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Freedom Discussion Meetings [Apr, 1888]

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Freedom: A Journal of Anarchist Socialism, Vol. 2, No. 19, online
source RevoltLib.com, retrieved on April 12, 2020.

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Over 200 people crowded the little hall at 13, Farringdon Road, at our second meeting, on March 15th. The debate was to have been on Individualist and Communist Anarchism; but as no Individualists or Mutualists appeared to state their side of the question, the discussion turned chiefly on Free Communism.

Comrade Kropotkin opened the proceedings with an hour's speech, which we print elsewhere. When he resumed his seat, the audience showed their interest in the subject by a brisk fire of questions, and then engaged in a somewhat desultory debate.

The chief result of the discussion was to show that we Socialists of all shades of opinion are a long way yet from a thorough common understanding. "Nature is not slow to equip us in the prison uniform of the party to which we adhere," says Emerson, and we are no exceptions to that rule. Like all parties, we have our party phrases and modes of expression, and are too apt to use these as masks for ideas borrowed or half thought out. One consequence

is a confusion as to the actual meaning of our commonest terms when we try in earnest to compare our thoughts. For instance, we Communist Anarchists are evidently not agreed with our Social Democrat comrades as to what is really meant by Communism. That must be cleared up. But first we propose to have one more quite general discussion.

The next meeting will be held at 13, Farringdon Road, E.C., on April 12th, at 8.30 p.m.

The discussion will be opened by Dr. Merlino. Subject : "Is Communist-Anarchism the Logical Outcome of Socialism?"