

# THE COMMONWEALTH

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

## In Memoriam.

Murdered by law, Nov. 11, 1887.	Killed himself in prison, Nov. 10.
GEORGE ENGEL	LOUIS LINGG
ADOLPH FISCHER	Imprisoned for life.
ALBERT R. PARSONS	SAMUEL FIELDS
AUGUST SPIES	MICHAEL SCHWAB
	Fifteen years' imprisonment.
	OSCAR NEEBE

IN presence of the doom that has befallen our comrades, of the cowardly vengeance wreaked upon them by the bourgeois of Illinois for the fear felt before treachery gave them into their hands, words fail; it is hard even to speak a tithe of the thought and feeling that seek expression. Every Socialist in all the world has before his eyes the image of the gallows whereon the four have died, and the shadow of the prison wherein their comrades are to linger out a death in life. To the resolute a new edge added to their stern hatred of class-rule and its evil fruits; to the half-hearted a clear warning of the risk they run, a call for them to choose between unhonoured safety and the dangers of truth; to the dullard or dilettante a rude awakening to the harsh reality of the war we wage and the penalty that must be paid for taking part therein.

The four men who have been done to death have died for their belief; those who in Rome were flung to the lions, who in Smithfield were burned alive for a similar offence, that they taught the overthrow of legalised wrong, are counted saints and held sacred in men's memories. So also will be these men of Chicago. From their birth was the record of their doings, alike of those that are dead and those who live, searched minutely for aught that might discredit them—and searched in vain. They were men of honest and clean lives, against whom none could cast a stone—and they have died for their belief. Whenever men have tried to stay the march of Truth by slaying her servants the attempt has failed; the cause for which men died martyrs has inevitably won; the stake, the whip, the scaffold have had no power over thought, but making men speak under their breath and laying up a tenfold woe for that state in which the folk dared but whisper their discontent.

Be it noted also that in times past mere death has not been deemed enough to deter men from the holding "dangerous" opinions; torture of one kind or another has been brought in to heighten the terror of dissolution and strike dismay into unruly minds. To-day, under a thin coat of polished hypocrisy, the bourgeois are as full of sordid cruelty as was ever the worst of all the Inquisitors they execrate. With a myriad means at hand for insuring a sharp and sudden death, the vindicators of law and order in Chicago designedly prolonged the death-agony of our four comrades for a quarter of an hour less one minute. For fourteen minutes did the "respectables" of Chicago stand gloating over the spectacle of four men struggling in the throes of gradual death; pluming themselves, no doubt, that now at least their property was safe and the revolution crushed. Nor did they see what it was they were doing; how by their own act they were preparing a Red Terror that shall be with them night and day, that shall be an unspoken fear at all their feasts, a spectre of dread beside their couches, and a final ruin pending over their profit-hunting enterprises. How shall it be wondered at if those who knew the four and loved them take into their own hands the blood-atonement of their murder? Will not the remembered horror of those fourteen minutes freeze any word of "moderation" upon the lips of those who would speak it? Will not it also strike away from under capitalism one of its trustiest supports, the respect for law among the masses, the belief in its embodiment of justice? Will it not prove a striking lesson to the workers of all lands in the hollow mockery of bourgeois morality, bourgeois freedom, bourgeois civilisation?

When courage wanes for awhile and hope is shaken, the memory of those who died so bravely and the thought of those in prison who would gladly have died also, will hearten us to fresh effort and renew our faith in the only cause for which men can now be heroes and

martyrs like those of old. Far above the petty game of politics, or the squabbling of rival creeds, these men stand out on a nobler height, a sublimer level; their heroism has lifted them out of the world in which men bargain and get rich, into the purer air in which stand Huss and Bruno and all those great souls whose lives were spent that Man might live. S.

## LONDON IN A STATE OF SIEGE.

SIR CHARLES WARREN has kept his promise and prevented the meeting organised by the Radical Clubs. From the military point of view he has been eminently successful, and deserved to be so, and it is now proper that we should make him a peer of the realm and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, if he will kindly consent to waive the title of Emperor or three-tailed Bashaw or whatever else is the proper nick-name of a supreme and irresponsible ruler. Sir Charles, I repeat, made his military dispositions admirably, and revolutionists should study them, since they have had a little piece of real war suddenly brought to their notice. The "Square," i.e., the sunken space, was guarded by foot-policemen four deep, whose business was simply to guard it and who had orders not to stir from their posts; outside these were strong bodies of horse-police who took careful note of any incipient gathering and at once scattered it.

This defence was ample against anything except an organised attack from determined persons acting in concert and able to depend on one another. In order that no such body should be formed and no such attack be possible, the careful general had posted strong bodies of police, with due supports to fall back on if necessary, about a radius of about a quarter of a mile of the Square, so that nothing could escape falling into the meshes of this net.

Into this net then we marched. The column in which the comrades of the League were, started from Clerkenwell Green in company with the Patriotic Club and some of the East-end clubs, including a Branch of the S. D. F. I see the correspondent of the *Daily News* estimates this column at 6000, but I think that is an exaggeration. Anyhow, we marched in good order through Theobalds' Road, and up Hart Street, crossing Oxford Street and Shaftesbury Avenue without attack from the police, but we had no sooner crossed the latter street and were about to enter the Seven Dials streets to make our way to St. Martin's Lane, than the attack came, and it was clearly the best possible place for it. The divergence of the streets would confuse any procession which had lost its rallying point; the side streets and the width of the thoroughfare at the spot gave a good opportunity for a flank charge, and at our rear was the open space of Shaftesbury Avenue to allow a charge in that quarter to finish us up after the attack on front and flank. It was all over in a few minutes: our comrades fought valiantly, but they had not learned how to stand and turn their column into a line, or to march on to the front. Those in front turned and faced their rear, not to run away, but to join in the fray if opportunity served. The police struck right and left like what they were, soldiers attacking an enemy, amidst wild shrieks of hatred from the women who came from the slums on our left. The band instruments were captured, the banners and flags destroyed, there was no rallying point and no possibility of rallying, and all that the people composing our once strong column could do was to straggle into the Square as helpless units. I confess I was astounded at the rapidity of the thing and the ease with which military organisation got its victory. I could see that numbers were of no avail unless led by a band of men acting in concert and each knowing his own part.

What happened to us happened, as I hear, to the other processions with more or less fighting. An eye-witness who marched up with the western column told me that they were suddenly attacked as they came opposite the Haymarket Theatre, by the police rushing out on them from the side streets and immediately batoning everybody they could reach, whether they resisted or not. The column, he said, was destroyed in two minutes, though certainly not quite without fighting; one brave man wrapping his banner torn from the pole round his arm and facing the police till he was hammered down with repeated blows.

Once in the Square we were, as I said, helpless units, especially as there were undoubtedly a good many mere spectators, many of them club gentlemen and other members of the class which employs Warren. Undoubtedly if two or three hundred men could have been got to make a rush on the cordon of the police, especially at the south-east corner the crowd could have swarmed into the Square, and if the weakest of the columns could have reached the Square in order this could easily

have been done. But the result would probably have been a far bloodier massacre than Peterloo; for the people, once in the Square, would have found themselves in a mere penfold at the mercy of the police and soldiers. It is true that as matters went, there seemed very little need for the appearance of the latter, so completely were the police, horse and foot, masters of the situation; and the great mass of the people also round the Square was composed of Radicals, very angry it is true at the horrible brutality with which they had been treated by Warren's men, but by no means strung up to fighting pitch. So that I was fairly surprised, the crowd being then quite quiet, to see the Life Guards form at the south of the Square and march up towards St. Martin's Church with the magistrate at their head (a sort of country-gentleman-looking imbecile) to read the Riot Act. The soldiers were cheered as well as hooted by the crowd, I think under the impression that they would not act as brutally against the people as the police: a mistaken impression, I think, as these gorgeous gentry are just the helmeted flunkies of the rich and would act on their orders just as their butlers or footmen would. A little after this a regiment of the foot-guards made their appearance with fixed bayonets, and completed the triumph of law and order.

Sir Charles Warren has thus given us a lesson in street fighting, the first point of which is that mere numbers without organisation or drill are useless; the second, which ought also to be noted, is the proper way to defend a position in a large town by a due system of scouts, outposts, and supports.

We Socialists should thank our master for his lesson, and so pass on from considering the military aspect of the case to its civil aspect. Warren has won a victory, but on what terms! It is clear from what is above printed that he would not have been thoroughly successful if he had not had a free hand given him: if he had not attacked citizens marching peaceably through the streets in just such a way as banditti might do, destroying and stealing their property, they would have been able to claim their right of meeting in Trafalgar Square in such a way that nothing but sharp shot and cold steel could have dealt with them. London has been put under martial law, nominally for behoof of a party, but really on behoof of a class, and war (for it is no less, whatever the consequences may be) has been forced upon us. The mask is off now, and the real meaning of all the petty persecution of our open-air meetings is as clear as may be. No more humbug need be talked about obstruction and the convenience of the public: it is obvious that those meetings were attacked because we displeased the dominant class and were weak. Last Sunday explains all, and the bourgeois now goes about boasting that he is the master and will do what he likes with his slaves. Again, the humbug is exposed of the political condemnation of coercion by Act of Parliament in Ireland, when here in London we have coercion without Act of Parliament; and the feeble twitterings of the *Daily News* will be received with jeers by the triumphant Tories.

And the greatest humbug which Sunday's events have laid bare is "the protection afforded by law to the humblest citizen." Some simple people will be thinking that Warren can be attacked legally for his murderous and cowardly assaults of Sunday. I say Warren, because 'tis no use beating the stick that beats you. Some perhaps will think that there may be a chance of his getting a few years penal servitude for inciting to riot and murder. But these persons forget that he has been ordered to act as he did just as he ordered his brigands, and that Salisbury and Co. who ordered him have done so at the orders of the class which they represent. They have made the laws, but have never intended to keep them when inconvenient. It has now become inconvenient to keep them—and in consequence we must think ourselves lucky to be only beaten by the policeman's baton if the bourgeois don't like us—lucky to get off the six months' or twelve months' imprisonment which is likely to accompany such an accident. In short, the very Radicals have now been taught that slaves have no rights. The lesson is a painful one, but surely useful to us boastful Englishmen: nay, in the long run it is necessary. WILLIAM MORRIS.

HOW DIFFERENT FROM LONDON!—The following extract from a letter by the Jaggayyapeta correspondent of the *Madras People's Friend* has a familiar ring about it: "The police here, as elsewhere, are more a curse than a boon to the people, and are indulging themselves in every kind of mischief. Village officials and shopkeepers form the chief objects of their prey. Innumerable are the false charges got up by them, and many are the persons suffering from their oppression. No mention need be made here of the bribery in this line, as everyone knows full well about it." Of course in London civilisation and Christianity together have guarded us against all this.

If capital insists on hanging men for political utterances, as it does in Chicago, what will it crave as punishment for political acts? Will it institute the stake, the rack, the thumbscrew and other Christian modes of convincing workmen that they had better lie still in the frying pan? But consistency is not a jewel in the crown of Pluto. The devil heats his furnace as hot for infants not a span long as for sinners old in iniquity, and a man might as well die for a sheep as a lamb. But suppression of free speech by hanging a few speakers will only close the valve through which extra pressure of discontent finds vent. Men cannot be convinced that they are wrong by hanging their friends for telling them they are right.—*Winsted Press*.

It was not Endacott alone who was on his trial the other day. It was Mr. Newton, and to some extent, Mr. Matthews also. A mere policeman might easily have been sacrificed to popular wrath, but alas, our rulers could not throw Endacott over and spare the others. They would have all hung together, hence the judicial joke of Mr. Justice Stephens' decision. We have gained something by the whole affair; a new word has been added to the English language. We all know what "boycotted" means, though the word is of recent origin. In future, when anyone finds himself in gaol through the stupidity or the hard swearing of a police constable, we shall say he has been "Endacotted."—*Norwich Daylight*.

## "BROKEN CISTERNS."

WE Socialists are often asked to justify our revolutionary position; we are urged to show cause why we should seek to remodel society on a different basis instead of going on improving that which has grown up on the present one. Our questioner dilates upon all the improvements that have been made, especially in the last 50 years. He points to the spread of education and educational facilities, to the repeal of the laws against trades' unions, and their consequent spread, which resulted in raising the wages of most skilled trades, the amount of rise being variously stated at from 25 to 50 per cent. Then they point to the laws passed to prevent the overwork of children, to enforce sanitary arrangements, and to ensure the safety of the workers in mines and on the sea. They point triumphantly to the reduction of pauperism, and they try to persuade us that things are on the mend, and that we have only to go on in the same direction to put things as right as they ever can be in this world. They would have us believe that all action in the future must be a carrying on of the policies of the present political parties; they call us unpractical dreamers and all the rest of it, and finally go off to the caucus meeting to do their share in carrying on things as they have been going. While our friends are thus engaged, let us see how it is that Socialists are such unreasonable fellows that they are discontented with all these methods of improvement, and declare that nothing short of a complete change in the basis of society will avail. The best order, I think, will be to begin by examining the various agencies, political and social, through which it is hoped that improvement will be brought about; trying to see what ground there is for hope in each case, and why each and all must fail to produce the amelioration hoped for.

We will begin with the political agencies, and here we have two main parties, Conservative and Liberal, with a third, Radical, which is practically the advanced part of the Liberal. Now what is the aim of each of these parties, what is the theory of society on which they base their action? The first thing which strikes us is that their actions are not based on any consistent theory of society at all, but form a series of empirical or experimental laws passed under temporary pressure, with only a small amount of thought given to the all important question of what consistent form of society is aimed at. Opportunism best expresses the moving principle of our legislation; this is largely the result of our basis of party government by which it becomes the chief duty of a party when in office to keep there, when out of office to get there; the legislation is planned chiefly to this end, and only secondarily for the good of the community. There are, of course, individual exceptions who look more to the good of the community than to party, but they can only exert any telling influence when their advice does not happen to make much against party interests.

The Conservative party, in so far as it is more than a mere drag on progress, has or had some definite theory of society; it is not content with a society which consists of a mere assembly of unconnected units, but looks for some organisation. Looking back it finds that in olden times society consisted of various grades and classes, all depending one on another, having mutual duties and fixed relations; the lower classes depended upon the higher for protection and guidance, and in return gave them homage and wealth. In those good old days a man knew his place and did not aspire to be as good as his master, but was content to do as he was told. The thinking part of the Conservative party sees some such theory of social organisation in the past, and hopes to establish a similar system again rather modified to suit modern times. The rich and noble will govern the land, and will look after the poor, teach them to respect their betters, and generally take a paternal interest in them, for which services the poor are to work for them and show them respect, and all the rest of it. Have we anything to hope from this? Not much, I think; surely when a system has been tried in the past and society has outgrown it, there is little use in wishing to try it again. The coat which a boy outgrows he can never wear again; so with society, it will not return to an outgrown system, and if it should the result would be anything but happy. Society may take the discarded principles of some old system and come back to them again on a higher level. So society may take the principle of organisation which there was in the old times, and coming back to that we may again have an organised society instead of a concourse of atoms, but it will be on quite a higher level. Conservatism in so far as it has an ideal of organised society is superior to the other parties, but, unfortunately, its ideal is borrowed from the past and only suitable for the past. Hence it is that Conservatives in office are forced by the irresistible pressure of social development to pass laws in direct opposition to their ideal.

We next come to the Liberal party. Now if we come to consider the matter we can imagine a society such as the Conservative would wish for, we can imagine a society such as the Socialist would wish for; the ideal society of the Individualist or Anarchist can be to some extent imagined, the same with the ideal of the Positivist; but what is the ideal of the Liberal party? We are stumped. All we can think of is our own country after two or three reforms which the Liberal party are talking about shall have passed. The Liberal party is a party without an ideal or consistent aim, there are sections in it holding each of the ideals named above, hence its actions are empirical; it does a bit here, a bit there, according as pressure is put on it or circumstances dictate; it lives from hand to mouth trying to make the present system do by rushing wildly to any point where there is unusual friction, passing at odd times some good and useful measures, but failing to see any future ideal to which all shall be made to tend, and failing to make its measures consistent one with another. At one