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drain? Or would it be fair or rational to say the illness in the neighbourhood was caused by the people who did this work or insisted upon it being done? Yet such is much the attitude of those critics of Anarchism who try to make it appear that we Anarchists are responsible for what is the natural result of the social evils we point out and struggle against.

And how about those Anarchists who use bloodthirsty language? No words can be too strong to denounce the wrongs now inflicted by one human being upon another; but violent language is by no means the same as forcible language, and very often conveys an impression of weakness rather than of strength. Savage talk is often a sort of relief, which half desperate men give to their tortured nerves; sometimes it is the passionate expression of the frenzy of indignation felt by an enthusiastically social nature at the sight of oppression and suffering: or it may be only the harebrained rattle of a fool seeking a sensation; but whatever its nature, cur position with regard to it is well expressed by Mr. Auberon Herbert in his letter to the Westminster Gazette, Nov.22: " Of all the miserable, unprofitable, inglorious wars in the world is the war against words. Let men say just what they like. Let them propose to cut every throat and burn every house—if so they like it. We have nothing to do with a man's words or a man's thoughts, except to put against them better words or better thoughts, and so to win in the great moral and intellectual duel that is always going on, and on which all progress depends."

Contents

ings and bombardments, but we decline, in such cases of homicide or attempted homicide as those of which we are treating, to be guilty of the cruel injustice of flinging the whole responsibility of the deed upon the immediate perpetrator. The guilt of these homicides lies upon every man and woman who, intentionally or by cold indifference, helps to keep up social conditions that drive human beings to despair. The man who flings his whole soul into the attempt, at the cost of his own life, to protest against the wrongs of his fellow men, is a saint compared to the active and passive upholders of cruelty and injustice, even if his protest destroy other lives besides his own. Let him who is without sin in society cast the first stone at such an one.

But we say to no man: "GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE."

The man who in ordinary circumstances and in cold blood would commit such deeds is simply a homicidal maniac; nor do we believe they can be justified upon any mere ground of expediency. Least of all do we think that any human being has a right to egg on another person to such a course of action. We accept the phenomena of homicidal outrage as among the most terrible facts of human experience ; we endeavour to look such facts full in the face with the understanding of humane justice; and we believe that we are doing our utmost to put an end to them by spreading Anarchist ideas throughout society.

Suppose a street where the drainage system has got thoroughly out of order, and the foulness of the sewer gas is causing serious illness throughout the neighbourhood. The intelligent inhabitants will first of all seek the cause of the illness, and then, having traced it to the condition of the drainage, will insist upon laying the sewer open, investigating the state of the pipes, and where needful, laying new ones. In this process it is very probable indeed that the illness in the neighbourhood may be temporarily increased by the laying open of the foulness within, and that some of those who do the work may be themselves poisoned or carry the infection to others. But is that a reason for not opening and repairing the

ety, for instance, an exploited wage-worker, who catches a glimpse of what work and life might and ought to be, finds the toilsome routine, and the squalor of his existence almost intolerable; and even when he has the resolution and courage to continue steadily working his best, and waiting till the new ideas have so permeated society as to pave the way for better times, the mere fact that he has such ideas, and tries to spread them, brings him into difficulties with his employers. How many thousands of Socialists, and above all of Anarchists have lost work, and even the chance of work, solely on the ground of their opinions. It is only the specially gifted craftsman who, if he be a zealous propagandist, can hope to retain permanent employment. And what happens to a man with his brains working actively with a ferment of new ideas, with a vision before his eyes of a new hope dawning for toiling and agonising men, with the knowledge that his suffering and that of his fellows in misery is caused not by the cruelty of Fate but by the injustice of other human beings,—what happens to such a man when he sees those dear to him starving, when he himself is starved? Some natures in such a plight, and those by no means the least social or the least sensitive, will become violent, and will even feel that their violence is social and not anti-social, that in striking when and how they can, they are striking not for themselves but for human nature, outraged and despoiled in their persons and in those of their fellow sufferers. And are we, who ourselves are not in this horrible predicament, to stand by and coldly condemn these piteous victims of the Furies and the Fates? Are we to decry as miscreants these human beings, who act often with heroic self-devotion, sacrificing their lives in protest where less social and energetic natures would lie down and grovel in abject submission to injustice and wrong? Are we to join the ignorant and brutal outcry which stigmatises such men as monsters of wickedness, gratuitously running amuck in a harmonious and innocently peaceful society? No! We hate murder with a hatred that may seem absurdly exaggerated to apologists for Matabele massacres, to callous acquiesers in hang-

> "The propagandists of Anarchist doctrines will be treated with the same severity as the actual perpetrators of outrage."—Telegram from Barcelona, Times, Nov. 10.

IS the above-quoted decision of the Spanish Government a measure for the protection of human life, justified by the peculiar doctrines of Anarchism, or is it merely one of those senseless and cruel persecutions of new ideas distasteful to the class in power that may be expected in the ancient home of the Inquisition?

This question must have struck many thoughtful men and women in England, who have heard for the first time of Anarchism as existing in their midst though the recent vituperations of the capitalist press, and certain Conservative members of the House of Commons. And, we, the publishing group of the oldest and most widely circulated Communist Anarchist paper in England, wish to meet this question fairly and frankly, and in reply to plainly state our own convictions on the subject.

Human beings have sometimes held beliefs of which murder was the logical and necessary outcome, as, for instance, the Thugs in India, who looked upon the murder of travellers as a religious obligation: is Anarchism such a belief? If it is, then the Spanish people are certainly justified in clearing their country of Anarchists; even though the perpetration of the Barcelona outrage be never directly traced to them; and the English people will be justified in regarding their Anarchist countrymen as enemies, dangerous in proportion as they are energetic and sincere.

We propose to enquire, firstly, if homicidal outrage is the logical outcome of Anarchist principles; secondly, if such outrage is a necessary method in the practical attempt to introduce Anarchism as a principle of conduct, a transforming agency, into existing society; thirdly, we propose to give our view of homicidal outrage as an actual social phenomenon, the existence of which, whatever be its cause, cannot be disputed.

I — Is homicidal outrage the logical outcome of Anarchist convictions*

The Communist Anarchist looks upon human societies as, essentially, natural groups of individuals, who have grown into association for the sake of mutually aiding one another in self-protection and self-development Artificially formed Empires, constructed and held together by force, he regards as miserable shams. The societies he recognises are those naturally bound together by real sympathies and common ideas and aims. And in his eyes, the true purpose of every such natural society, whether it be a nation or a federation of nations, a tribe or a village community, is to give to every member of it the largest possible opportunities in life. The object of associating is to increase the opportunities of the individual. One isolated human being is helpless, a hopeless slave to external nature; whereas the limits of what is possible to human beings in free and rational association are as yet unimagined.

Now the Anarchist holds a natural human society good in proportion as it answers what he believes to be its true purpose, and bad in proportion as it departs from that purpose, and instead of enlarging the lives of the individuals composing it crushes and narrows them.

For instance, when in England a comparatively few men claim a right to exclusive possession of the soil, and thereby prevent others from enjoying or using it except upon hard and stinting terms, the Anarchist says that English Society, in so far as it recognises such an arrangement, is bad and fails of its purpose; because such an arrangement instead of enlarging the opportunities for a full human life for everybody, cruelly curtails them for all agricultural workers and many others, and moreover is forced on the sufferers against their will, and not arrived at, as all social arrangements ought to be. by mutual agreement.

they are the last desperate struggle of outraged and exasperated human nature for breathing space and life. And their cause lies not in any special conviction, but in the depths of that human nature itself. The whole course of history, political and social, is strewn with evidence of this fact. To go no further, take the three most notorious examples of political parties goaded into outrage during the last thirty years: the Mazzinians in Italy, the Fenians in Ireland, and the Terrorists in Russia. Were these people Anarchists? No. Did they all three even hold the same political opinions? No. The Mazzinians were Republicans, the Fenians political separatists, the Russians Social Democrats or Constitutionalists. But all were driven by desperate circumstances into this terrible form of revolt. And when we turn from parties to individuals who have acted in like manner, we stand appalled by the number of human beings goaded and driven by sheer desperation into conduct obviously violently opposed to their social instincts.

Now that Anarchism has become a living force in society, such deeds have been sometimes committed by Anarchists, as well as by others. For no new faith, even the most essentially peaceable and humane the mind of man has as yet accepted, but at its first coming has brought upon earth not peace but a sword; not because of anything violent or antisocial in the doctrine itself; simply because of the ferment any new and creative idea excites in men's minds, whether they accept or reject it. And a conception like Anarchism, which, on the one hand, threatens every vested interest, and, on the other, holds out a vision of a free and noble life to be won by struggle against existing wrongs, is certain to rouse the fiercest opposition, and bring the whole repressive force of ancient evil into violent contact with the tumultuous outburst of a new hope.

Under miserable conditions of life, any vision of the possibility of better things makes the present misery more intolerable, and spurs -those who suffer to the most energetic struggles to improve their lot, and if these struggles only immediately result in sharper misery, the outcome is often, sheer desperation. In our present soci-

fiery propagandist? More particularly in England, at this moment, we find as a field for our endeavours the vast force of the organised labor movement; a force which, rightly applied, could here and now bring about the economic side of the Social Revolution. Not the parliament, not the government, but the organised workmen of England—that minority of the producers who are already organised—could, if they would, and if they knew how, put an end to capitalist exploitation, landlord monopoly, to the starvation of the poor, the hopelessness of the unemployed. They have, what government has not, the sower to do this; they lack only the intelligence to grasp the situation and the resolution to act. In face of such a state of things as this, has the propagandist of Socialism, who will none of parliamentary elections, no sphere of action left but homicide? Such a question, we say again, is absurd, and we only raise and answer it here because certain Social Democrats have now and again considered it worth asking.

III — While homicidal outrages are neither a logical outcome of Anarchist principles nor a practical necessity of Anarchist action, they are a social phenomenon which Anarchists and all Social Revolutionists mat be prepared to face.

There is a truism that the man in the street seems always to forget, when he is abusing the Anarchists, or whatever party happens to be his bête noir for the moment, as the cause of some outrage just perpetrated. This indisputable fact is that homicidal outrages have, from time immemorial, been the reply of goaded and desperate classes, and goaded and desperate individuals, to wrongs from their fellow men which they felt to be intolerable. Such acts are the violent recoil from violence, whether aggressive or repressive;

Such being his view of human societies in general, the Anarchist, of course, endeavours to find out, and make clear to himself and others, the main causes why our own existing society is here and now failing so dismally, in many directions, to fulfil its true function. And he has arrived at the conclusion that these causes of failure are mainly two. First, the unhappy recognition of the authority of man over man as a morally right principle, a thing to be accepted and submitted to, instead of being resisted as essentially evil and wrong. And second, the equally unhappy recognition of the right of property, i.e., the right of individuals, who have complied with certain legal formalities, to monopolise material things, whether they are using them or need to use -them or not, and whether they have produced them or not. To the Anarchist, the state of the public conscience which permits these two principles of authority and property to hold sway in our social life seems to lie at the root of our miserably desocialised condition; and therefore he is at war with all institutions and all habits which are based on these principles or tend to keep them up. He is not the enemy of society, never of society, only of anti-social abuses.

He is not the enemy of any man or set of men, but of every system and way of acting which presses cruelly upon any human being, and takes away from him any of the chances nature may have allowed him, of opportunities equal to those of his fellow men.

Such, in general terms, is the mental attitude of the Anarchist towards Society, and beneath this attitude, at the root of these theories and beliefs lies something deeper: a sense of passionate reverence for human personality; that new-born sense—perhaps the profoundest experience which the ages have hitherto revealed to man—which is yet destined to transform human relations and the human soul; that sense which is still formless and inexpressible to most of us, even those whom it most strongly stirs, and to which Walt Whitman has given the most adequate, and yet a most inadequate and partial voice :

"Each of us inevitable,

Each of us limitless—each of us with his or her right upon the earth,

Each of us allow'd the eternal purports of the earth,

Each of us here as divinely as any is here."

Is this an attitude of heart and mind which must logically lead a man on to commit homicidal outrage? With such feelings, with such convictions must we not rather attach a peculiar sanctity to human life? And, in fact, the genuine Anarchist looks with sheer horror upon every destruction, every mutilation of a human being, physical or moral. He loathes wars, executions and imprisonments, the grinding down of the worker's whole nature in a dreary round of toil, the sexual and economic slavery of women, the oppression of children, the crippling and poisoning of human nature by the preventable cruelty and injustice of man to man in every shape and form. Certainly, this frame of mind and homicidal outrage cannot stand in the relation of cause and effect.

II —Though Anarchist principles do not in themselves logically lead to the commission of homicidal outrages, do they practically drive the active Anarchist into this course by closing other means of action?

It is true that his convictions close to the conscientious Anarchist one form of social action, just now unfortunately popular, i.e., parliamentary agitation.

He cannot conscientiously take part in any sort of government, or try to relieve the cruel pressure upon human lives by means of governmental reforms, because one of the worst possible evils

he could do his fellow men would, in his eyes, be to strengthen their idea that the rule of man over man is a right and beneficial thing. For, of course, every well-meant attempt of the men in power to better things tends to confirm people in the belief that to have men in power is, after all, not a social evil. Whereas the aim of the Anarchist is to convince his fellow lawn that authority is no essential part of human association, but a disruptive element rather, and one to be eliminated, if we would have social union without unjust and unequal social pressure. The current political means of action and protest, therefore, are barred to the Anarchist, by the new-born conception of social relations which is the keynote of his creed. On this point he differs from all other Socialists and social reformers.

But is homicide the necessary antithesis of parliamentary agitation? Must the man who looks upon political action, as commonly understood, as useless and worse, necessarily endeavour to spread his views or improve society by outrages upon his fellow men?

The question is obviously absurd. If one particular way is barred, an infinite variety of other ways are open. The great changes in the world's history, the great advances in human development have not been either set agoing or accomplished by the authority of kings and rulers, but by the initiative of this man and that in making fresh adaptations to changing material conditions, and by the natural and voluntary association of those who saw, or even blindly felt the necessity for a new departure. And now, as always, the great social change which the most callous feel to be at our doors, is springing from the masses, the inmost depths of the nation in revolt against unendurable misery and fired with a new hope of better things. We, Anarchists, have the whole of this vast sphere for our action: —the natural and voluntary social life of our countrymen. Not a society founded on principles of voluntary association for any useful purpose whatever, but our place is there. Not a natural human relationship, but it is our work to infuse it with a new spirit. Is not this field wide enough for the zeal of the most