



OFFICES: 24 GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.

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

The COMMONWEAL is the official organ of the Socialist League; but, unless definitely so announced by the Editors, no article is to be taken as expressing in more than a general way the views of the League as a body. In accordance with the Manifesto and Statement of Principles of the League, the COMMONWEAL is an exponent of International Revolutionary Socialism. On minor differences of opinion the widest freedom of discussion is maintained. As all articles are signed, no special significance attaches to their position in the paper.

Articles and letters dealing with any phase of the social problem are invited and will meet with earnest consideration. They must be written on one side of the paper only, and accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication. MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope accompanies them.

Advertisements can only be inserted if unobjectionable in all particulars. Scale of charges and special quotations may be obtained from the Manager.

SUBSCRIPTIONS, including postage:—For British Islands, Europe, United States, and Canada, a year, 6s.; six months, 3s.; three months, 1s. 6d. For Australia, New Zealand, Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal, and the Argentine Republic, a year, 8s.; six months, 4s.; three months, 2s. For India, Ceylon, China, Hong Kong, and the Straits Settlements, a year, 10s.; six months, 5s.; three months, 2s. 6d.

Subscribers who receive a RED WRAPPER are thereby reminded that their subscriptions have expired and must be renewed immediately if they wish to continue to receive COMMONWEAL.

SPECIAL RECRUIT SUBSCRIPTIONS.—To aid in spreading our principles, the following largely reduced terms are offered to those who obtain new subscribers: Two new yearly subscriptions for British Islands, etc., 10s. 6d.; for Australia, etc., 15s.; for India, etc., 19s. Five new subscriptions: For British Islands, etc., 25s.; for Australia, etc., 37s. 6d.; for India, etc., 47s. 6d. Specimen copies will be sent on receipt of postage.

All P. O. orders should be made payable to Post-office, 42 Drury Lane, W.C.

Remittances from abroad must be made by International Money Order.

Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday August 13.

ENGLAND Belfast Weekly Star Justice Labour Tribune Norwich—Daylight People's Press Hallway Review Sozial Demokrat Seafaring The Whirlwind Worker's Friend	Chicago (Ill)—Vorbote Cincinnati (O.) Volks-Anwalt Detroit—Der Arme Teufel Philadel.—Knights of Labour Paterson Labour Standard S. F.—Coast Seamen's Journal San Francisco Arbeiterzeitung Pacific Union San Diego—Calif. Nationalist Valley Falls (Kan.)—Lucifer	SPAIN Madrid—El Socialista Barcelona—El Productor
INDIA Bankipore—Behar Herald	FRANCE Paris—Bourse du Travail Paris—La Revolte Le Parti ouvrier La Revue Europeenne Charleville—L'Emancipation Lille—Le Cri du Travailleur Rouen—Le Salarist	PORTUGAL Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
UNITED STATES New York—Der Sozialist New York—Truthseeker New York—Freiheit Freie Arbeiter Stimme Twentieth Century Phrenological Journal, etc. United Irishman Volkszeitung Bakers' Journal Workmen's Advocate Boston—Woman's Journal Boston—Liberty Investigator Buffalo—Arbeiter-Zeitung	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Halberstadt, Sonntags-Zeitung	GERMANY Berlin—Volks Tribune Halberstadt, Sonntags-Zeitung
	AUSTRIA Vienna—Arbeiter-Zeitung Brunn—Arbeiterstimme	HUNGARY Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
	DENMARK Copenhagen—Arbejderen	SWEDEN Malmo—Arbetet Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
	WEST INDIES Cuba—El Productor	CAPE COLONY Cape Times
	ARGENTINE REPUBLIC Buenos Ayres—Vorwärts	GREECE Socialists
	ITALY Milan—Il Fascio Operaio	

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 mastering them; they were so no longer; they were working for other people, driven by competition to sell themselves at a poor price in the market. In short, they had become 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 instruments of a timid scanty commerce. If they could have 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 sow the seed of her decay and final destruction; she was forced to develop the power of Labour to the utmost; 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 do not supersede it, such as the grist-mill, the potter's wheel, the lathe, the simple loom, the crane, etc.; that 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 grow towards manhood at 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 organising. Therefore, set him, the single man, at doing one small portion of that work, and you can soon dispense with almost all his intelligence, while at the same time you will quicken the habit of his hand, his mechanical power, prodigiously; in short, 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 properly built up. This was the work of the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth it was complete, and the unit of labour was no longer a single man but a group of men.

Commerce was now, one would think, as well provided 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 that marvellous series of inventions, which one would 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 new and enormously rich middle-class, and multiply the working population many times over 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 briefly told tale is over now, 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 is to make the factory itself the machine, 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 human life, production to wit, one thing to do as long as 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 well fulfilled their purpose; but though they have in that process seized hold of the bodies of the hard-working ones, the wage-slaves, though the factory has their bodies in its grip, it has not got hold of their intelligence, and does not want it, nay, sedulously keeps it out. 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, so that there should be no classes! In that case would not life 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 anxious seeking for toil, and the need for accepting the sickening burden. Surely that is so. Surely there is nothing in the machines 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 civilised world in the days of the late Roman Republic, and the Absolutist Empire which followed it. What is its condition now that we have gone through chattel-slavery and serfdom to wage-slavery? It can be told nearly in the same words.

A privileged class partly composed of a landed nobility, partly of a money-bag aristocracy; a parasite class, ministering to their pleasures and their corruption, drinking of their cup, eating of their dish, flattering them and flattered by them but despised by them, and (woes me!) sharing in their crime of living on the misery of the poor. And those by whose labour they live? A huge population of miserable and hopeless labourers, to whom are superadded a crowd of paupers, far

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN SOCIETY.

(Concluded from p. 253.)

THUS fell the Society of the Middle Ages, by Capitalism establishing itself on the ruins of Feudality, and the rise of a middle-class who were either parasites of the nobility, themselves become commercial, trading on the grossest monopolies, and exacting rack-rent, and practically doing the state no service—partly parasites of the nobility, or partly employers living on the profit wrung out of workmen employed at a very low rate of wages. I have been giving the story of the change 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 stiff political demarcations gave rise to most horrible wars, which reduced the peasants to the last stage of misery, hampered new-born commerce, and in the long run ruined 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 Year's 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 manufacture began to alter; and that 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 had to be

less joyous than the old Roman ones, fed by the fears, the remorse—the charity we call it—of the rich; and a few, a very few, free workmen, who as they work not for the workers, but the idle, must be turned back again to herd with the crowd of parasites aforesaid. Who can dare to say that this is not true of our society? And how does it differ from that of Roman corruption? Can its end be otherwise then—or worse?

Remember this, that in the days of that Roman corruption there was valiancy outside it which was ready to help the then world by destruction and new life combined; its enemies were the friends of the world, and were as good in their way as the early classical peoples had been in theirs, and I say they were outside that society, but at hand for its regeneration. All that the last two thousand years have used up; there is nothing outside civilisation that we can turn to for new birth; whatever there is to help us must come from within.

How are we to get at that? you will say. The answer to that question is the fact that we admit that the workers of to-day are wage-slaves. Those that feel themselves slaves must have been driven to desire freedom. But, again, what is the freedom which we desire? For the word has been used so often that men have forgotten its meaning. I think the answer is the freedom to develop our capacities to the utmost without injuring our neighbours. And how can that be done? By each of us working for the welfare of the whole of which we each form a part, and feeling sure that only so can we each of us fare well. Shall we not then have to give up a great deal in order to reach this point? Yes, we who are trying to bring people to that point will have to, but when people have reached it, they, when Socialism is realised, will turn round and find that their loss has only been imaginary. The rich man will have lost riches, *i.e.*, dominion over others, and find that he is happy; the intellectual man will have given up his claim to be worshipped by the masses, and will find that he is understood by them and loved by them—and the poor man, what has he to give up? He will have to give up his chance of becoming rich—a valuable possession truly—and he will find that he is not rich, but wealthy; that is, that he has whatever a man healthy in mind and body can wish for, and that poverty has become an evil dream but half remembered.

In short, even now, while the realisation of Socialism, though it is already going on, is neither desired nor understood by most men, the mere breath and rumour of its coming can at least hold out to true men who will join our ranks one gift at least—that they shall be glad to live and not afraid to die. And is that not a wonderful contrast to the spirit of the life of those who are still living placidly, because ignorantly, amidst the dishonesty of our present society? wherein how many there are, and those not always the poorest or most ignorant, but men of culture, men of genius, who do at once hate life and fear death. Friends, join us in helping to throw off this bugbear, so that you may be no longer wage-slaves or their masters, or their masters' parasites. So shall we be our own Goths, and at whatever cost break up again the new tyrannous Empire of Capitalism. WILLIAM MORRIS.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CONFERENCE.

AN 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: Autonomie Club, Berner Street Club, East London Anarchist-Communist Group, Gleichheit Club, Hull Freiheit Club, Freedom Group, Italian, French, and Scandinavian Groups, Knights of Liberty Group, Sheffield Socialist Society, and the West-end Anarchist-Communist Group; and the following Branches of the Socialist League—North London, Hammersmith, Streatham, East London, North Kensington, South London, 'Commonweal,' Leicester, Norwich, Oxford, and Yarmouth.

The Conference having assembled, Kitz, 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 quasi-constitutional official. 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 undersigned were appointed Secretaries, and the Conference was constituted.

The first question on the agenda for discussion was—

"To secure United International Action on the part of the Revolutionary Party in the event of a European crisis, so that the Cause be not injured by indecision in such 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 together. As to what he would do "in the event of a crisis," he would do his best to get the groups called together for consultation; but as to preliminary steps he should form himself into a committee of one. In the event of a crisis at home, the first thing to do was to fire the slums and get the people into the West-end mansions. In the event of a crisis abroad, the first thing to be done was to prevent help to foreign capitalists being sent from here.

Cores thought that for example in the Leeds business strong revolutionary placards might have been issued and meetings called in the neighbouring towns, 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. Workmen understood unflinching propaganda better than theoretic discussions.

Kitz said our chief enemies, strange to say, were amid the dregs of the populace. We were largely to blame for this, because of the academic mode in which the propaganda had been carried on. We should preach to the thieves, the paupers, and the prostitutes. The Christians already reached them by their emotional superstition; we might do so by preaching heaven here on earth. The first act of the Revolution ought to be to open the prison doors.

Charles (Sheffield) was sure the spirit of revolt would spread here as well as abroad. Leeds showed this. The very children looted the little provision shops for their fathers who were fighting in the streets. The women collected stones for the men to throw. If we only spread ourselves a bit 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 assuring combined international action had been often discussed. The authoritarian solution was to have committees everywhere. The committees were always too late or ill-informed, and consequently the movement was paralysed. Another system was to renounce all system. The results of this course were no better. By all means trust to individual initiative, but let every individual have a clear idea of what he should do, without necessity for any word of command. To establish an initiative of this kind the individual must know the strength behind him. 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 comrades. For practical purposes, too, we should distinguish future plans from present action. For instance, as to the future, we might be either Communists or Collectivists; but both schools of Anarchists were at one as to what was to be done immediately. Each school was determined to seize property and put it in common by means of a tumultuous revolution. Why should not the two schools agree together, so long as the Revolution was yet to be made? Let us urge the people to seize property and go and dwell in the mansions of the rich; do not let us paralyse our efforts by discussions as to the future. Some organisation was desirable. There was an authoritarian system of organisation, which encouraged spies and accustomed 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 Democrats or the politicians. In all things we went from one exaggeration to another before finding the mean. It was so in discussing the problem of how to make the Revolution. At one time Anarchists had abandoned trade-unions and strikes, and thought of nothing but making the Revolution by force. Then we found the bourgeois too strong for us upon this ground, and after the great Dock Strike we began to fancy that the General Strike would do everything. A strike, however, was not the Revolution, but only an occasion to make it. The General Strike would be good if we were ready to make use of it at once by immediate military action, whether by barricades or otherwise.

After Malatesta's speech the Conference adjourned at 1.30 for dinner. Upon resumption of business at 3 p.m.,

Ogden (Oxford) said that it would be very indiscreet, as we had no pretensions to be prophets, for us to lay down laws as to what any individual should do or as to what the future society should be like. We could at any rate here to-day make doubters understand that we were at war with the present society. What should be our immediate practical action? He answered, to bring into existence elements out of which the Revolution would be made. Natural leaders there must be, but do not let us make gods—Gladstones or Bradlaugh—of them. That was what we were in revolt against.

Pearson (Freedom Group) said that we must know what we were to put in place of the present system. The Social Democrats were revolutionists, but we could never work with them because they would not abolish authority. The Social-Democratic system was as bad as the present one. Coercion in any shape—dictating to people what was right and what was wrong—was bad. Our organisations in the past had gone wrong by electing people to do our work. We should recognise individuality. We should get into harmony with those with whom we could work and whom we could trust. For example, we had got to make it unsafe to send English soldiers to put down rioters and revolters elsewhere. This should be done by individual guerilla warfare. Don't let us try to organise the Revolution upon fixed lines beforehand, and bring people into the streets to be shot down. The Commune was ruined by councils and governors.

Kent (Sheffield) spoke of the impending colliery strike. Leaders would be required to prevent people acting all together in mobs and to utilise them individually. We wanted to know where the gatling guns and other instruments of destruction were kept, so that we might find them when wanted. So we wanted to know where the storehouses of food and clothing were, that we might take them.

Bordes said that whenever the people had conquered any advantage, it had been by means of individual initiative. It was so in the great French Revolution. At the time of the Commune, too, people did not wait for the Central Committee, but acted for themselves. Organisations of every kind had only sold the people. The thing to be done was to show the producers that everything that existed was false, and to put into their hands the means of getting rid of their masters.

Miss Lupton believed in assembling the people in the streets; only by teaching them together could we infuse courage into them. Revolt, too, was generated in this way, as fire by the sharpening of flint against flint. There must be leaders—(some cries of "No!")—but they must arise when the time came. Leadership was necessary—(renewed dissent)—but we must not plan it. We must not make a trade of it; only we must be ready to utilise it when necessary.

Casey suggested that we should stick to what he called the basic line of this discussion, *viz.*, that our Revolution was a Revolution against property. He thought Miss Lupton's views of leadership somewhat dangerous.

Louise Michel said that the General Strike was the Revolution. In the Revolution there was no Group, no League,—only Humanity. We should not be always talking; we should act. By action the Revolution would be begun; all would understand action. In France, too, there had been too much talking. Comrades have endeavoured to make propaganda before the law courts, but they had only made themselves drunk with their own words and moved no one. The 1st of May showed they had been working on wrong lines.

Wess thought the result of the discussion was that personal and local initiative was the best means to our end. He also thought that we should not depend upon bourgeois papers for news, but upon our own journals and personal information.

The Conference then proceeded to discuss the second question on the agenda, *viz.*:

"To determine the best methods of propaganda."

With this question was also considered the following suggestion from the Council of the Socialist League:

"To push on the Cause by the advocacy of a General Strike and Non-Payment of Rent."

H. Davis, reverting to the previous discussion for a moment, spoke against