The development of modern society.

Thus fell the Society of the Middle Ages, by Capitalism establishing itself on the ruins of Feudalism, and the rise of a middle-class who were parties to none of the nobility, themselves become commercial trading on the greatest monopolies, in all industries, manufactures, crafts, and practically doing the state no service—partly parties to the nobility, or partly employees living on the profit wrong out of workmen employed at a higher rate than that of the same work as it happened in England. On the Continent the divorce of the people from the land was not so sudden or complete, I think because there was less resistance possible to the centralised bureaucracy here than on the Continent. There, on the other hand, the rise of definite nations with still political demarcations gave rise to most horrible wars, which reduced the peasants to the last stage of misery, handiworkmen, and in the end landed the land owning aristocracy, and at last made the French Revolution both possible and necessary. It is no exaggeration to say that Germany is only now within the last twenty years recovering from the Thirty Years' War which went on at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries.

But with the birth of capitalism and the world-market, the relative importance of agriculture and manufactures began to alter; and the again especially in England, a country so rich in coal and minerals, and so well furnished with harbours on all sides. The new-born power of making profit out of the employment of handicraftsmen to be exercised and developed. The craftsmen were in a changed position; they had been completely masters of their own work with other resources, which forbade the work masterising them; they were so long; they were working for other people, driven by competition to sell themselves at the lowest price in the market. They never saw wage-slaves; but they were still handicraftsmen working in an isolated way. They were not being made the most of, and could only be the instrument of any timid society of oligarchy. They remained thus I think that they would have been less degraded than they became afterwards, and are now; but then the last word of progress would have been said, the hope of revolution would never have arisen.

What happened was very different. Capitalism was no sooner born than she was forced to now the seed of her decay and final destruction. She was now ready to develop to this extent that was indeed her work. The mechanical invention of man had lain dormant since the early days that had invented the plough, the cart, the row-boat and the simple machines that help man's labour and are not suitable for the use of the simple tools, the plow, the shovel and the saw. This invention was now to wake up, but not very suddenly; the fuller organisation of handicraft was to precede its abolition. I say when Capitalism began to make itself master of the end of the sixteenth century, production was wholly by handicraft little organised.

The work of the seventeenth century was that gradual organisation by means of the division of labour. In handicraft (supposing a man to take no pleasure in his work, to be no artist) the single worker's whole intelligence is wasted on a piece of commonplace goods; a small part of that intelligence will suffice, if the whole of some one else's intelligence is employed in ordering in general, in guiding, in giving a man, at doing one small portion of that work, and you can soon dispose of with almost all his intelligence, while at the same time you will quicken the machine he gives its work. In about twenty years, you will at last make of him a very delicate machine, or part of a machine, for performing the small piece of work you apportion to him; but you must take care that the whole machine of him and his fellows must be as good as all the previous one in the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth century it was complete, and the unit of labour was no longer a single man but a group of men.

Commerce enters now, one would think, as well as she needed to be; but happily she could not stop there, or there would still have been no revolution possible for us. Now, indeed, she stirred up the sleeping invention of man, and with the latter half of the eighteenth century began the monstrous inventions, which we have thought should have set mankind free from the greater part of his labour, but which, as it is, has done, on the face of it, little more than make a world and enormously increase the number of those working population that we were very in order to provide them with due wage-slaves, who work not less, but more than they did in the days before the organisation of labour, and get not higher wages, but lower for their more burdensome labour.

My briefy told tale is too long, for I need not go through the often-told story of the fly-shuttle, the spinning Jenny, the steam-engine, the power-loom, and the rest of it. I will only remark that the last development of machinery was a great help to the organisation of which these wonderful machines, and the men that manage them (the most wonderful of all) are only parts. There remains only on this side of what is of life itself to act, and that is the organisation of machine production lasts (which I prophecy will not be for ever). That one thing is this: The machines were invented that some men might work harder and others softer than they used to do, and they have been made to fail, his purpose was to organise the lowest state of man, to seize hold of the bodies of the hard-working ones, the wage-souls, though the factory has its bodies in its grip, it has not got hold of their intelligence, and does not want it, nay, sedulously keeps it. Suppose that intelligence to wake up and to say, The hard work and the soft work, let us no longer keep these two separate for two classes of men, but throw them together and divide them equally amongst all. Is there where shall be no classes? In the first place, in general, the only holy and sacred thing we know, be purified and made far holier by taking away from it the sorrow and misery that come of the demands made for toll, and the demands for payment of slavery. Surely at last, they see that nothing in the machinery themselves, and the invention of man which created them, that they should forbid the true use of them, the lightening the burden of human labour.

That is what we Socialists under the machine and factory system are striving for at present, leaving the consideration of what is to be done to the machines and factories to future ages, who will be free to consider it, as we are not. Freedom first at any price, and then if possible happiness, which to my mind would be the certain result of freedom. Or are we free! I have told you what was the condition of the world in 1890, and what is the condition of the world in 1890. It is in the world of the Absolutist Empire which followed it. What is its condition now that we have gone through chattel-slavery and servitude to wage-slavery! It can be told nearly in the same words.

This ingladden of the world is partly composed of money-bag aristocracy; a parasitic class, ministering to their pleasures and their corruption, drinking of their cup, eating of their dish, flattering them and pleasing them, and being thus enabled by their power to be the mere sharers in their crime of living on the misery of the poor. And those by whose labour they live! A huge populace of miserable and hopelessly labourers, to whom are superadded a crowd of parasites, far
Charles (Sheffield) was sure the spirit of revolt would spread here as well as abroad. Leeds showed this. The very children lected the little province, shops for their fathers who were fighting for the streets. Differences of opinion are breed to be shoved aside when we are free to throw down we proudly spread ourselves a in the provinces we should soon light a fire that would end the whole damned thing.

Malatesta said the problem of the best means of securing combined international action had been often discussed. The authoritarian solution was to commit every single individual to the revolution, to be ill-informed, and consequently the movement was paralysed. Another system was to renounce all systems. The results of this discussion were that every individual has a clear idea of what he should do, without necessity for any word of command. We shall discuss the problems of the Anarchist and Anarchist. For our part it is the only way to lead to the Anarchist state. As a rule men were not heroes, and they wanted to be assured that if they did some great thing they would have the sympathy of their fellows. There was no Anarchist-Communist, but both schools of Anarchists were as to be done immedi at. Each school—nigh, determined to seize property and put it in common by means of a tumultuous revolution. Why should not men, who were the schools of Anarchists, agree to seize property, which was a strong argument? But, we might be either Communists or Anarchists; but there was also a system of organisation, which encouraged spies and sentenced the people to the system of delegation; but there was also a system of organisation, which was spontaneous and Anarchist. A party which did not believe in organisation would do nothing; a party which believed in organisation only would soon join the Social Democratic party. And, then, others, we might do no more than to place ourselves at its office by immediate military action, whether by barricades or otherwise.

After Malatesta's speech the Conference adjourned at 1.80 for dinner.

The return of the Anarchist-Communists at 3.

Ogden (Oxford) said that it would be very indiscrimate, as we had no pretensions to be prophets, for us to lay down laws as to the future. We do or do not believe in the future. We are not inclined to the attitude that we would at any rate here to-day make doubts understand that we were at war with the world. We, too, held ourselves to be the Anarchist-Communists answered, to bring into existence elements out of which the Revolution would be made. National leaders there must be, but do let us make them. We Anarchists. Bradlaugh might have been the first to revolt against. We do not believe in the past, and also that we were not the leaders. We do not believe in the revolution from the future. What is it, we might make workers. If we, the revolution against.

Pearson (Freedom Group) said that we must know what we were to put the front of the city. The Social Democrats were revolutionists, but we could never work with them because they would not abolish authority. We, the revolutionists, must form our own party. We do not believe in any shape—dictating to people what was right and what was wrong—as bad. Our organisation in the past had gone wrong by electing people to do this. We should not believe in the Social Democratic party. We help to us must come from the Anar chists. The Conference having assembled, Kirby, at noon, on behalf of the Social Democratic party, stated the general objects aimed at—viz., greater unity and efficiency in revolutionary work and propaganda. He asked the comrades present to decide whether they would elect a chairman or not. It was unanimously agreed to dispense with any such quasiconstitutional form. It may here be also mentioned that throughout the proceedings no vote or division was taken, but that, nevertheless, perfect order and harmony were maintained. The foreigners were appointed Secretaries, and the Conference was con stituted.

The first question on the agenda for discussion was:

"The Adoption of the International Atlantic on the part of the Revolutionary Party in the event of a European crisis, so that the Cause be not injured by individual action in the event."

Mowbray thought that the gist of the matter was to secure ourselves from waiting or indecision. In the first place, we should meet at least quarterly to discuss. He thought it would help us to concentrate our meeting, be it in the meeting of each town, so as to keep the police of those towns employed at home. He hoped that what we discussed to-day would not be kept to ourselves, but spread abroad. The workmen understood unfolding propaganda better than theoretic discussions.

Kilty said our chief enemies, strange to say, were amid the drags of the propaganda of the life of the Society. One of the main problems of our work was in which the propaganda had been carried on. We should preach to the Therefore, it was important that the Anarchists should always live by their emotional spontaneity; we might do so by preaching heaving here on earth. The first act of the revolution ought to be to open the prison doors.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CONFERENCE

As Anti-Parliamentary Conference of revolutionary bodies and groups was held at the Autonomie Club on Sunday, August 3rd. The following societies and groups were represented: Autonomous Club, Berne Street Club, East London Workers' Club, German Anarchist, British Federation of Anarchist-Communist, Italian, French, and Scandinavian Groups, Knight's of Labour, Anarchist-Communists, Anarchist-Communist Group; and the following Branches of the Socialist League—North London, Hammersmith, Streatham, East London, North Kensington, South London, Greenwich, Wandsworth, and Islington.

The Conference having assembled, Kirby, at noon, on behalf of the Socialist League, stated the general objects aimed at—viz., greater unity and efficiency in revolutionary work and propaganda. He asked the comrades present to decide whether they would elect a chairman or not. It was unanimously agreed to dispense with any such quasiconstitutional form. It may here be also mentioned that throughout the proceedings no vote or division was taken, but that, nevertheless, perfect order and harmony were maintained. The foreigners were appointed Secretaries, and the Conference was constituted.

The first question on the agenda for discussion was:

"The Adoption of the International Atlantic on the part of the Revolutionary Party in the event of a European crisis, so that the Cause be not injured by individual action in the event."

Mowbray thought that the gist of the matter was to secure ourselves from waiting or indecision. In the first place, we should meet at least quarterly to discuss. He thought it would help us to concentrate our meeting, be it in the meeting of each town, so as to keep the police of those towns employed at home. He hoped that what we discussed to-day would not be kept to ourselves, but spread abroad. The workmen understood unfolding propaganda better than theoretic discussions.

Kilty said our chief enemies, strange to say, were amid the drags of the propaganda of the life of the Society. One of the main problems of our work was in which the propaganda had been carried on. We should preach to the Therefore, it was important that the Anarchists should always live by their emotional spontaneity; we might do so by preaching heaving here on earth. The first act of the revolution ought to be to open the prison doors.