

Freedom

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NEW PARTIES FOR OLD.

The *Herald* of June 23 contains a detailed programme around which it suggests "the democratic forces of this country might well rally," as a "People's Party." To tell the truth, it seems to differ very little but in degree from the programmes put forward by the Socialist parties in the past, except that control of industry will be jointly undertaken by the State and the workers—at least, the State is to "own" everything and the workers are to "manage" it. This is the initial blunder, and gives the keynote to the rest of the programme. The very first thing that revolutionists must do to make a successful Social Revolution is to abolish the wage system and the control of the lives of one section of the community by another section. This control—called government—is a continuation of the slavery of the past, which has gradually evolved into what is termed "democracy" or self-government, but which is not self-government at all. The workers have had a vote given to them by which they decide who shall govern them, and the votes registered for and against rival sections of the ruling class are accepted by them for the time being in the same way as they accepted the results of battles in the past. The "Wars of the Roses" have been replaced by the "Battles of the Ballot-boxes." In each case the working class have fought for their masters and not for themselves.

That is quite true, we shall be told, but cannot you Anarchists see that we Social Democrats now want the workers to elect a Government from amongst themselves and not from the ruling class? Yes, we know you do, we reply, but whatever class the Government is elected from the effect will be the same—a few men, comparatively speaking, will make decisions which will affect the lives of millions of men and women. The fact that at election time their promises may be good will not prevent them acting as other rulers when they get into power. In the same issue of the *Herald* in which the programme appears, George Lansbury writes: "Who amongst us can ever forget the high hopes which centred round the Labour Party in 1906, when forty direct representatives of the working class found themselves in the House of Commons? How disillusioned we all are now!" Yes, and it will always be the same with elected persons in the future as it has been in the past.

One of the principal points in the programme is "economic independence of all men and women." This is a point upon which we Anarchists can agree with those who drew up the programme; but as soon as we see their practical application of it we find there will be no "independence," for lower down we read of "a high minimum wage guaranteed by the State." If the State—that is, the Government—has the payment of this wage, it is quite certain it will wish to control the conditions under which you will earn it. Is that independence? Are we so much in love with our leading Socialist and Labour men that we would wish them to control our livelihood? Of course not. Therefore let us find a new method in which our bread and butter will be free from the dictates of those who may wish to legislate for us in the mass without thinking of us as individuals.

It is said that when Napoleon I. remarked to Laplace that in his "Exposition of the System of the Future" the name of God was nowhere to be found, Laplace answered: "I nowhere felt the need of that hypothesis." Similarly, when Anarchists think of a new system of society they never feel the need of a State hypothesis. The State is an instrument of oppression, was always an instrument of oppression, and of necessity must ever be an instrument of oppression. It is not a mere accident that those who guide the State machine have always used deceit and lying in their dealings with the people. Their position compels them to adopt such means so as to hide from the people its inner workings. Think for a moment of the mountains of lies that

have issued from all the Governments during this war! Read the report on the Dardanelles tragedy and the recently-issued report on the expedition to Mesopotamia—the lies that were published to bolster up those in power, and to serve the interests of the State. And then think of the abysmal ignorance of those reformers who wish the State to "own" everything!

Those who really wish to be free will have to confess that there is no escape from the Anarchist solution, which is that the land shall be free for the use of the producers, who shall decide the methods of production and distribution of the products by free agreement among themselves. They may and will make mistakes, but if they are really actuated by a desire for freedom they will have little difficulty in finding remedies for them. Surely this war has burned into our brains the evils of Capitalism and the State, therefore let us wipe them out for ever, and build up a new society in which the machine-gun and the policeman's baton will have no place.

KROPOTKIN'S FAREWELL.

In a long farewell letter addressed to the "Western Working Men," prior to his return to Russia, Peter Kropotkin writes:

"After having worked in your midst for forty years, I cannot leave Western Europe without sending you a few words of farewell. From the depths of my heart I thank you for the reception—more than fraternal—that I found in your midst. The International Working Men's Association was not for me a mere abstract word. Amidst the working men of Switzerland, France, Britain, Spain, Italy, the United States, I was in a society of brothers and friends. And in your struggles, each time I had the opportunity to take part in them, I lived the best moments of my life. I deeply felt that wave of human solidarity and oneness of men, disregarding all frontiers, which represents one of the greatest promises for man in the future."

In dealing with the war, he says that no International will be possible that does not oppose "every attempt of every nation to invade foreign territories." The brutality of the war has awakened mankind to the necessity of all men and women uniting their energies in social reconstruction, and he points out that it was the reconstruction work which had been going on all over Russia since the beginning of the war which rendered the Revolution possible. The main lines of reconstruction he states as follows:

"The production of all that is necessary for the nation, as well as the distribution of the produced wealth, must be organised in the direct interest of all. It is no more a matter of struggling for adding to the wages a few shillings, which usually are soon swallowed by all sorts of exploiting intermediaries. The workers, the producers, must become the managers of the producing concerns. They must settle the aims and the means of production, and society must recognise their right of disposing of the capital that is needed for that."

After insisting on the necessity of a great final military effort to beat the Germans, on whom he throws the whole blame for the war, Kropotkin tells the Western workers that as soon as the war is over they must "seriously study and resolutely take in hand the fundamental reconstruction on the lines of socialisation of the social wealth, socialised production, and socialised distribution of produced riches. . . . Russia will join you in the same work."

In bidding farewell to Kropotkin on his return to Russia, we can but hope that by contact with the Russian workers he may realise the errors of his attitude on the war, and with them work in the building up of that Anarchist society of which he was such an enthusiastic exponent prior to the war. His numerous Anarchist books and pamphlets will be read and remembered long after his patriotic backsliding in this war has been forgotten.

AN URGENT APPEAL.

With this month's issue of FREEDOM and SATIRE is enclosed a collecting sheet on behalf of the funds of both papers. Everyone knows the enormous increase in the cost of paper has put an end to many journals, and it is only by means of the voluntary and regular contributions to our Guarantee Funds that we manage to keep our own papers in existence. We hope that our readers will do their best to collect money for FREEDOM and SATIRE, and thus enable us to carry on. Many inquiries for Anarchist literature have reached us lately, and the sales are steadily increasing. Let us strike while the iron is hot.