

Recollections and Reflections

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Chapter 1

Knowing that I was engaged in Socialist propaganda prior to the foundation of the existing Socialist organisations in this country, some comrades think that my personal recollections of events subsequent to the decline of the British Federation of the International and of the revival of Socialist agitation will be of interest to readers of *Freedom*. I do not profess to be a facile writer, nor do I lay claim to literary ability; but I will give as coherent a narrative as my memory will enable me to do.

In autobiographical sketches it is expected that a writer should give some account of his early life, and whilst I am reluctant to put my own personality in the forefront of a narration of events in which I was a humble and obscure actor, I think that a relation of the causes which made me an antagonist of the capitalist system, and led me to engage during the best years of my life in persistent warfare against it, may not be out of place.

I have been asked frequently of late years how I became a Socialist and the reasons for my conversion. Some have hinted — not ill-naturedly, I hope — that I was born with a rebellious kink in my composition, which is, perhaps, near the truth. I was a fatherless lad living in a single room, for my mother had to go out to service. I supported myself as an errand boy, porter, and messenger in various situations: ill-shod, badly clothed, and seldom enjoying a square meal, except occasionally when my mother smuggled me into her employer's kitchen. This employer, I may mention, was a vitreous, scraggy old maid, related to a well-known firm of manufacturers. She occupied her spare time in writing to Tory magazines advocating military drill for the working class, especially on public holidays. And now we see the working class voluntarily lending itself to this scheme to make the gallery fight the battles of the stalls.

I decorated the walls of my lonely room with pictures of the French Revolution, which I purchased out of my scanty earnings. Brought up in the neighbourhood of the West End, with the evidences of wealth and luxury confronting me — wealth unearned, comfort undeserved — and with my own undeserved hardships, I needed no lectures upon surplus value or dissertations upon economics to cause me to challenge the justice of a system which confers wealth upon the parasites of society and clouds the lives of thousands, as it had already darkened mine at the outset, with care and poverty.

At the time I am writing of it was still possible to catch glimpses, on clear days at some points in London, of the distant Surrey hills or the Northern heights, now obscured by an ever-extending canopy of smoke. I have an intense love of the country, and it was my habit to make excursions on foot nearly every Sunday, with a scanty wallet of food, into the then remaining rural spots around the Metropolis. Those "kneaded fields," as Ruskin described them, have long since become noisy, sooty wildernesses of bricks and mortar. In later years, when engaged in Socialistic propaganda, I have listened with mingled anger and amusement to opponents who alleged that we desired to destroy everything that is beautiful and upbraided us for our "grossly materialistic aims;" and I have thought of the vanished pleasaunces, the desecrated landscapes, the obliteration of every reminder of Nature, and also of the crowded slums which have replaced those scenes. Ruskin

has poured out the vials of his wrath upon the spoilers, and Morris owed in great part his conversion to Socialism to his abhorrence of this aspect of the beast of Capital.

I was soon to undergo wider experiences which gave shape to my ill-defined hostility to the present system, and made of me an active propagandist against it. I had been articled to a garment dyer, but his conditions of service were such that I determined to seek fresh fields. I left him abruptly, and obtaining a shilling from a too-confiding recruiting sergeant, I enjoyed a steak washed down with stout at her Majesty's expense. The call of the road was upon me, so getting a little help from a few friends, I sallied forth on tramp. Starting out through Surrey, I traversed the South-East Coast, repeating near garrison towns the recruiting experiment, for as there were rumours of war, and England expected to be involved, the roads were being scoured to pick up likely recruits. All the recruiting-sergeants said I was a fine young fellow who would be better off in the service. I did not stay long enough in those parts to gather their subsequent opinions of the "fine young fellow." I had no intention of dying for a country which condemned me to tramping and starvation.

Among my experiences on this comparatively short tramp — for I doubled back from the Cinque Ports through Kent — I made acquaintance with "doss kens" and casual wards, and often had to shelter beneath a barn or a hedge. In passing through Rochester on my way back to London, I asked for employment of a local dyer who was standing before his counter measuring up the next day's work, a custom at that time. He gruffly told me, throwing down a 1/2d., that he had no room for tramps. That night I had to sleep in a casual ward at Strood. Upon my return to London, I learned that the dyer of Rochester was dead, and that his widow wanted a hand. I secured the job, and returned to Rochester to measure up work on the same spot where I had been so harshly treated.

My next tramp was undertaken in the depth of a hard winter, when the unemployed were thronging the streets of London. This time I journeyed towards the North, passing through the Midlands and North Wales into Liverpool, where I arrived lame and penniless, without boots. They had long since departed, and I had been forced to take to my clogs. In Liverpool I secured temporary employment, and forgetting my past troubles, the frozen roads and grim lodgings, with the buoyancy of youth I managed to pass a pleasant time. Still, my wanderings were not ended, and I went still further north, in all covering over two hundred miles on foot on the upward journey alone. I found everywhere the same conditions — the factory with its iron discipline, the mazes of mean streets and insanitary slums for the workers, the enslavement of women and children. He champions of the family and those who predict its dissolution under Socialism might see what capitalism does in that direction if they witnessed the rows of mothers outside a factory at meal times suckling their babies brought to them for the purpose.

In the course of my travels I met with widely different treatment when forced to ask for assistance. I have been hospitably treated by parents for the sake of a son, a wanderer like myself, whose whereabouts they knew not. At other times I have been threatened having the dog set on me if I did not clear. As a propagandist of Socialism, I have returned to some of the towns in which I first arrived as a wanderer; and the memories of my own sufferings and the sufferings of my class have given emphasis and force to my attacks upon the citadel of property and privilege.

I need not dwell longer upon the subject of my tramping experiences. On my return to London I settled in Soho, and here I was induced by a friend to attend a political discussion held at a public-house ; and becoming a regular attendant at those meetings, I there became acquainted with G.

Odger, John Rogers, G. Milner, W. Townshend, the brothers Murray, G. Harris, and G. Eccarius, all members of the lately defunct British Federation of the International.

This society was styled the Democratic and Trades Alliance Association. Most of the members were Soho tailors and shoemakers, always the most advanced amongst the workers. I became a member and a regular attendant at the meetings. There I made my first attempt to open a debate, reading a paper against political action, and was sat upon heavily and informed that I would never be a speaker and not to try again.

Though this was my first entrance into membership of any democratic society, I had in boyhood attended nearly every meeting or demonstration held by the advanced movement in London. In the riot at Hyde Park at the time of the Reform League my white printer's jacket made me conspicuous in the skirmishes with the police, and only my nimbleness saved me from arrest. The police behaved then with their usual brutality, and when a deputation from the Reform League afterwards waited upon the Home secretary Walpole to protest against the outrages they committed, Walpole shed tears at the recital of their doings; as the Press had it "he wept upon the bosom of the League." The League turned the incident into profit, for at the great triumphal meeting at the Agricultural Hall they reaped a harvest by selling Walpole's tears in penny bottles.

This is a digression, however. I was now to be a co-worker with men to whom in the past I had been an unknown auditor.

They have all joined the great majority, many passing away in abject poverty, neglected and forgotten by the class for whom they sacrificed the best years of their lives. I recall them as I write, the steadfast old guard who in the midst of the reaction following the collapse of Chartism and the decline of the Owenite agitation were the last remnant of the British Federation of the International. Deserted by the Trade Unionists at the outbreak of the Commune, they still upheld the principles of the Social Revolution. The English Trade Union leaders of this period, with the exception of George Odger and a few others, were the rump of the Manchester School of Liberals. They batted upon bogus political associations and electioneering dodges of every description. Here is a sample of their tactics. A certain Alderman who sat for a London constituency had always employed the Mottershead party as his election committee; but, tiring of the bleeding process, he determined to dispense with their services in one election. Consternation reigned in the camp of the boodlers; visions of dry throats and empty pockets rose before them. But they had heard that an itinerant herbalist had Parliamentary ambitions and also a little cash. They waited upon him as a deputation of the electors, and urged him to put himself up as a candidate. He rose to the bait, parted with several pounds, and the next day the division was placarded with his name posted over that of the Alderman, who capitulated and put them upon his committee; and the herbalist was a sadder and poorer man. The difference between the old Trade Unionist and the new variety is that to their credit it must be said they did not use Socialistic phrases to cover their nefarious designs or to gain power.

In this survey of the time, one notes that whilst a strong Republican and Freethought agitation was being carried on all over the country, there were only the few elderly men of the British Federation to represent and uphold Socialism. As a young recruit, I stood alone. Of literature there was little worth mentioning, except that issued in the Republican and Freethought propaganda. In passing, I must pay a tribute and own my indebtedness to them for their sledge-hammer attacks upon the landocracy and theologians. The facts and knowledge they spread broadcast had an educational effect which has been of advantage to other and more advanced movements. We owe nothing to Christianity, the historic foe of all progress. Personally, I have met only with virulent

opposition from Christian advocates when battling for Socialism. The intrusion of Christianity into the Socialist movement to-day is designed to vitiate it and thwart its aims.

Chapter 2

But to return. Having shed some of the mere Trade Unionist members, we evolved as the Manhood Suffrage League. Nominally a political society, its members were the chief actors in bringing about the revival of Socialism and laying the foundations of the present movement. Our activities at the time were small, for it was a time of political apathy. As a delegate of this society, with the late C. Murray, at a conference on the land question, I defeated a proposal by C. Bradlaugh for small proprietorship. We also took part in the magnificent reception given to Michael Davitt upon his release from prison. I imbibed my knowledge of past movements from my elderly colleagues who had been associated with Robert Owen, H. Hunt, J. Harvey, Ernest Jones, Bronterre O'Brien, Feargus O'Connor, W. Lovett, whom I met once before his death, and a host of others. Dr. Travis, who was a friend of Owen, became a member of our society, and Dr. Gammage, the historian of Chartism, was an associate.

A sketch of some of the members will bring me to other matters in connection with my narrative. First in my memory is W. Townshend, a tall, gaunt, kindly old shoemaker, the possessor of a vast accumulation of books and knowledge pertaining to the cause. He would read us voluminous essays upon the helots of Greece and the plebeians of Rome, which caused a stampede of our younger and more flippant visitors. Poor Townshend! he died in poverty, and his beloved books which he struggled so hard to acquire fell into the hands of strangers. Then there were the brothers C. and J. Murray, who had been in every movement from the Chartist onwards; J. B. Leno, the Buckinghamshire poet, who struck at the landlord system in rhyme and verse; J. Rogers, friend of Karl Marx; and Maltman Barry, also on the most intimate terms with Marx. Barry had won a certain notoriety by his tourneys with the political economists of the Manchester school, especially Leone Levi. I and others mistrusted him, but he appeared to break a lance for Democracy, and his intimacy with Marx made him unassailable. Whether he used Marx or Marx used him is a point that remains unsolved. Barry was the enemy of the old school of Trade Unionists and Liberals, and posed as a Revolutionist. My hostility to Barry frequently brought me into collision with my old friend J. Rogers, who worshipped him. After years of deception, towards the close of his career he threw off the mask and stood revealed as a Tory agent. There is another Tory who, having manipulated the Socialist movement, has not yet unmasked; and it is, therefore, not a matter for surprise that Justice should publish a friendly obituary of the late Maltman Barry.

I have alluded to the defection of the English Trade Unionists from the International. After the Commune, the remnant of the British Federation called a meeting in Hyde Park to show sympathy with the Parisian workers. There was a great gathering in response, which the Press did its utmost to belittle by describing it as exclusively composed of foreign refugees. A second meeting called at St. George's Hall was prohibited by the police, who guarded the doors with mounted men. The capitalistic Press indulged in a furious campaign of calumny against the Commune and all who sympathised with it. With the public hostile or indifferent, and the secession of the Trade

Unionists, it fell to the lot of the foreign branches in London, by holding annual celebrations, to keep alive the memory of the Commune.

Conspicuous amongst the foreign revolutionary forces in London at that time was the German Working Men's Communist Society. Founded, if I remember rightly, after the abortive upheaval in Berlin in 1848, it became a rallying-point and home of refuge for all who were proscribed for the cause. Marx, Engels, Weber, Lessner, Herman Jung, were among those who associated with and became members of this society. In conjunction with the French, Slavonic, and Scandinavian elements of London, they organised commemoration meetings. The Press chortled over the almost exclusively foreign character of the audiences, and said that the British working man would never imbibe the doctrines of foreign revolutionaries. I recall a meeting whereat L. Weber, having spoken in German, had, in the absence of any English speakers, to address the gathering in English. He asked bitterly, where were the Englishmen who had belonged to the International and the alleged upholders of freedom.

I pass over those years of triumphant reaction and apathy, and come to the breaking of the dawn of a revival which is yearly growing in strength and momentum. We in the small political society I have previously mentioned had our conflicts with the purely Trade Unionist members, who, when our foreign comrades solicited our help, opposed co-operation. The bills announcing the celebration (and brave bills they were, with the Red Flag printed upon them) were removed from the club-room notice board. The brothers Murray, who represented our speaking power at the time, went unofficially to help them. Eventually we shed this fossilised element, shifted our quarters, and blossomed out as the Manhood Suffrage League. The advanced reader may be somewhat surprised at the mild political titles we assumed. We were pushing forward the doctrines of Socialism under a political disguise, whilst there are a number in the Socialist movement to-day who are mere politicians disguised as Socialists.

Freed from obstruction and opposition, we cordially co-operated with our foreign comrades in holding an international meeting at the Cleveland Hall to celebrate the Commune. It was a most enthusiastic demonstration, and marked the beginning of the revival. A large number of English working men attended. Our comrades Louise Michel and Kropotkin spoke (I think that was their first appearance upon a public platform in this country). I made my first speech in a public hall on that evening. At an informal meeting of comrades afterwards I was urged by my comrade Johann Neve (since done to death in a German prison) to form an English section of the Socialist party. I succeeded in getting together a number of comrades, including those of the British Federation whom I have previously referred to, and thus was started an English Revolutionary Society, which, working with the foreign element, was to take its part in the International Socialist movement. In referring to this period I may be allowed to mention that H. M. Hyndman, who is styled by his admirers "the father of Social Democracy," has recently published his reminiscences. I have not perused the book, but a reviewer of it states that it is a record of thirty years of work on behalf of Socialism. The reviewer in question must be in error, for about the time I am writing of "the Father of Social Democracy" was wooing the suffrages of a London constituency (Marylebone) as a Tory. Some have unkindly suggested that his conversion was too sudden to be thorough, and that his lapses into Jingoism and his Chauvinistic ideas of a purely English Socialism are but signs of the old Adam peeping forth again.

New Toryism or Tory Democracy was being put forward to distract the attention of the workers from the land question, which was being vigorously discussed in working-class clubs and conventions. The landlords were quite willing to divert the attacks from themselves to the capi-

talists, and when the English section got to work amongst the working class we had to combat their agents, who advocated thrift, emigration, and Malthusianism as alternatives to Socialism. We routed them in many a stormy meeting, and the emigrationists had frequently to emigrate in undignified haste from the meetings they had convened. Another society was now formed in the East End, named the Labour Emancipation League; and, co-operating with them, we held a great anti-emigration demonstration upon Mile End Waste. One of the banners depicted an angry armed crowd chasing the landlords and capitalists into the sea, as the only kind of emigration necessary. Some have thought that this alleged conspiracy of the landocracy to preserve their ill-gotten possessions even at the expense of their fellow thieves, the capitalists, is a mere surmise; but the efforts of the Tories Oastler and Shaftesbury in reference to the factory children whilst the labourers upon the Shaftesbury Estate were in a deplorable condition (vide Engel's letters upon the condition of the working class in England); and, coming to our own times, the pressure put upon Dr Gibbins, the author of the "Industrial History of England," to abate his condemnation of the landlords; and the reduction of the position of the Financial Reform Almanack from being a text-book upon the land question to a mere catalogue—these are evidences of the landlords' influence.

In these days of British Socialism, which is, I presume, a by-product of the purely English variety, and has given us those strange human documents, the Jingo Socialists, it may not be out of place to note that the Socialist movement in England owes its origin largely to the propagandist zeal of foreign workmen, who wherever they came into contact with their English confreres sought to enthuse them with what was then, even in its Parliamentary form, a new gospel. The C.A.B.V. (the German Communist Society I have previously referred to), in the masons' strike, subscribed their funds and their members helped to picket the Law Courts, and they were the means of getting away again several batches of German masons who had been brought here under false pretences. They also conducted a vigorous agitation amongst their compatriots. When the Crown Prince Frederick visited this country, some German tuft-hunter arranged a loyal demonstration, with a choir to sing patriotic songs; but the Communists got there first and treated the Prince to a by no means patriotic version of the "Wacht am Rhein," ending with a free fight and the defeat of the loyalists, which threw the English Press into a rage. The prominence given to the German Socialist movement caused some inconvenience, for wherever we (the English section) addressed open-air meetings we were dubbed "damned Germans," and as some of our members hailed from the Green Isle, the description was slightly out of place.

Gradually we won our way. From the West we extended outwork into the East End. Mile End Waste was our outdoor rallying-point, and indoors—let not the temperance reader be shocked—the club-rooms of various public-houses, where under the guise of debating societies or similar harmless-sounding titles we pursued our propagandist work. The Radical clubs had still a leaven amongst them of 'Chartists and Republicans, and their platforms were at our disposal. They have long since been nobbled by the middle class and brewers, and the amateur negro minstrel stands where the lecturer should be.

By a combination of all the sections we established a club in Rose Street, Soho. Having a hall of our own, we were enabled to hold public meetings with greater frequency.

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.

Chapter 3

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!

If it had been the purpose of the Government and their Russian allies to spread the doctrines of Socialism, they could not have chosen a better course than the prosecution. Brassey, a member of the Government "I forget in what capacity, but as he was a road contractor, doubtless it was

at the Admiralty — had subscribed to Most's election expenses when he stood for the Reichstag, and this fact I was commissioned to communicate to the late Lord Randolph Churchill, and he used the information to annoy the Government and not from any other motive. On that visit to the "Gasworks" I interviewed that sturdy old Radical, Joseph Cowen, M.P. for Newcastle, who promised to contribute a large share of our legal expenses. Catching sight of A. M. Sullivan in the Lobby, he asked him if he would undertake the defence of Most, and after a few moments' hesitation, for Most's opinions were opposed to his own, he said, "This man is being-persecuted, and I will do what I can for him." I also interviewed Biggar, who contributed a small sum, for doing which he got into trouble with his Catholic confreres.

Before passing on to other matters, I wish to refer again to J Cowen. Although a manufacturer upon a large scale, he had assisted every movement at home and abroad which had for its object the overthrow of tyranny. He recruited a legion here and fitted out a vessel at his own expense to assist Garibaldi. Remembering the refusal of the Turks to deliver up Behm and Kossuth to the Austrian Government, he was a bitter antagonist of Gladstone's pro Russian policy in relation to the Eastern Question. And he assisted us from a feeling of hostility to the Power whose ruthless methods are a menace to mankind.

In closing this account of the *Freiheit* prosecution, I may summarise some of the points which occur in connection therewith. The whole legal machinery of the Liberal Government was put in motion to crush a political refugee at the instigation of Russia : but the Gladstone Government had also in view the suppression of the germs of Socialism in this country. The head and front of the offence of the party behind the *Freiheit* was their propagandist efforts to spread the principles of Socialism amongst the English working class. They paid out of their funds towards every attempt made in that direction. In 1879 Sketchley's "Principles of Social Democracy" was published and issued broadcast by the German section. They also helped to start an International Federation of Trade Unions, in opposition to an attempt by Bradlaugh and others to set up a caricature of the old International. Their opposition to the coercion of Ireland, and the comments of the *Freiheit* upon the Phoenix Park affair, brought upon them a second prosecution, when Schwelm and Mertens, two composers, were sentenced to six and three months' imprisonment respectively. Schwelm, upon receiving his sentence, pointing to the sword of justice suspended over the head of the judge, said, "That sword ought to fall upon you." A few months later the emblem did fall upon the chief sheriff.

As I have shown, the prosecution had the result of awakening public interest in the question of Socialism, and the English section had now a wider field of operations before it. Our record for a small band of men working under difficulties was no mean one. From Marylebone in the West to Stratford in the East we had pushed our propaganda. We had published pamphlets and issued addresses—one to the amnestied Communists of Paris circulated through Europe.

But the pace was not quick enough for an ambitious young member named E. Dunn; there was no limelight upon our obscure and ill-requited efforts; and therefore he convened meetings of all sorts and conditions of men, from which gatherings there evolved the Democratic Federation, the forerunner of the Social Democratic Federation ; and thus, if we leave out of sight the other workers of the preceding years, Dunn was the real "father of Social Democracy."

Some Tories of the Neo-Tory school attended the preliminary meetings, including >H. M. Hyndman, with the blushing honours of his recent candidature still fresh upon him. That gentleman, whom Frank Harris in his book "The Bomb" describes as a prosperous-looking Jewish gentleman, soon engaged in a conflict with Dunn for the leadership, and evicted him, and has reigned with

the aid of permanent officials ever since. There have been revolts within and secessions from the “only” Socialist organisation, for it was not to be expected that patriotism could be substituted for internationalism, and palliatives take the place of principles, without some exposure of the cloven hoof, and consequent protests; but rigorous discipline, coupled with slander-spread by faithful henchmen, has hitherto sufficed to preserve this ancient institution.

But to return to the work of the English section. With the view of starting a no-rent agitation and an onslaught upon landlordism, our activity took another form and we became for a time the Local Rights Association for Rental and Sanitary Reform. The *Daily Chronicle*, amongst other papers, reported our earlier meetings, although they said there were some suspicious Irish and German names in our membership. We explored the slums and published our reports of the homes of the workers, giving the names of the titled and lesser landlord and owners, thus causing some commotion in dark places. The Press quickly discerned our real object and dropped us. Now at this time in that terrestrial inferno, St. Luke’s, a retired policeman laboured to save his fellow creatures from perdition and earn a living for himself. We beguiled him into letting us have his mission hall for our meetings. There we conducted a vigorous no-rent and anti-landlord campaign. The missionary soon took alarm and stopped our meetings’. “Why,” said he, “all my rich subscribers will leave me if they know of it!” We on our side, to prove our fidelity to principle, refused to pay. A rival labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, to wit General Booth, has entered into the sphere of the ex-policeman’s domain, and with the lucre bestowed upon him by the British public for the Darkest England scheme has bought up some of the slums, also a fully licensed house. All are in going order at increased rentals and are a veritable godsend to the modern “profit,” Booth.

Whilst conducting our agitation an anonymous subscriber helped us to publish a pamphlet on the land laws, dealing chiefly with the Metropolitan properties of the Bedford, Salisbury, Portman, Grafton, Portland, and other descendants of the pimps, procurers, courtesans, and informers of the past, who now have London in their grip.

It should be remembered that the English section and the comrades of the Labour Emancipation League worked with only one aim, and that was to permeate the mass of the people with a spirit of revolt against their oppressors and against the squalid misery which result from their monopoly of the means of life. No thought of kudos or personal aggrandisement had entered into their efforts to spread the light, and therefore the squabbles between would-be leaders had no interest for them. We determined to devote ourselves exclusively to circulating leaflets amongst the people, to do which we raised money by means of concerts and lotteries, and purchased some printing materials, the deficiencies of which were supplied by involuntary contributions from printing firms where some of our members were employed. In this way a well-known firm of Government printers furnished us with some excellent ink, paper, and other requisites for printing our revolutionary manifestoes and addresses, for which I now tender them my belated thanks.

The methods of the Liberal Government of the day in regard to the *Freiheit* and in Ireland made us cautious, and to give no points we met secretly. Our first meetings were held in a street near King’s Cross, but the neighbours and police becoming inquisitive, we shifted into Boundary Street, Shoreditch, then a notorious slum. We occupied a floor there as a co-operative printery, our next neighbours being two deaf-mute beggars. The denizens of the street looked askance at our intrusion into their region, regarding us as police “narks” (spies). One of our members who had the misfortune to live in their midst reassured them, and their suspicion changed into

contempt for lunatics who could open a printery in "our street." The furnishing of the "printery" was a model of economy and simplicity. Our seating accommodation was made of packing cases provided upon the involuntary plan. A paving stone was our making-up stone and inkslab combined. Candles stuck in the composing cases was our lighting installation; and a roller hand-press our machinery.

From this primitive establishment we issued the leaflets "Fight or Starve," an appeal to the unemployed; "Are We Over-populated?" an answer to the Malthusians ; the "Revenge" leaflet, which caused a question to be put in the House of Commons in regard to its origin ; and many others, notably the "Appeal to the Army, Navy, and Police," the terms of which appeared to be so strong to the comrade who was setting it up that at midnight he suddenly threw down his composing stick and declared that he would not go on with it. His place was immediately taken by another compositor in the room. That leaflet found its way into several garrison towns. We sallied out on nocturnal bill-sticking expeditions, and despite the destruction by the police of some of our handiwork, we managed to placard the East End with incendiary manifestoes. By our persistent distribution of literature and championing of Socialism in lecture halls and schoolrooms – in fact, wherever Socialism was being discussed we were present as upholders of the cause – we could fairly claim a large share in bringing about the awakened interest and enthusiasm for Socialism which prevailed at this time, especially in East London.

Some of our members were also members of the Social Democratic Federation and the Labour Emancipation League. Those in the former were wasting their time in the futile task of combatting the opportunism and Jingoism of their shifty leader. These causes were the factors in the split which took place in 1885 and resulted in the formation of the Socialist League by the seceding members. The purely propagandist and non-Parliamentary objects of the League appealed to our members, and we joined it at once. We found, however, that the demands upon our scanty leisure were too great to allow us to attend to both the printing group and the League, and we finally decide to merge our work into the League's, with its possibilities of a wider field of propaganda.

True to our anti-rent campaign, we owed some rent to the landlord of our "printery." At the final meeting of our group a heated debate took place as to the best method of settling this liability, some arguing in favour of cash payment and others for payment in kind. Finally, it was decided to liquidate our indebtedness to the slum landlord by leaving him our ink-slab (the previously mentioned paving-stone) as being akin to his own heart.

Before describing the work and activities of the Socialist League, more than a passing reference must be made to William Morris, the most conspicuous amongst its founders. This is the more necessary as in the short years that have passed since death removed this great personality from our midst a fictitious Morris has been created by interested scribes, who have invented for their own purposes a false legend around his memory, and seek to deprive Socialism of the influence which his adhesion gave to the movement.

Even the firm which bears his name, and which he with others founded to raise the artistic taste of the public in regard to domestic decoration and furnishing, whilst departing widely from the standard of excellence which Morris set up, in a booklet recently published by the firm has made a slighting reference to his Utopian ideas.

In the opening chapters of these recollections I alluded to the causes which mainly contributed to his conversion to Socialism, these being the hideous squalor of our towns and the defilement of Nature by commercial greed. He saw that the debasement of art and the destruction of natural

beauty were the certain results of a profit-mongering capitalist system, and the production of tawdry, shoddy articles under a system of fierce competition and sweating is destructive also of health and life; and that it was useless to expect the modern worker to possess artistic perception under such hellish conditions.

He looked back longingly to a pleasanter England, when in a more spacious age the handicraftsmen of the guilds wrought at anvil and loom the masterpieces of artistic workmanship, the wonder of to-day. He loathed the modern factory hell and the grimy prison towns, the slave-pens of capitalism; and this feeling found expression in his verses. The following brief quotation from "The Day is Coming" show how, like Gerald Massey and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, he detested the factory system :

"How long shall they reproach us where crowd on crowd they dwell,
Poor ghosts of the wicked city, the gold-crushed hungry hell?
Through squalid life they laboured, in sordid grief they died,
Those sons of a mighty mother, those props of England's pride.
They are gone; there is none can undo it, nor save our souls from the curse ;
But many a million cometh, and shall they be better or worse ?"

The whole of his poetry and prose is permeated with sympathy and love of the poor, the victims of landlord and capitalistic greed. This note of sympathy distinguishes him from many who surrounded him and who babbled of art and culture, but were mere tuft-hunters, devoid of any desire to raise the status of the working class.

And thus it came about that the artist and poet, bred in luxury and trained in an aristocratic university, met upon terms of equality men who had felt their way towards the light from totally opposite surroundings. His keen intuition and broad humanity had led him out from his environment towards them; and they, enduring the horrors of the factory and the slum, revolting against their conditions, joined hands in propagandist work against the monopolists of the means of life. Morris's preference for the society of his humbler confreres gave great offence to some superior persons, including the great G. B. Shaw, who upon the death of Morris wrote an obituary of him for a daily paper, wherein he complained of Morris's preference for the company of "tinkers and tailors." There were several erroneous statements in that notice, presumably paid for at ordinary press rates. The French term this sort of thing "making capital out of a corpse." Blatchford, who had just previously had a violent quarrel with "G.B.S." and patched it up, reprinted the obituary in the *Clarion*, no doubt "to oblige Benson." I think also that in wading through the works of another superior person, H. G. Wells, and his brand-new version of suburban Socialism and wonderful Gulliver-like stories, I came across some sentences deriding the street-corner Socialist orator. Morris did not object to take his share in that kind of propaganda. At one time the police were attempting to suppress our outdoor meetings at Bell Street, Edgware Road; and several comrades, amongst them the late Sam ainwaring, were arrested and heavily fined, upon the usual pretext of obstruction. Unlike the arm chair philosophers of the Wells stamp, who sell their treatises and fearsome literary concoctions, Morris went to the danger-point; but, much to his chagrin, the police would not molest him, but victimised the poorer comrades.

So convinced was he of the utility of open-air propaganda that he stood by my side on many a windy, inclement night at the corner of some wretched East End slum whilst I endeavoured to gain him an audience by addressing a few listless stragglers as "the working class of England."

He had no feeling of contempt for those who do the rough work of the movement. He was well aware that the persistent efforts of the governing class to suppress free speech is a testimony to the efficacy of this form of propaganda, and he was willing to share the risks which working men ran when making themselves conspicuous by outdoor advocacy of revolutionary principles.

Although his audiences were at first somewhat mystified by his method of delivering his message, for he was no great orator, they gradually grasped his meaning : and as he preached to those toil-worn crowds in those gloomy East End byways of the possibility of realising the dream of a beautiful England free from the curse of commercialism, he would warm to his subject, and his audience would enter into the spirit of his address. The following extract from one of his addresses will furnish an idea of his style and give an answer to those who, as I previously remarked, seek to claim the artist and poet, and deny his Socialism. Speaking of the workers' claim for a higher life, he said :-

“I have looked at this claim by the light of history and my own conscience, and it seems to me so looked at to be a most just claim, and that resistance to it means nothing short of a denial of the hope of civilisation. This, then, is the claim : It is right and necessary that all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing, and be of itself pleasant to do; and which should be done under such conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over anxious. Turn that claim about as I may, think of it as long as I can, I cannot find that it is an exorbitant claim; yet again I say that if society would or could admit it, the face of the world would be changed ; discontent and strife and dishonesty would be ended. To feel that we were doing work useful to others and pleasant to ourselves, and that such work and its due reward could not fail us! What serious harm could happen to us then? And the price to be paid for so making the world happy is Revolution.”

In the midst of so much that was of the earth earthy, when even Socialism was presented by many as an urban doctrine still redolent of bricks and mortar and the factory, his ideal of a natural life was like the sweet aftermath of new-mown hay, which is carried by night winds from distant fields into the city streets.

In “Nupkins Awakened” he scathingly satirised the methods of class-made judges. In “John Ball” we are carried back to pictures of ancient rural England, with a love tale subtly interwoven into the story, of the Kentish priest and the rising of the peasants. The poet is, after all, the fashioner of men thoughts, and sometimes the prophet of vast changes in this everyday, prosaic world ; and in “News from Nowhere,” which was written in opposition to Bellamy’s “American store Socialism,” we have a glimpse of the coming fight between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” When the Armageddon of Labour is fought, his idealism will mayhap be the guiding thought which will give it inspiration; and the soil of England, of which we have been despoiled by violence and legal chicanery, be yet the home of a really free and happy people. To bring this about, the strike will give place to the taking back of our common heritage, the land, and the means of life produced from it. In that time which we hope and strive for, his solemn words of warning and hope in “All for the Cause” will be realised :-

“Some shall pause awhile and ponder on the bitter days of old,
Ere the toil of strife and battle overthrew the curse of gold ;

Then twixt lips of loved and lover solemn thoughts of us shall rise ;
We who once were fools and dreamers, then shall be the brave and wise.
There amidst the world new-built shall our earthly deeds abide,
Though our names be all forgotten, and the tale of how we died.”

In the police-court proceedings which followed upon the attempt of the authorities to suppress free speech at Dod Street, Limehouse, a charge was trumped up against him of assaulting a constable in court. The Nupkins on the bench, Sanders, had never heard of William Morris, and was unmercifully chaffed throughout the Press for his ignorance. A cartoon appeared representing Sanders tearfully blacking Morris’s boots. When the latter left the court he received a great ovation from a tremendous crowd outside, which somewhat perturbed him, for he disliked hero-worship; but it evidenced the feeling of the East-Enders towards him.

Writing of this reception of Morris by the people of the East End reminds me of the ovation accorded G. R. Sims some years before, when he had touched the hearts of the people by his writings, notably his “Christmas Day in the Workhouse.” That gentleman is now only known to fame as the patentee of a hair restorer, which is but right seeing that his later literary effusions are calculated to cause baldness. Sims had shaken hands with the late King, and space will not permit of giving a list of those who, from Chamberlain (erstwhile Republican) down to the editor of Justice, have gone astray after undergoing that fateful handshake.

Dealing with the motives which led Morris to attack the system which has surrounded us with ugliness and squalor reminds me that the Anti-Socialists have issued a leaflet warning us of the danger to art and culture should Socialism prevail. This combination of the most sinister anti-human interests — land thieves, slum owners, stock jobbers, proprietors of the reptile press, all of the kind which the late Bronterre O’Brien depicted in his “Vision of Hell” — standing as the defender of art, is a sight to make angels weep. Their hireling-speakers are continually attempting to besmirch the memory of Morris, but that is beyond the power of those who, as Ruskin has said, “pawn the dirty linen of their souls in order that they may dine.”

Chapter 4

Many provincial branches severed their connection with the S.D.F. and joined the newly formed League, of which new branches were formed in fresh centres. It was in the course of furthering the provincial propaganda that I revisited many towns where, as I have previously related, I had formerly arrived as a tramp. The propaganda was carried into Wales, Mainwaring and myself holding meetings at Aberdare, Merthyr Tydvil, and upon the historic Rocking Stone at Pontypridd, Mainwaring using the Welsh language in his addresses. We might fairly claim to have been the pioneers in Wales of modern Socialism, which has now taken root in the Principality. Certainly, the real Prince of Wales, the arquis of Bute, will not fail to furnish the Welsh with object-lessons in landlord rapacity and greed. Acting upon his right of possession, he has quarried and sold half the mountain upon the summit of which the ancient Rocking Stone stands. Popular clamour at the desecration of an ancient landmark has been of little use to arrest the work of destruction. And why not? Can't a Marquis do what he likes with his own mountain?

In summarising the work of the League, its leaflets were the most effective method of propaganda. Amongst those issued were "Ireland a Nation" showing the futility of Nationalist proposals to free Ireland; "The Causes of Prostitution"; T. Barclay's (Leicester) inimitable parody upon the old nursery rhyme, "The House that Jack Built" (when will this be republished?); and many others, including one by myself, an "Address to Working Women and Girls," which the S.D.F. have done me the honour to republish — without acknowledgment.

Events across the Atlantic were to give the League an opportunity to distinguish itself from the State Socialists. Men, women, and children had been shot and bludgeoned by Pinkerton's police and the militia in the ferocious and brutal attacks upon unarmed crowds in the eight-hour agitation in Chicago. At last, after many had been murdered, some one (who has never been discovered) threw a bomb at the police who, at the memorable meeting in the Haymarket on May 4, 1886, were advancing upon the people; and this time the police were slain. Although this act of reprisal stopped the murders by the police, it furnished a pretext for the arrest of eight of those most prominent in the Labour agitation. Of the subsequent infamous trial and martyrdom I cannot write here. My object is to show the attitude taken up in this country by the League and other advanced sections in relation to these tragic events.

The capitalists of America and other countries deluded themselves with the belief that the hanging of our devoted comrades — Parsons, Spies, Engel, and Fischer — had stamped out the embers of Anarchy. The reptile press on both sides of the Atlantic, guided by a common inspiration of hatred towards the workers, gloated over the tragedy of November, 1887; and, indulging in an orgy of abuse and calumny of our martyred comrades, vainly hoped that by the stifling of their voices they had secured undisturbed mastery of their own position. But the dying words of August Spies, "There will come a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle to-day," were a call to action to the comrades on this side. The Socialist League, with comrades of the Labour Emancipation League and the Freedom Group, determined to do their utmost to defeat the object of the infamous trial and judicial murders in Chicago, by publishing

the lives and speeches of the condemned men, with a record of the events which led up to the culminating tragedy. At this distance of time I cannot compute the thousands of copies which were issued in several editions of the "Chicago Martyrs." The sale was phenomenal, and cheaper editions were published. The widow of Albert Parsons came over at our invitation, and delivered a series of lectures which were fully attended. Through all the intervening years the memory of our Chicago comrades has been kept green by annual celebrations convened by the Socialist League and later by the Freedom Group. Sometimes the police have deprived us of the use of halls for these meetings, but that has not prevented the gatherings being held. As the years have rolled by we have witnessed the growth and spread of Anarchism, and the attempt to silence it on the scaffold has been frustrated.

The State Socialists lent no assistance to keep alive the memory and principles of the Chicago men. "Father" made it the occasion to put a pamphlet on the market, but his followers were advised to abstain from attending the commemoration meetings. A similar line of policy was pursued over the May Day celebrations. The International Congress held at Paris in 1889 had decided to hold mass meetings throughout the world on the First of May each year, to show the solidarity and international character of the workers' movement. The Trade Unionists decided upon a Sunday demonstration, and the only Socialist societies which held the first (1890) May Day meeting in England upon the First of May were the Socialist League, the foreign sections, and the Federation of All Trades and Industries, led by Jack Williams. The "only" Socialist organisation declined to come out. A successful meeting was the result of our combined efforts, and it created a very different effect to that held the following Sunday.

There existed, however, in the League itself opposing elements which eventually led to its disruption. The merely negative policy of Anti-Parliamentarianism could be endured by the West End branches, of which Hammersmith was the strongest, and in which Morris's personality was dominant; but the East End comrades, confronted by a fierce struggle for existence and in the midst of gigantic Labour conflicts, drifted towards a definitely Anarchist attitude. A quantity of ink has been shed over the question of the split between the West and East End branches which caused the dissolution of the League; but the temperamental differences have always been ignored. Many of the West End members would have found a more suitable environment and method of exposition of their ideals within the ranks of the I.L.P. or the Fabian Society; and, as I have indicated, it was only Morris's personality which caused them to give a lip-service to opinions from which many of them have since seceded. They seemed to be afflicted with the timidity of anaemic respectability. After a deal of friction between the diverse elements, a climax was reached, occasioned by an article in the *Commonweal* by my co-editor, D. J. Nicoll, on the question of tactics. The publication of a second instalment of it was made a test question by the Hammersmith branch, and as he refused to withdraw it, they severed their connection with the League. As indicative of the attitude of this branch, before leaving this portion of the subject I may mention that at a meeting held in the East End (a Commune celebration, I think) the Hammersmith choir refused to render the whole of the "Carmagnole," and deleted the verse containing the line, "Their gods to hell may fly," as repugnant to West End respectability and Hammersmith orthodoxy.

The advanced sections migrated to the East End, and became for a time the London Socialist League, the *Commonweal* appearing as an Anarchist journal. The Walsall police plot and the condemnation of Fred Charles and others to long terms of penal servitude brought forth an indignant article in the *Commonweal*, to which the police replied by seizing the paper and arresting

the editor and writer of the article. It would need greater space than is at my disposal to give a complete narrative of all the circumstances which led up to a course of police persecution and prosecutions directed against the English Anarchists. When in 1881 I had charge of the defence of Most, I was assured by some of the Radical Club delegates to the Defence Committee (rebels of the Sunday-morning-club-visitor type) that no Government would dare to prosecute Englishmen for free expression ; and the English Press, whilst chortling over the almost exclusively foreign character of the Socialist movement of that time, said Englishmen would never imbibe the doctrines of foreign revolutionaries. The absence of repressive measures against English movements was due to their innocuous nature and the passivity of the Anglo-Saxon — in short, it is not necessary to muzzle sheep.

However, the capitalist Governments have forced the pace. From the prosecution of aliens and the restriction of the right of asylum, they proceed quite naturally to incarcerate Englishmen for expressing opinions hostile to the established order, and have introduced Russian methods in their police prosecutions. We are about to see the most brutal features of American labour disputes imitated here by the international exploiters — Pinkertons and hired auxiliary police. It is to be hoped that the organised working men will be prepared to give a good account of these vermin. And so the logic of events is driving the English working class forward on the path towards social revolution.

Those whom the gods seek to destroy they first make mad. So runs the ancient proverb ; and as an old man at one time somewhat despondent of the success of the revolutionary cause, I thank our masters for their recent persecution as supplying the needed stimulus to the movement for the overthrow of the present system.

I have related in these reminiscences the growth of the Socialist revival from the nucleus of a handful of poor men, without literature and with scarcely any speakers or meeting-places, up to the present development of the Socialist and Anarchist movements in this country. I have been asked to mention the names of some of those who played a part in those early days. Some have joined the great majority. Where all co-operated for the cause, it would be invidious to mention one or two names. The purpose of writing these recollections will have been served if it shows to those who have entered the movement later, especially our younger comrades, what a few can do against almost insuperable odds. The reader will have followed the evolution of the movement I have described from Parliamentary Socialism to Anti-Parliamentary, and onward to Anarchism; and in bringing these reminiscences to a close it may not be out of place, whilst dealing with the Anarchist position, to give some of the personal and general reasons which have caused the severance from Parliamentary Socialist agitation and repudiation of its methods and objects.

In the past, like many others, I would have preferred the line of least resistance as a path towards the goal of common ownership of the means of life, if Parliamentary methods had presented a feasible possibility of arriving at that consummation alone, viz., the administration things and not of persons. But as the spectacle of a wealthy prelacy preaching the doctrines of lowliness and poverty, no less than the lies, slander, and blackguardism of their hindmost supporters, the Christian Evidence Society, made me an antagonist of Christianity ; so likewise have the persecuting, despotic methods of the State Socialists within their nascent organisations shown me what would happen to minorities under their majority rule. They have displayed a bitter spirit of persecution, misrepresentation, and abuse towards those who, whilst in agreement with them as to the common ownership of the means of life, differ upon the question of tactics and method of agitation. Their nebulous attitude and even dalliance with Christianity,

their display of Jingoism in reference to the questions of armaments and patriotism, and- their bolstering up of the State in its inquisitorial and Puritanical interference with the liberty of the individual, even if we had not the pronouncements of Webb and Shaw to guide us, would make us alive to the danger of State Socialism. In a pamphlet entitled "Socialism v. Anarchy," issued by A. M. Simons, of the International Socialist Review, in Chicago, after the death of President McKinley, being a report of an address delivered against the Anarchists, there occur several statements which, as they resemble the stock arguments used against us by Socialist opponents, may be summarised here. He denies that Socialists desire "a further extension of the powers of Government," and states further that "they are seeking to educate the people to use their ballots to the end that the workers may become the rulers in the present State, and then use the governmental machinery to abolish exploitation and oppression. This is the only movement that antagonises Anarchy at every turn." We are then assured that there is nothing in the philosophy of Anarchy at variance with Capitalism, and hence the reason why we are petted by the capitalists. I have thought over this "petting," from Pere la Chaise, Waldheim, Montjuich, and the hecatombs of victims of Russian despotism, who only wanted to use their ballots, to the ballot-box stuffing and the bludgeoning and shooting of those under the American Eagle, who also sought to use their ballots to abolish exploitation.

The disillusionment of Anarchists and Direct Actionists as to the efficacy of Parliamentary methods has been mainly the work of Governments themselves. They have shown that they do not intend the political machine to be used in the manner so fondly dreamed of by the State Socialists. They will allow a minority to participate in the work of tinkering at legislation (vide Lloyd George), but the possibility of a Socialist majority would be met by provoking a conflict or gerrymandering the constituencies. Let the Standard speak. Alluding to the common ownership resolution passed at a Trades Union Congress some years ago, that organ of the classes then said :—

"Assuming for a moment that the majority of the electors in the United Kingdom were bent upon such spoliation as the Congress proposes, assume that they seriously set themselves to put the will of the people into law, even then the battle would not have been won or lost. The strength of the propertied classes is not to be measured by the counting of noses, and the promoters of the Social Revolution would find themselves confronted by sterner arguments than platform rhetoric or Parliamentary divisions. Only by force can such changes be effected, and in these days force does not lie in numbers."

Others have discovered the truth of this last sentence, and may utilise its lesson; but it was written against the political aspirations of the State Socialists. Whether it be a Republic, a Monarchy, or an Autocracy, force is its final expression.

We have borne the brunt of the attacks of the propertied classes, and our list of martyrs in the cause of human freedom is not recruited by the armchair Socialists or the pedants who cling to an exploded political shibboleth. Doubtless they will come in as "experts" and want to direct the coming storm. In such a case we may remember their past "services," and reward them in such measure as they deserve.

The chief of the tactical differences between the Anarchist and the Socialist position is in regard to religion. As I have shown, the Socialists have temporised with Christianity because of the

belated adhesion of a few clerics to a mild version of Christian Socialism. We know that a creed rehabilitated at the expense of the workers' movement would close the door of knowledge to the people, especially the children, in order to bolster up their superstitious creed.

Our comrades are imprisoned for anti-militarist propaganda, while the Jingo Socialists (!) pocket fees for writing articles in favour of patriotism and the increase of armaments for the columns of capitalist papers which are notoriously bitter and virulent enemies of the working class. And when these same gentlemen tell us that the Government of the future will be "a gigantic statistical information bureau," we are not especially enthused.

If force alone will effect a change, we will approach the coming conflict with the full determination to end political domination and the exploitation of man by man; and bearing in mind the lessons learnt from the mistakes of past revolts, the extinction of human slavery will be our battle-cry in "the last grand fight to face."

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Frank Kitz
Recollections and Reflections
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