INTRODUCTORY.

To our readers' leave for a few words in which to introduce to them a Socialist journal, The COMMONWEAL. In the first place we ask them to understand that the Editor and Sub-Editor of The COMMONWEAL are acting as delegates of the Socialist League, and under a direct control: any slip in principles, therefore, any mis-statement of the aims or tactics of the League, are liable to correction from the representatives of that body.

As the conduct of THE COMMONWEAL, it must be remembered that it is one aim—the propagation of Socialism. We shall not, therefore, make any excuses for what may be thought journalistic shortcoming: if we can but manage to attract attention to the study of our principles by those who have not yet thought of Socialism, or who, as often happens, bitterly hostile to them through ignorance; or if we can help those whose feelings are drawing them towards the cause of the workers, but who need definite instruction as to its aims and methods. To awaken the sluggish, to strengthen the waverers, to correct the seekers after truth; these are high aims, yet not too high a journal that claims to be Socialist, and we hope by patience and real to accomplish them.

It is our duty to attack unseemingly the miserable system which makes economic existence in a society of rich and poor, of slaves and slave-owners. In all its details we must attack it; but in doing so, we shall avoid mere perorations, not for the sake of escaping the censures of bad taste and bitterness, which doubtless will in any case be flung at us, but because, it is illogical to attack those men, merely because as their position is, who are themselves more helpless than in the terrible machine of modern commerce. To attack such classes they put themselves forward as the representatives of the system, the order of the workers, their striving for the national share of the production of barbarous peoples is nothing to us except so far as it may give us an opportunity of insilling Socialism into men's hearts, or of organizing discontent into Socialism.

We invite from all, Socialists or others, free discussion of anything we put forward, in the belief that even an un instructed attack is useful information which might otherwise have lain unstimulated.

On articles will, for the most part, be of an educational nature: there will be a series on historical revolutions, expositions of the socialistic basis of Socialism, and contributions from men of various nationalities.

Lastly, a word of appeal, to the workers chiefly. It is not only that happier—a word we say is profusely directly in their interest: much more it through them alone, through the slaves of society, we look for generation, for its elevation from its present corruption and we cannot pretend to think that they, the workers, as yet, much of the principles of the cause that rests upon them, of its cause, in fact. We beseech them to help us in spreading brage of those principles and accept their fellows, that as we believe they now find us honest, so that, their support may make us resolve, action, and hopeful—in a word, successful in our efforts for the advancement of the cause we have at heart.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

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THE MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE

FELLOW CITIZENS,

We come before you as a body advocating the principles of Revolutionary International Socialism; that is, we seek a change in the basis of Society—a change which would destroy the distinction of classes and nationalities.

As the civilized world is at present constituted, there are two classes of Society—the one possessing wealth and the instruments of production, the other producing wealth by means of those instruments but only by the leave and for the use of the possessing classes.

These two classes are necessarily in antagonism to one another. The possessing class, or non-producers, can only live as a class on the unpaid labour of the producers—the more unpaid labour they wring out of them, the richer they will be; therefore the producing class—the workers—are driven to strive to better themselves at the expense of the possessing class, and the conflict between the two classes is ceaseless. Sometimes it takes the form of open rebellion, sometimes of strikes, sometimes of mere widespread mendacity and abuse; it is always going on in one form or other, though it may not always be obvious to the thoughtless looker-on.

We have spoken of unpaid labour; it is necessary to explain what that means. The sole possession of the producing class is the power of labour inherent in their bodies; but as we have already said, the rich classes possess all the instruments of toil, that is, the land, capital, and machinery, the producers of workers are forced to sell their labour, possess the power of labour, on such terms as the possessing class will grant them.

These terms are, that after they have produced enough to keep them in woking order, and enable them to bring children to the world when they are worn out, the surplus of their products shall belong to the possessors of property, which bargain is based on the fact that every man working in a civilized community can produce more than he needs for his own sustenance.

The relation of the possessing class to the working class is the essential basis of the system of producing for a profit, on which our modern Society is founded. The way in which it works is as follows: The manufacturer produces to sell to a profit to the retailer, who takes a profit out of his dealings with the merchant, who again sells for a profit to the retailer, who must make his profit out of the general public, aided by various degrees of fraud and adulteration and the ignorance of the value and quality of goods to which this system has reduced the consumer.

The profit-grinding system is sustained by competition, or, as we now call it, war, not only between the competing classes, but also within the classes themselves: there are always wars among the workers for bare subsistence, and among their masters; the employers and middle-men, for the share of the profit wrung out of the workers; lastly, there is competition among, and sometimes open war, among the nations of the civilized world, for their share of the world's market. Indeed, all the rivalries of nations have been reduced to the struggle for their share of the spoils of barbarous or unfortunate races. At home the purpose of increasing the riches of the few, and the poverty of the many.

For, owing to the fact that goods are made primarily to sell, and only secondarily for use, labour is wasted on all hands; since the pursuit of profit compels the manufacturer competing with his fellow to force his wares on the markets by means of their cheapness, whether there is any real demand for them or not. In the words of the Communist Manifesto of 1847—

"Cheerful was the skill with which their iron artillery for battering down Chinese wall, and heavy were the instruments of torture and extermination under penalty of ruin the Be-