

THE FIREBRAND

For the Burning Away of the Cobwebs of Ignorance and Superstition.

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THE FIREBRAND

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POOR MAN'S LAND.

"Oh! weary ones, the world's oppressed,
Seek ye a poor man's land! The crest
Of Mount Millenium touches sky
In this Democracy, hard by!"
So to "God's poor" has been proclaimed,
And hither flocked the halt, the maimed.
The outcrop of satanic glee,
Excited by prospective fee,
Behold, sirs, here. The pauper herd,
Dependent, suffering, a blurred
And blotted promise of mankind,
In living colors, pose, and mind,
Portray our bottom social Lie:
The Lie of curt authority—
Of BRUTE SUPERIORITY.
The "poor man's land!" Oh, paradox!
Came thou from brain of grandee ox?—
The land where poor men roam abroad,
The victims of unstinted fraud!
The land (oh, hear!—this is the bait!)
Where slave, if Cunning on him wait,
May wiggle to the master's seat
And backs of former bosses beat!
Out, out with "poor man's land," I say—
In whate'er sense the phrase we bray.
Once cross the line drawn slack around
Primeval man and there is found
The knowledge which, if filtered through
The aggregated human crew,
Would plentifully provide for all,
And none need whip and none need crawl.
But knowing ones monopolize
Their insight as their rightful "prize";
From sire to son 'tis passed along.
By artifice that hides the wrong,
Extensive culture is their boast,
Broad gulf twist them and boorish host,
But th' needy man of ev'ry nation
Is "education's" grim negation,—
And christian and pagan races
Are rivals in scholastic paces!
The "poor man's land!" Whene'er the word,
Poor, poor, in all the world is heard
No more, then will the slave be freed
From th' hateful bonds of cruel GREED.

VINOQA DANIELS.

A SYMPOSIUM

ON

ANARCHIST-COMMUNISM.

1. Do Anarchist-Communists believe in the common ownership of land and capital?
2. If the answer is yes, how are they to become common property?
3. Can a worker who owns a number of machines, the product of his own labor, keep them under Anarchist-Communism?
4. If he can, and if he uses them for productive purposes, can he keep the product?
5. Suppose a man has a piece of land which he is occupying and using, will he be permitted to continue to do so?

ANARCHIST-COMMUNISTS believe in the common holding and use of land, and common ownership of the means of production and distribution—capital, hence the title Communists.

With common use of land and capital in vogue, monopoly would be impossible. But let not our individualistic friends become alarmed, for this condition would be a voluntary one, desired, not submitted to, by all persons in the community. Being Anarchists, we are opposed to authority, even the authority of a jury that "judge both of the law and the evidence," and seeing the inevitable tendency of "protective associations" to crystalize into governing bodies, and the necessity of "protection," where land and capital are held as private property, we wish to avoid the risk of drifting back in authoritarianism by instituting a system of private ownership of land and capital, founded on and upheld by "protective associations." Then again, to keep account of all transactions, and minute details, which private ownership of land and capital involves, necessitates a tremendous expenditure of time and energy, which is saved or employed in something more necessary or enjoyable in common ownership and use.

The land we find here when we come. Capital is the product of many workers, the knowledge, necessary to our present industrial development is the accumulated experience of past ages as well as the present generation. Therefore we see that Anarchist-Communism is strictly scientific in its proposition to hold and use land and capital in common.

2. Very simply. At present rates of absorption of land and capital, especially land, by the privileged class, and the voluntary ceding of land to colonies and associations, it will not take long to have all the land in the hands of speculators on one side, and communities on the other. Then the disinherited have but one

thing left to do—take possession! This means a revolution, which in all probability will include the destruction of most of our present institutions, "titles", etc., and will necessitate an entire readjustment. In the readjustment what is now municipal, county, state and national property, will become common property. Unoccupied land being free will be taken by associations of workers and used in common.

In fact we are convinced that, as time goes on, and the numerous schemes of readjustment are tried, Anarchist-Communism will prove so much simpler, more practical and in every way desirable, that all who are holding land and capital as private property will gradually turn them in as common property, from choice.

(3) The fact that a man is living in an Anarchist-Communitistic society does not prevent him from making any number of machines he may desire, and there would be no authority to deprive him of them, but in all probability no man would make a machine, ALL BY HIMSELF, as there would be no incentive to do so. Associated production is easier and quicker.

(4) What would prevent him? Who would deprive him of it? Let the asker of the fourth question answer these two. Such questions as his are silly. Every one in the community having an abundance of everything they desire, they would not as individuals wish to take the acorns from the chipmunk nor the product of labor from the hermit. There being neither legal nor "voluntary" police prowling around, he would be as secure in the retention of his product as the squirrel in the enjoyment of his nuts. But few such specimens would appear in a condition of Anarchist-Communism, although occasional "reversion to the original type" might occur; for human beings are naturally gregarious and prefer associated to isolated effort.

(5) If the community settles around him, the adjoining land having been vacant, or having been turned in by its occupants, he may retain his land as his very own, or he may turn it in for common use whenever he chooses to do so. If Nationalists, State Socialists or Individualist-Anarchists should be in the majority in the section of country where he lives, an effort to take his land "for the public good," by "right of eminent domain," or by rendering a "compensation fixed by a jury," according to which school of thought his neighbors belonged, might occur. Were his neighbors Anarchist-Communists the "right of eminent domain" would not be recognized, and juries and valuation would be out of the question; so if he ever parted with his land he would do so voluntarily.

It seems to me that all such questions are merely attempts to judge of people's actions in freedom by their actions now, which is absurd. Anarchist-Communism is simply voluntary association on terms of absolute equality, and there is no incentive whatever to curtail the liberty of any one, or to invade the equal liberty of another. Those who do so would be relics of the past and would soon cease to appear.

HENRY ADDIS.

(1) We advocate the common use of the land and the common ownership of the products of labor.

(2) By common consent. Or, by common recognition of the facts that (a) land can not be "owned," and (b) capital, being a common product, is common property.

(3) Yes, "IF." There is no authority to say to any man, "Thou shalt."

(4, 5) Answered in No. 3.

In a treatise on Communism I might handle some of these questions in a different manner; but I will not be inveigled into a discussion of questions of detail which, by ignoring basic principles, only leads to confusion. Let the questioner study works on Communism.

J. H. MORRIS.

NOTICE.

On or about the 15th. of August comrade Charles Milford Mowbray will start out for an agitation tour. He will visit all the principle cities of the country with the object of addressing the laboring masses, whose hardships grow with the advance of our civilization. He will devote a part of his time to organizing groups, thus leaving after him men and women who will spread the ideas and principles of Anarchist-Communism. There are too many of those who feel the pressure of capitalism and greed to expect anything but success, from this enterprise. Let every comrade do his duty and success will crown our way. All those groups wishing to engage Mowbray will kindly communicate with the Secretary at once.

Mowbray is willing to visit all towns or cities, the groups of which will bear their share of the necessary expenses.

With best wishes for the cause, we remain,

THE BOSTON GROUP,

Henry A. Koch, Secretary.

16 Hanover Street, Boston, Mass.

HOWEVER much it has been made so, work is not an end, but a means. The worker, strange to say, is rich in means but poor in ends.—[Coming Age.]

THERE is no ground for the cry of martyrdom by the Adventists who were jailed for working on Sunday, so long as they accept law and authority and majority bossism. Let no man whine about persecution by authorities or extortion by tax leeches and politicians until he renounces the state.—[Altruism.]

Comrades, agitate for THE FIREBRAND!

THE NOVEL IN PROPAGANDA.

NEVERTHELESS there is something, as it seems to me, in Mr. Tanner's letter of July 7, something perhaps not applicable to THE FIREBRAND publishers, but to the general mass. The appalling fact 100 years ago was the willingness of the peasant of the Vendee to shoulder arms on behalf of Feudalism; the appalling fact today is that his lineal heirs are just as willing. Their name is legion.

This almost universal hugging of the chains is what paralyzes, and it will continue as long as the present low and degraded tastes exist. We thunder against "rule," but the average mortal loves to lord it and be lorded over; we cry out against the politician, but the politician is actually admired for his knavish smartness; to do or to be done in money matters constitutes a gamble, with loaded dice, that is full of fascination to ninety-nine out of a hundred; at a picnic the masses will turn from the most gorgeous scenery to crowd the dancing platform and squat round the beer keg. 'Tis true 'tis pity, but the pity is 'tis true.

What is one to do? One's little best to inculcate a purer taste. It is taste rather than argument that wins the day, character rather than logic that makes A a rebel and B a truckler to the actual powers. It is not the reasoning of Karl Marx or of Lassalle, of Bebel or of Leibknecht that has committed the Germans to State Socialistic thought, but the pride of strength and the lust of power inherited from their victory over France; and it is their taste for freedom, acquired by the English speaking populations in their outdoor lives and fondness for athletic sports, that will make them ultimately reject State Socialism when they once understand the tyranny that it involves.

I plead for a greater circulation of good books as the best instruments I can think of for the elevation of the public taste; for the circulation of the works of masters, which are invariably healthy, but are neglected in our propaganda because they are not labelled "economic."

For instance, in Europe such writers as Kropotkin, Bakounine, Jean Grave, and others, have done invaluable work by their analyses of the evils inherent in our representative system. One hears them quoted occasionally by some student, just as one hears now and again a passage from Tucker or Josiah Warren. But never do I come across a Socialist or Anarchist who seems to be aware that this whole question has been treated with enormous power, and set in a framework of intense dramatic interest, by one of the most popular of modern novelists. I allude to Ouida and her story of "A Village Commune." It is of all her stories the most profoundly sympathetic, and no more powerful indictment of bureaucracy was ever penned.

Recently I forwarded to Solidarity an extract from Guy de Maupassant's "Afloat," which contained a withering anathema of war and of the political rulers who manufacture war. That is perhaps the most charming of the many works of this most charming of modern novelists, and it is full, from cover to cover, of Anarchistic thought, so phrased as to compel attention. How many of our propagandists read and circulate De Maupassant? Yet he can be got, in English, from every library, and he has the reputation of being an invariable captivator of

the female heart.

"Merrie England" has lately had a great success, though it advocates a scheme of State Socialism that instinctively repels, and is most tedious in details. The secret of the book's success lies, I would wager large odds, in the judicious selections the author has made from such writers as Thoreau, Richard Jeffries, Emerson and Ruskin—poets whose love for the beautiful throws a halo over what is otherwise a by no means attractive scheme. The humor of the situation lies, of course, in the fact that such men as Emerson and Thoreau would be the first to repudiate the elaborate state regulations that Mr. Blatchford so enthusiastically champions.

Anyhow, I have the feeling that Hugh O. Pentecost was doing his best propaganda work when, years ago, he was inducing us to read such books as "The Story of an African Farm," and that when a man like Grant Allen dares the public with "The Woman who Did," the best thing we can do is to read it and to get it read. In this matter Benj. R. Tucker sets us all a good example.

W. C. OWEN.

The Letter-Box.

J. H. COALGATE, I. T.—We are glad to hear that the producers in your district take delight in THE FIREBRAND. The desire for freedom is growing everywhere, and soon the oppressors will tremble.

R. S., CITY.—"How can a Secularist beat his wife?" you ask. Rather a strange question. He considers "his wife" his property, and is still intoxicated with the christian teachings that the "wives must obey their husbands." You very seldom find a Secularist, or a so-called freethinker, who has got rid of the christian views on morals,—they only sail under a different flag. But Secularism is not responsible in this case; it is H.'s stupidity, and he himself is hardly accountable for his actions. That he is the "leading man in the Secular Church" is not his fault.

A WORKINGMAN.—You say: "There is no relief until the farmers and labor organizations unite under one constitution." All men are united without any "constitutions" and "platforms" as soon as they have one aim. Constitutions are the first stumbling blocks in all labor organizations. Plutocracy is united all over the world to subjugate the workers, without having a platform proposing such subjugation. As soon as the downtrodden find out that they have to abolish plutocracy, all laws and restrictions, in order to get relief, just so soon they are united.

NOTICE!

THE receipt of copies of THE FIREBRAND when you have not ordered it, is an invitation to subscribe. If you want the paper and can send us 5 or 10 cents, or more, we will be glad. If you can not send us any money, but want the paper, let us know and you shall have it just the same. All we ask is that you try to get us a subscriber or two. If you do not want it, and will not hand it to some one who does, please inform us; we cannot afford to send it where it is not wanted.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.

"I HAVE given my consent to the proposition of the brother from the city," said a farmer, after the assembly had quieted down, "but don't you think some kind of government is necessary? Of course I can get along without it, and in all probability every brother present here could do so, but there are some people who need a government; there must be somebody to restrain them or they will get into mischief."

"I'm glad the brother has brought this question up for discussion," said Ellis, the spokesman of the workingmen's committee. "By the people who need government he meant, very likely, what used to be called the criminal element. And if we had retained the institution of ownership of the means to make a living the brother's point would have been well taken. But we have removed the causes which produced crimes, and the cause was property. People used to steal or rob in order to get possession of property; sometimes to satisfy their wants, and again, as in the case of corporations, etc., to keep the people in subjection, to govern them through the control of the necessities of life or the opportunities to make a living."

"Under the system which I have proposed, and which is in actual operation in the city, every one is assured that all his wants will be satisfied—in fact, there is no more doubt about that than that there will be enough air for us to breathe. Food, clothing, shelter, etc., are as necessary as air, and to deprive, for any reason whatever, a human being of one of these is to commit murder."

"The incentive which caused the crimes against so-called property have been taken away and the crimes have ceased. Those who formerly desired to accumulate property, in order to rule over their fellow men, now find it impossible to do so."

"The brother wants to know what we do with people who are too lazy to work. Nothing, brother—let them alone. They will find, after awhile, some occupation which suits them; and if not, we may as well support them—have we not supported innumerable people who did not work? Laziness is brought about by several causes—ill health, overwork, occupation unsuited to the individual. Formerly, as you know, men and women had very little choice of occupation. Our environment very often forced us to do something that we disliked. That has fallen away; we can work at what we like and as long as we like it."

"And who will do the disagreeable work?" asks a brother over there. There is really no work which is disagreeable to all men. Some men like to work in a mine, others to be on the ocean, others take to the pick and shovel; and one kind of work being considered just as necessary as any other kind, and the rewards being the same, we find no difficulty in having it done. Besides that, there is such a thing as public spirit, and when some work is necessary and pressing we all pitch in and have done with it."

"The brother expresses his surprise that we work so harmoniously. Even in our former society a good deal of work was done on the voluntary plan. Let him remember the voluntary fire companies in many cities. Men have risked life and destroyed their clothing

to save property which did not belong to them, without a hope of any other reward than the approval of their fellow citizens. There used to be any number of societies that worked voluntarily and without pay for the public good—the Red Cross Society, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Fraternal societies, are some of them."

"It is written in the bible, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Those of you who are earnest and sincere christians, will know that it used to be an impossibility. You could not love very well the man who cheated you or took advantage of you in any other way, or the striker the "scab" who, he supposed, took the bread away from himself and family. But all that has fallen away. You can now love your neighbor as yourself, because it is to his and your interest to work for the welfare of each other."

"Oh, yes, we have organization, or better still associations. Absence of government does not mean chaos or disorder; far from it. We have any number of associations—for instance, the different trade associations, educational and city improvement associations, etc.; there being no compulsion, only those who really take an interest in these different lines of work join them, and are for that reason so much more effective than the former organizations. Some of you will very likely have a desire to live in town. There is nothing to hinder you, because there are enough in the city who are anxious to take your place on the farm. A change of habitation and occupation is beneficial. It broadens our ideas and is conducive to happiness."

"No, we have no general laws or rules of conduct; only one fundamental principle, and that is, whatever is necessary to sustain life, cannot be appropriated by the few to the exclusion of the many. All have an equal and inalienable right to its use. Public opinion, freed from all prejudice and superstition by frequent public debates, is our only safeguard to prevent us from returning to our former servitude. Certainly, there are ambitious men among us, but their desire is not any more to be leaders or to be wealthy, but to excel in workmanship, in being orators, good writers, artists, musicians, athletes, and such as that."

"No brother, religious ceremonies have fallen into disuse. We have "Sunday every day." The churches are being used for various purposes—lecture halls, dance and concert halls, warehouses, etc. The ministers have generally quitted their profession; they did not care to preach any longer what they themselves did not believe. Of course, some old women still have their church. They are too old and set in their ways to be open to arguments."

"The brother wants to know about our marriage relations, or how we get along with the women. I will talk on that after recess for the lunch which the ladies have been kind enough to provide."

E. SLABS.

RECEIPTS.

Portland, Or., L. H. 50c., Unknown \$15.00, V. Pl. 50c., Sales \$1.65.; Boston, Mass., H. Koch \$1.50; Jersey City, N. J., A. P. B. \$1.00; New York City, E. Goldmann \$2.00.

NOTES AND CRITICISMS.

No doubt every reader of THE FIREBRUND will agree with Comrade Owen as to the desirability of the circulation of good books. But he fails to take into consideration the fact that the people whom it is necessary to reach with our propaganda have not the means to invest in such literature. The workingman may be able occasionally to buy a five or ten cent pamphlet treating simply of the principles of Anarchism; but the means and the time to follow up the "modern novelists" and glean the grains of Anarchist thought and sentiment from the tedious piles of chaff certainly to be encountered is not theirs.

In view of this fact, it is no particular discredit to Anarchists that they do not "seem to be aware, that the whole question has been treated with enormous power" by Ouida. I do not consider it a very heinous crime not to have read Tucker's two-dollar "Instead of a Book." All the power and logic necessary can be had in cheaper and more convenient form; and in my opinion Anarchists show very good "taste" in buying the cheaper literature and devoting their scanty means to feeding and clothing those dependent upon them.

We must not forget that the field of propaganda lies among the disinherited of earth, those low of purse and perhaps of "taste." We are they at whose expense "esthetic taste" is developed; it is ours to toil double time that others may have leisure for "culture." Let us not make the mistake of thinking, as some propagandists have even asserted, that it is the middle and professional classes to whom we must look for salvation. The burden of present conditions falls heaviest upon the workers, and the time is rapidly approaching when they must revolt. If it is the blind struggle of a great infuriated animal, what will the professional and middle classes, those of culture and taste, be able to accomplish in the face of it?

Is nothing but taste needed, after all? No knowledge of human nature, of economics, no logic? We may admit that it is not logic that leads Germany toward State Socialism; and whatever it is we want to avoid it. I find no fault with the "taste" of the Germans; they desire leisure, ease, enjoyment, culture, liberty, but in the absence of the logical faculty, or at least failure to employ it, they have followed the fallacies of their leaders into the Socialistic net.

Let propagandists employ themselves in the production and circulation of a cheap literature—not cheap in point of quality, but in price. It must be more than taste and sentiment; it must be sense and reason, it must be as strong, powerful, as simplicity can make it. In this line we have an excellent beginning in the pamphlets of William Morris, Kropotkin, Reclus, Bakounine, Malatesta, and others. This literature must be produced and circulated without a thought of financial reward; every cent of profit weakens the movement, just as the withdrawal of blood from the system reduces the activity of the individual. Let us not base our hopes upon a literature that is produ-

ed for profit, because, in the very nature of things, it must have an ever decreasing circulation. Comrades may plead for an increased circulation, but their desires and the taste of the people for this literature does not provide the means for its circulation.

It would seem that the pillars of the Secular Church, and models of true infidel nobility have been doing some of the things which they so loudly denounce in the orthodox church member.

A bachelor supper, prepared and presided over by a Secular unofficial Goddess of Liberty, in honor of the departure, at the command of her husband, of the legal wife of one who is a strong advocate of "law and order," it would seem, caused the inhabitants of seventh street "on the hill," no small amount of annoyance, not long since.

POLYGAMY, "on the quiet," is a recognized institution in our midst, but a new form of sex relation, so far as this vicinity is concerned, seems to have made its appearance. Polyandry appears to be the desired and accomplished mode of life of one of our moral instructors—one of our half rate (on the railroad) "pastors." I have no objection to everyone pleasing themselves, but a moral instructor, one who advocates the enforcement of law, might increase his "power for good" by a little consistency. Authoritarians, whether Christian or Secular, demand state supervision of morals and elect certain men to do the supervising. In this state they have a governor who is father of a girl who has never borne his name, and a chief of police who is admittedly a "bastard" begetter. Fine specimens to keep others "straight!"

It should not surprise us that people demand laws to punish "vices" which they themselves practice, for it is their own weakness that causes them to regard all others as weak; their own depravity that causes them to consider every one else depraved. It is a case of measurement in one's own half bushel.

E. B. Foot, Jr., would give Oscar Wilde 20 years, instead of two, were he the pronouncer of the sentence in Wilde's case. Certain people, who thought they knew as much as Dr. Foot thinks he knows, would have sentenced E. B. Foot, Sr., to twenty years imprisonment for his writings, and yet strange to say, the junior Foot does not seem to comprehend that he is in exactly the same frame of mind they were in. It seems to be a case of "whose ox is gored" with him.

MAN owes everything to society, since he would be a barbarian without it.—[Coming Age.]

But since society could not exist without man, don't you think it stands about "hoss and hoss?" With such a jump as this in fundamentals, it is little wonder that Socialists wind up in such a quagmire of inconsistency and rot.

Correspondence.

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL ORDER.

ENCLOSED I return your paper. While I am probably as much down on the capitalistic aristocracy as you are, I cannot agree with your revolutionary teachings. I believe in a peaceful evolution out of the oppressive conditions that exist. Education of the masses along the line of fundamental economics, based upon order and government, is the only way to bring that about.

C. F. LINDSTROM.

Enterprise, Kans.

I cannot see that being "down" on a person or a class is a virtue, or if it is that THE FIREBRAND makes any claim to it. But I am opposed to the continuation of a system or institution that is productive of class distinctions; and government, which the brother favors, certainly is such an institution—producing a governing (plutocratic) class and a governed (proletarian) class. He loves the cause, but is "down" on the effect. His intentions are good, but his logic has a "wheel off."

As to revolution (a complete change), it is necessary, and though I would much prefer that it come without bloodshed, it will come as it must, and the how is beyond our control. I shall be content that it comes.

I favor evolution (for which process revolution is but a more emphatic term), but current events show a conclusive and rapid social evolution in which the governments of the world, without exception, are notably active; hence I conclude that not through government, but rather in spite of it, is progress to be accomplished. As for peace (which it is no longer pretended that we enjoy), we will have it "if we have to fight for it." Since we have neither peace nor evolution, what will the good brother do about it?

Order cannot be the basis for better conditions, but liberty is the only basis for social order. Government (coercion) being wrong because pernicious in effect, cannot be the basis for fundamental economics; neither is it compatible with order, for all through the pages of history disorder (dissatisfaction, turmoil and rebellion) has followed it like a shadow. Every step in social progress has been the doing away with some governmental restriction, some law or measure that was felt galling and oppressive, and every step has made possible and necessary each succeeding step; every step has been opposed by all the brutal force, every stolen privilege defended by all the blood and iron at the command of government, and the air will never be free of revolutionary impregnation so long as the spirit of "Thou shalt" shall exist.

"Liberty is the mother, not the daughter, of order."

J. H. MORRIS.

THEN AND NOW.

My son, although he has been "out of work" for some time, hands me the enclosed (\$1.00) to send you.

As we long ago had to defy and set at naught the infamous Fugitive Slave Law, so it seems to

me now even more imperative to repudiate all the laws, customs, traditions and religions through which men get possession of wealth that other people and not themselves have created.

A. P. BROWN.

Jersey City, N. J.

LUCIFER THE LIGHTBEARER, stands for light against darkness; for freedom against slavery; for freethought, free speech, free press, free mails, free land, free currency, free trade, free manhood and—above all—free womanhood and motherhood.

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