in the Club Union lecture-hall in Clerkenwell Road on Thursday, January 25, comrade W. Ponder assisting on the platform. Heavy rain and very cold weather no doubt prevented many outsiders attending the meeting, but, all things considered, it was good. Everybody expressed pleasure with the lecture, which was followed by many questions and some discussion.

The next evening an excellent audience gathered in the William Morris Hall, Walthamstow, and Barrett's remarks were followed with close attention. Numerous questions followed, as well as a brief discussion. A collection was taken and literature sold. Our Walthamstow comrades deserve much credit for their successful work.

On Saturday, January 27, the Broadway Hall was filled with a most sympathetic gathering. Again, after the lecture, a long string of questions and an exciting discussion took place. There was also a good collection and sale of literature. The Hammersmith group showed that they know how to organise this kind of propaganda.

On Sunday, despite the bitterly cold weather, Barrett spoke to fairly good meetings—one at Victoria Park in the morning, and at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, in the evening.

On Monday, January 29, about eighty comrades met at the Food Reform Restaurant, Holborn, at a reunion, at which George Barrett was present. Percy Tanner acted as M.C., and in that capacity contributed to the good spirit of the occasion. Miss Dorothy Needs was of great service at the piano, besides singing "Sunshine and Rain" and other songs. Mrs. Baker and Nelly Ploschinsky recited "Bara Avis" and "Revolution." W. Ponder and G. Exall also rendered vocal service; and A. T. Rouse delighted us with a series of songs, one, "A Song of Liberty," being sung and played for the first time publicly. "No Master," "L'Internationale," and other revolutionary songs were sung. During the evening W. Ponder made a short speech of welcome to George Barrett on behalf of the London comrades. He referred to the good effect of the visit in bringing them closer together, and believed it would have a permanent effect in that way. Wess, on behalf of the Jewish comrades, promised their cordial co-operation on behalf of the new weekly paper which is so necessary at the present juncture in view of the confusion in popular ideas concerning both the meaning of Anarchism and the future of the labour struggle.

G. Barrett, in replying, expressed pleasure that his visit had been made the occasion for a reunion, and said that he was much impressed with the splendid feeling of cordial fellowship he had met on all hands. The new paper would be supplemental to FREEDOM, which had been carried on in the face of all obstacles, and had made a weekly paper possible. Events during the labour disputes had proved that there was a deal of unconscious Anarchism throughout the country.

J. Turner and J. Tochetti also delivered splendid though brief addresses during the evening.

On Tuesday, January 30, the last of the series of lectures on "Recent Strikes" was given in the Barnsbury Hall, Barnsbury Street, Islington. There was a very good audience, which was very sympathetic, a number of questions, and a good discussion. Literature sold well, and there was also a good collection. At this meeting steps were taken to build up a strong and active group.

On Thursday, February 1, George Barrett gave his final lecture at the South Place Institute, Finsbury, on "Anarchy and Progress." In consequence of small advertisement and intensely cold weather, only a moderately-sized audience assembled. However, a good lecture was succeeded by a series of questions and an interesting discussion. Literature sales and the collection were also good.

We congratulate Barrett on the general success of his lecture propaganda, and also our London comrades on their energetic work which has ensured that success.
G. C.

BRISTOL.—If we set aside considerations of space, it is impossible to say too much in praise of the way the Bristol comrades worked for their meetings, and it is good to find that their efforts were not wasted. We had two meetings well attended, and this, I hear, was followed up by a bumping house for John Turner's lecture a fortnight later. With sustained activity, Bristol should do well, although an up-hill battle against prejudice must be fought there. It is winning, however. Bristol deserves help from any speakers who can possibly get there.

CARDIFF showed encouraging signs of waking up with the times, and we have some good comrades here who will be heard of again soon. It will be well if Cardiff keeps in close touch with Bristol.

READING.—The Reading comrades were unable to arrange the meetings that were first planned, as the Marxian Club refused to allow its hall to be desecrated. The time put in there, however, was by no means ill spent; and an informal discussion in the vestry at the above-named institution showed a considerable interest in our principles. The Reading comrades promise to get into touch with the London groups and arrange an interchange of speakers with them.

Huddersfield.—On February 3 (Saturday), in spite of a snowstorm, we had a short meeting at the Market Cross to advertise the lecture on "Recent Strikes" on the Sunday. The attendance at this latter meeting was disappointing, but, in spite of this, the visit to Huddersfield must be

