



HAVE YOU NOT HEARD HOW IT HAS GONE WITH MANY A CAUSE BEFORE NOW? FIRST, FEW MEN HEED IT; NEXT, MOST MEN CONTEMN IT; LASTLY, ALL MEN ACCEPT IT—AND THE CAUSE IS WON!

Communications invited on Social Questions. They should be written on one side of the paper, addressed to the Editors, 13 Farringdon Rd., E.C., and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to them because of their position in these pages. None to be taken as more than in a general manner expressing the views of the League as a body, except it be so explicitly declared by the Editors.

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B. A.—The articles you ask for are probably those on "The Military Side of the Commune," by Gen. Cluseret, in *Fortnightly Review* for 1873 pp. 1, 213, 351. J. S. (Birmingham).—Article received; will appear next week.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday May 2.

ENGLAND Church Reformer Leaflet Newspaper London—Freie Presse Labour Tribune Norwich—Daylight Railway Review Worker's Friend	FRANCE Paris—Cri du Peuple (daily) La Revolte Journal du Peuple Havre—L'Idée Ouvriere	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune	SWITZERLAND Zurich—Sozial Demokrat
CANADA Toronto—Labor Reformer	HOLLAND Hague—Recht voor Allen	GERMANY Arbeiterstimme Brunn—Volksfreund	ITALY Marsala—La Nuova Eta
UNITED STATES New York—Freiheit Truthseeker Jewish Volkzeitung Boston—Woman's Journal Liberty Chicago (Ill.)—Vorbote Chicago—Labor Enquirer Buffalo—Arbeiter-Zeitung Denver (Col.)—Labor Enquirer	BELGIUM En Avant Ghent—Vooruit Antwerp—De Werker Liege—L'Avenir	GERMANY Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik	SPAIN Madrid—El Socialista
		HUNGARY Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik	PORTUGAL Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
		ROMANIA Bucharest—Gutenberg	AUSTRIA Arbeiterstimme
		SWEDEN Stockholm, Social-Demokraten	GERMANY Malmö—Arbetet

SOCIALISM FROM THE ROOT UP.

CHAPTER XXIII.—SOCIALISM TRIUMPHANT.

It is possible to succeed in a manner in picturing to ourselves the life of past times: that is, our imaginations will show us a picture of them which may include such accurate information as we may have of them. But though the picture may be vivid and the information just, yet it will not be a picture of what really took place; it will be made up of the present which we experience, and the past which our imagination, drawing from our experience, conceives of,—in short, it will be *our* picture of the past.¹ If this be the case with the past, of which we have some concrete data, still more strongly may it be said of the future, of which we have none—nothing but mere abstract deductions from historic evolution, the logical sequence of which may be interfered with at any point by elements whose force we have not duly appreciated; and these are abstractions also which are but the skeleton of the full life which will go on in those times to come.

Therefore, though we have no doubt of the transformation of modern civilisation into Socialism, yet we cannot foretell definitely what form the social life of the future will take, any more than a man living at the beginning of the commercial period—say Sir Thomas More or Lord Bacon—could foresee the development of that period in the capitalism of to-day.

Nevertheless, though we cannot realise positively the life of the future, when the principle of real society will be universally admitted, and applied in practice as an everyday matter, yet the negative side of the question we can all see, and most of us cannot help trying to fill up the void made by the necessary termination of the merely militant period of Socialism. The present society will be gone, with all its paraphernalia of checks and safeguards: that we know for certain. No less surely we know what the foundation of the new society will be. What will the new society build on that foundation of freedom and co-operation?—that is the problem on which we can do no more than speculate.

No doubt some transition, the nature of which will be determined by circumstances, will take place between the present state of things,

¹ The mediæval painters naively accept this position—*e.g.*, in representing the life of a saint of the second century, they dress the characters in a costume but little altered from that of their own period; and it is worth noting that they gave up the attempt at archeology altogether with the more familiar characters—a carpenter or blacksmith will be just the craftsman that they had before their eyes every day; whereas the emperors, giants, and so forth, they do try to clothe in imaginative raiment. A further illustration may be given in the art of music: works such as Weber's *der Freischütz* or Wagner's *Meister-singers*, which seem to embody the spirit of past ages, nevertheless are in themselves thoroughly modern.

in which the political unit is a nation, and the future, in which a system of federalised communities will take the place of rival nationalities; but as this chapter has to do with the ultimate realisation of the new society rather than with the transitional period, we need not speculate on this point.

We ask our readers to imagine the new society in its political aspect as an organised body of communities, each carrying on its own affairs, but united by a delegated federal body, whose function would be the guardianship of the acknowledged principles of society; it being understood that these two bodies, the township or community and the Federal Power, would be the two extremities between which there would be other expressions of the Federal principle,—as in districts that were linked together by natural circumstances, such as language, climate, or the divisions of physical geography.

It is clear that in such a society what laws were needed for the protection of persons and the regulation of inter-communal disputes, since they could be but the expression of the very root principles of society, would have to be universal, and the central regulating body would be charged with their guardianship, and at a last resort to carrying them out by force. Obviously no community could be allowed to revert to the exploitation of labour of any kind under whatever pretext, or to such forms of reaction as vindictive criminal laws. Such measures if allowed, even as local and spasmodic incidents, would undermine the very foundations of communistic society. This unity in Federation in short, appears to be the only method for reducing complexity in political and administrative matters to a minimum; and of ensuring to the individual, as a unit of society, the utmost possible freedom for the satisfaction and development of his capacities.

As to the methods of labour necessary to the existence and welfare of society, it would have to be co-operative in the widest sense. It would of course be subordinate to the *real* welfare of society; *i.e.*, the production of wares would not be looked upon as the end of society (as the production of *profit-bearing* wares now is), but it would be regarded as the means for the ease and happiness of life, which therefore would never be sacrificed to any false ideas of necessity, or to any merely conventional views of comfort or luxury. For instance, in any society it is desirable that cotton cloth should be produced at the least expenditure of labour, but in a communistic society it would be impossible to condemn a part of the population to live under miserable conditions, conditions in any degree worse than that of others, as in a black country, in order to reduce the expenditure of labour for the community, which would have to pay the price for giving the weavers and spinners, etc., as good a life as anyone else, whatever that price might be.

Again, as to the conventional standard of comfort: we may here quote a good definition of a luxury, as given by a friend, as a piece of goods that the consumer would not have if he had in his own person to pay the full value of the work—*i.e.*, if he had to make it himself, or to sacrifice an amount of his own labour equivalent to the making of it. As, *e.g.*, a lady of the present day would hardly consent to make a Mechlin lace veil for herself, or to pay for the due and proper livelihood of those who do make it; in order that she may have it, numbers of women and girls at Ypres and the neighbourhood must work at starvation wages.

To make the matter of production under Communism clearer let us consider the various kinds of work which the welfare of Communal Society would demand.

First, there would be a certain amount of necessary work to be done which would be usually repellant to ordinary persons; some of this, probably the greater part of it, would be performed by machinery; and it must be remembered that machinery would be improved and perfected without hesitation when the restrictions laid on production by the exigencies of profit-making were removed. But probably a portion of this work at once necessary and repellant could not be done by machinery. For this portion volunteers would have to be relied upon; nor would there be any difficulty in obtaining them, considering that the habit of looking upon necessary labour from the point of view of social duty would be universal, and that now, as then, idiosyncracies would exist which would remove objections to work usually disliked.

Again, the greater part of this work, though not agreeable, would not be exacting on mental capacity, and would entail the minimum of responsibility on those engaged in it. We mention this as compensatory of the disagreeable nature of the work in itself.

As examples of this necessary and usually repellant work, we may give scavenging, sewer-cleaning, coal-hewing, midwifery, and mechanical clerk's work.

It must be remembered again that under our present system a great deal of this kind of work is artificially fostered for the sake of making business for interest-bearing capital, and that the competition for employment amongst the proletariat makes it possible to be so done; whereas in a Communal Society such work would be dispensed with as much as possible. Disagreeable work which a Communal Society found itself saddled with as a survival of past times, and which it found out not to be necessary, it would get rid of altogether.

Secondly, work in itself more or less disagreeable, and not absolutely necessary, but desirable if the sacrifice to be paid for it were not too great. This might be done if it could be made easy by machinery, but not otherwise; it would not be worth while to call for volunteers for the purpose of doing it, since the citizens would then have to make the sacrifice in their own persons. Before we leave the subject of work not generally pleasant, but which is either necessary or desirable, we may again call attention to the existence of idiosyncracies which

would make many people willing to undertake it, and still more to the variety of tastes which are so common that they could not be classed as idiosyncracies, and which would help us out of many difficulties in this respect. There are, for instance, rough occupations involving a certain amount of hardship, which would be acceptable to many persons of overflowing health and strength, on account of the adventure and change which goes with them, and the opportunities which they afford for showing courage and adroitness and readiness; in a word, for the pleasurable exercise of special energies, such as sea-fishing, exploration of new countries, etc. Again, many people have so much love for country life and dealing with animals, that even hard work of this kind would not seem irksome to them. In short, we might go into great lengths on this subject, and every step we took on the road would show that the stimulus to exertion in production is much more various and much more complex than is usually thought in a period like our own, when everything is supposed to be measured by mere cash-payment.

Thirdly, we come to a kind of work which we may well hope will take a much higher position in communal life than it does at present; we mean work that has in it more or less of art; and we should here say that the very foundation of everything that can be called art is the pleasure of creation, which is, or should be felt in every handicraft. That even as things are it is very commonly felt, is proved by the craving that persons have for some occupation for their hands when they are debarred from their usual occupation, as very notably persons in prison. As to the matter of art as an occupation, we may divide it into *incidental* and *substantive* art. Incidental art is that which is subservient to some utilitarian function; as the designed form or added ornament in a knife or a cup, which is subservient to the cutting or drinking use of those things. What is commonly called decorative art comes under this heading. Substantive art is that which produces matters of beauty and incident for their own sakes, such as pictures or music, which have no utilitarian purpose. As to incidental art Commercial Society has nearly destroyed it by divorcing its exercise and the reward for it from the products which it should beautify; it has divided the producers of an ornamented article of use into the maker of the utilitarian article, the maker of the ornament for it, and the designer of the ornament, the two former being mere machines, and the latter being the producer of a marketable ware to be forced on the public in the same way that other wares are forced on them by commerce. In a Communal Society this division of labour will be recognised as impossible in a piece of goods of which the art of design formed an integral part, and that art itself will only be exercised in answer to an undoubted and imperative demand of the public; there will be no occasion to force a demand for it.

As to the substantive art that must always be on the surface the product of individual labour and skill, although at bottom it is a social product as much as or even more than any other production; since the capacity of the most original artist or author is really the result of tradition, and his work is the expression of a long social development of tendencies concentrated in the special individual.

A question may occur to some as to the probable future of the races at present outside civilisation. To us it seems that the best fate that can befall them is that they should develop themselves from their present condition, uninterfered with by the incongruities of civilisation. Those of them will be the happiest who can hold civilisation aloof until civilisation itself melts into Socialism, when their own natural development will gradually lead them into absorption in the great ocean of universal social life.

E. BELFORT BAX AND WILLIAM MORRIS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FREE SPEECH IN DANGER.

SOME time since I informed our readers that the Bethnal Green Conservative Association were endeavouring, by underhand means, to suppress all meetings in Victoria Park. Since then they have presented a humble petition, supposed to contain 2,000 signatures, praying that the meetings should be stopped because of the "blasphemous and seditious language used," the real reason being that for the last three or four years the Socialist League has made great progress there. I recommended at the time that the Rads and Reds should combine to oppose this move, but thus far the only persons who have interested themselves in the matter are the Socialists, who usually protest against it at their meetings, and the National Sunday League, who are getting up a counter petition. As to the Radicals of the neighbourhood, they are so busy with G. Howell, M.P., holding meetings against Early Closing, that they have no time, I suppose, to interest themselves about such a paltry thing as the right of public meeting (except when it is made a party political question as in Ireland). As the meetings in the Park have hitherto been very orderly, the Tories have hired some roughs to try and upset us. Last Sunday they appeared on the scene shouting that they were brave and bold Englishmen, and that we were a lot of d— foreigners. We managed to get one on the platform, when he said that he hated all foreigners, had fought seven years for his Queen and country, that he would sooner starve than work for a foreigner, that he had had the chance of seducing the daughter of a German in Green Street, but he hated all Germans so much that he refused it. He was answered by the lecturer, and an English comrade pointed out to him that if the foreigners worked for their living they were quite as good as an Englishman. The Tory reply was a blow on the jaw, with the exclamation, "I'm an Englishman, I am!" Our comrades should be on their guard, as the evident intention is to make a scene at our meetings as an excuse for suppressing us as disorderly persons. I hear that all the gardeners at Victoria Park have received orders to keep themselves in readiness to act as park constables; they are all to have a cap but not a full uniform. This move evidently means something.

T. R. COOPER, Homerton.

'THE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALISM MADE PLAIN.'

(By Frank Fairman; with Preface by William Morris. W. Reeves, 185 Fleet Street, E.C. 1s.; cloth, 2s. 6d.)

THE author of this plain and ably written little book has, in accordance with its title, supplied to a considerable extent that which has long been wanting—namely, a plain statement of the principles of Socialism. His definition of Socialism "as a criticism of the present system of society" will be demurred to by those who think that to be of any value it should consist of a thoroughly mapped out in full detail system of society.

To us the most attractive part of the book is its treatment of the moral basis of Socialism; and this put shortly is "that every human being has equal rights of life, the pursuit of happiness, and the use of his faculties, so long as he does not exercise them to the detriment of others." The impossibility of this in a society (as, for example, the present) which maintains the right of a section of it to possess itself of the whole of the means of subsistence, thereby condemning those—the masses, the dispossessed—to a life of slavish toil, is reasoned out in the most forcible manner. Dealing with the plea that is so often urged that priority of possession confers the right upon the possessor to hold and use for all time *his* possession as he pleases, it is contended that there is nothing consistent with the principles of justice to warrant such an assumption. The author deals with this assumption as follows:

"Supposing a ship to be wrecked in mid-ocean, and the crew and passengers to escape in boats to some uninhabited island. Has the first boatload the right to claim possession of the island, and to make those who come in the second and subsequent boats work for them upon it at mere subsistence wages? No one would dream of giving assent to such a proposal. Then, if another ship be wrecked off the island the following week, are the survivors of that ship to be in any worse position, and if so, why? It would, perhaps, be dangerous to carry the illustration much farther, because we should be getting nearer and nearer to the actual facts, in which the bias of self-interest and long established custom would come in to distort the judgment, and the answer would probably be, 'The crew of a wreck the second or third year could not have any rights to the land of the island at all; or else it would follow that those wrecked on the shores of one country would equally have a right to share in the land of England, and that cannot be just.' In reply to such an argument, I can only say that he who seeks to know or do what is right does not concern himself with the unpleasantness of the consequences; or, to be most exact, to the truly just man the only consequences which are pleasant are those which are founded upon justice, and that if priority alone gives the right of possession, the first boatload must be the only rightful owners of the island. A few minutes, or hours, or days, or months can, in equity, make no difference. In fact, the only solution of this problem which leaves no room for quibble or dispute is, that the globe belongs rightfully at any given moment to the whole of the inhabitants living upon it at that moment—neither to those who have had their turn and have gone hence, to be seen no more, nor to those who are yet to be born. That in short, as Mr. Herbert Spencer puts it, 'All men have equal rights to the use of the earth.'"

The question of the remuneration of special ability, geniuses, etc., so often raised, is happily handled:

"If it be said that without the stimulus of more than ordinary reward men would not undertake responsible positions in the management of large establishments, would not invent machines, or paint pictures, or write good literature, the answer is twofold. First, the wildest Communist or Anarchist has never yet suggested that fame and reputation shall be thrown into a common stock and divided amongst everybody in equal shares, and therefore nothing can prevent men who perform responsible duties, or confer benefits in other ways upon the public, from obtaining a special reward in the esteem and honour in which they are held. As a plain matter of fact, a great deal of very onerous work is performed gratuitously, and the greatest successes have been achieved both in the sphere of invention and in that of artistic work (literary or pictorial), either from the desire for fame, or from the inherent necessity which genius is under of creating something, whether it produce a reward or not. But secondly, if without extra money payment work of a superior character cannot be obtained, the necessary price will have to be paid, and in such cases it can be paid without infringing on any sound social principle."

In the chapter on "The Economic Basis," it is demonstrated that the larger part of the wealth enjoyed by the rich is produced by the workers "day by day and year by year." "It is not the fact, as many people seem to imagine, that the rich have acquired their wealth once and for all"; whereas they are simply drawing upon the labour of toilers day by day and year by year for their means of life. "A man with an income of £1000 a-year from the funds is said to possess £30,000, because he is credited with that amount in the books of the Bank of England; but this is only the banker's way of stating the fact that he is entitled to draw £500 every half year." Upon what? The labours of the toiling millions.

The illusion that so many labour under that the rich do not tax labour is well exposed.

Luxury and misery, rich and poor, are relative states, the luxury of the rich being dependent upon the misery of the poor.

The contention of the Socialist is that all material wealth is produced by human labour plus the aid of natural forces; and that it therefore follows that those who do not labour must of necessity live upon those who do.

Separate chapters are devoted to the consideration of "Current Economic Fallacies," "Objections," "Quack Remedies for Poverty." This last-named deals with Religion, Malthusianism, Nationalisation of the Land, Co-operation, etc.; and "The Methods and Future of Socialism" bringing to a conclusion the handiest, and, for its size, comprehensive book yet written on the subject.

H. A. B.