

Our Comrades in Chicago

Freedom Press (London)

October, 1890

The following comrades will speak:—LOUISE MICHEL, PETER KROPOTKIN, HENRI MALATESTA, H. DAVIS, TOM PEARSON, JAMES BLACKWELL, J. CASEY, WALTER NEILSON, CHARLEY MORTON, and GENOSSE TRUNK.

The Freedom Group have also arranged to hold local meetings as follows:—

Thursday Nov. 6, Scandinavian Club, Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, W.

Friday Nov. 7, Gleicheit Club, Old Street, St. Lukes Saturday Nov. 8, International Workingmen's Club, Berners Street, Commercial Road, E.

Sunday Nov. 9, Autonomie Club, 6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Road.

Sunday Nov. 9, Lambeth Progressive Club, 122 Kennington Road, S.E.

A BIT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

IT is four years this month since the first number of Freedom appeared. In October, 1886, one or two of us started the first Communist-Anarchist paper in England, and uphill work it was at the beginning. For over two years the paper was carried on nearly single handed. How often we were discouraged. How often we felt so bitterly conscious of the great difference between the glorious truth of our principles and the feebleness of our own advocacy of them that we almost lost heart! And yet, somehow, we went on and on. Knowing that our cause was the cause of the masses, deeply convinced that what we were striving to express was the bidden thought and feeling of hundreds of thousands of our fellows, we could not be silent.

And meanwhile the course of events was preaching Anarchism louder than any words could do. The heroism and the cruel death of the Chicago Anarchists drew the attention of many of the most thoughtful workers in England to the ideas for which our comrades in America died. The action of certain English Social Democrats in disowning and maligning these martyrs of the labor cause a year after they had laid down their lives for the people disgusted many honest revolutionary Socialists with the principles and expediencies which could sanction such a treason. Experience of the intrigues and petty despotisms to which democratic methods give rise, even within the Socialist party, alienated and is still alienating others from the theory of Democracy. One by one earnest men and women have been turning their attention seriously to Anarchism. One by one new groups have been formed, or old groups remodeled on Anarchist instead of Democratic lines. In a word, the new principle of association is little by little taking its place among the workers as the conscious fruit of their own experience. Unconsciously, of course, the yearning for free and equal association has been the basis of revolt for ages. But the blind longing

for any good is widely different from the conscious and reasoned understanding of its nature and determination to gain and practice it.

Thus the course of events has continually strengthened the position of *Freedom*. In the third year of its existence its management passed into the hands of workmen— comrades who had themselves once been Social Democrats, and were convinced by their own experience of the dangers and fallacies of Democracy. In fact, the former manager of *Justice* became the manager of *Freedom*, and bore for some time the main burden of responsibility for the paper. Thenceforward it became more distinctly an organ of the Workers; but its continuity has always been preserved, its principles and character have been unchanged. The comrades who originally started it have always remained upon its staff.

During the last year the increasing rapidity of the growth of the Anarchist movement has constantly contributed to broaden out the possibilities of the paper. It has secured new contributors and distributors. It has become the organ of several active propagandist groups, and its circulation has in consequence considerably increased. Its small size has been its chief hindrance. We have issued two or three supplements; but as English Anarchism is mainly a working class movement, money has been scarce with us—too scarce to allow us to venture upon permanent enlargement as long as we had to put out our printing. And until now we have had no office or type of our own.

When we first started, the paper was set up at the *Commonweal* office, and the Freethought Publishing Company let us a business room at a very small rent. But after the Chicago affair Mr. Bradlaugh did not like Anarchists on his premises, and besides our room was wanted for *The Link*; so we migrated to *The Socialist* office, which Comrade Bolas fraternally shared with us until that paper was wound up. Since the Cooperative Labor Press has been established, they have done our printing, and our quarters have been with them. But now, with our fifth year, we enter upon our own printing office, and we hope henceforward to issue a supplement regularly every month.

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