



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.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CORRESPONDENTS who order literature should prepay postage, or state if they wish their parcels to be sent per rail or carrier, "carriage forward." To prevent inconvenience, subscribers and friends will please note that the following pamphlets are out of print:—Useful Work v. Useless Toil—Aims of Art—Address to Trades Unions—Organised Labour. These will shortly be reprinted. Speeches of the Chicago Anarchists now in the press. L. H. (Manchester).—'Socialism in England,' by Sydney Webb (Sonnenschein, 12, Paternoster Square; price 2s. 6d.) is probably the work you want.

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Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday June 4.

ENGLAND	FRANCE	HOLLAND
Justice	Boston—Woman's Journal	Hague—Recht voor Allen
London—Freie Presse	Investigator	Middelburg, Lichten Waarheid
Labour Tribune	Nationalist	BELGIUM
Norwich—Daylight	Buffalo—Arbeiter-Zeitung	Antwerp—De Werker
Railway Review	Chicago (Ill)—Vorboten	Ghent—Vooruit
Rochdale Observer	Cincinnati (O.) Volks-Anwalt	ITALY
Sozial Demokrat	Detroit—Der Arme Teufel	Milan—Il Fascio Operaio
Unity	Philadelphia—United Labour	GERMANY
Worker's Friend	S.F. Coast Seamen's Journal	Berlin—Volks Tribune
INDIA	Paterson Labour Standard	AUSTRIA
Bankipore—Behar Herald	Anarchist	Brunn—Volksfreund
UNITED STATES	FRANCE	DENMARK
New York—Truthseeker	Paris—La Revolte	Social-Demokraten
New York—Der Sozialist	Paris—Bourse du Travail	Copenhagen—Arbejderen
New York—Freiheit	Le Parti ouvrier	SWEDEN
Labour Advocate	Le Proletariat	Stockholm, Social-Demokraten
Twentieth Century	Little—Le Cri du Travailleur	Malmö—Arbetet
Volkszeitung	Lyon—L'Action Sociale	

ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY.

Most of those into whose hands this paper will fall know that as the organ of the Socialist League the *Commonweal* advocates abstention from Parliamentary action; that the Socialist League neither puts forward candidates, nor advises its members to vote for this that or the other candidate; that the readers of these columns will indeed find Parliament mentioned in them, but never with respect, and most commonly only to point the moral of the corruption of these latter days of capitalism. Our policy is, in short, abstention from all attempts at using the constitutional machinery of government, whereas

to some Socialists this seems the only means of bringing us to the verge of the Social Revolution. Now this policy of abstention seems to some mere folly, and perhaps to others seems inexplicable. Let us, then, try to explain it, and leave others to call us fools if they needs must after having listened to our explanation.

What is the purpose of Socialist propaganda? Surely it intends to make it clear to all the working-classes that society (so-called) as it exists to-day, is founded on the robbery of the "lower" classes by the "upper," of the useful by the useless, of the many by the few; that so long as this privileged robbery goes on, those who do all the useful work that is done will be constantly deprived of the refinements of life which are supposed to make the difference between the civilised man and the savage; while their lives will be much more laborious and much more pleasureless than the lives of most savages. In short, thorough discontent with their position and a sense of its unfairness is the first thing we want to impress on the minds of the workers.

Next, we want to make it clear to them that this position of slavery, this unfairness which makes them so wretched and so bitter, is not a necessary condition for those who live by producing the wealth of the country (that is, the only people in it who have a chance of being honest); that these working-men and women could still work, live, and be useful if they were working for each other, that is to say, for their friends and not for their privileged masters, i.e., their enemies.

Again, we have to make it clear to the workers that this privilege of a few to compel the many to live miserably, is merely an explanation of the phrase, *The institution of private property*; that he who declares that he wishes to abolish privilege means to say that he wishes to abolish the Institution of private property; that he who defends the Institution of private property defends privilege, the gross inequality of rich and poor, the consequent misery of all genuine workers, and the consequent degradation of people of all classes. Let it be clearly understood that only two systems of society are possible, SLAVERY and COMMUNISM; all who know the A B C of Socialism know that this is so. Communism or the abolition of the individual ownership of property is our aim, the aim of all real Socialists.

Will Parliament help us towards the accomplishment of this aim? Take another question as an answer to that first question. What is the aim of Parliament? The upholding of privilege; the society of rich and poor; the society of inequality, and the consequent misery of the workers and the degradation of all classes.

Clearly if this is its aim, its reason for existence, it will only exchange its aim for ours if it be compelled to do so, or deluded into doing so.

Can it be forced? Well, Parliament is the master of the Executive; that is to say, of the brute force which compels the useful classes to live miserably; it will use that brute force to compel those classes into submission as long as it dares. When it no longer dares, it will practically no longer exist. Now I, for my part, say as I have always said, that in the last act of the Revolution the Socialists may be obliged to use the form of Parliament in order to cripple the resistance of the reactionists by making it formally illegal, and so destroying the power of the armed men on whom the power of the parliament and the law-courts really rests. But this can only come in the last act; when the Socialists are strong enough to capture the parliament in order to put an end to it, and the privilege whose protection is its object, the revolution will have come, or all but come. Meantime, it is clear that we cannot compel Parliament to put an end to its own existence; or, indeed, to do anything which it does not believe will conduce to the stability of Privilege, or the slavery of the workers.

Well, then, can we jockey Parliament into Socialism, into Communism? It seems to me a most hopeless enterprise. We shall not find it difficult, perhaps, to put so much pressure upon it as to make it pass measures for "the amelioration of the lot of the working classes." But what will that mean save the "dishing" of the Socialists?—who, if they do not take care, will find that instead of using Parliament, they will be used by it. Let us remember, too, that the knowledge of Socialism is growing with tremendous rapidity, and that even M.P.'s and their wirepullers will soon get to know what it means, and will then strain their ingenuity to take the sting out of any measures that look Socialistic on the outside; or at last, and perhaps before long, will stiffen themselves up into mere rejection of anything that looks like Socialism. The failure of the attempt to capture the *Star* for the parliamentary Socialists ought to be a sufficient lesson to them of the power of the reactionists, Liberal as well as Conservative, and the way in which they will refuse to be driven into a corner.

Well, then, if we cannot force Parliament to declare its function of safeguarding privilege at an end, when it is obviously in vigorous life; if we cannot jockey it into furthering the very thing which it hates most, and has most reason to hate—Socialism, to wit—what can we do? "Nothing," say our parliamentary friends. I cannot see that. Is it nothing to keep alive and increase discontent with the vile slavery of to-day? Is it nothing to show the discontented that they can themselves destroy that slavery? Is it nothing to point out to them what lies beyond the period of struggle, and how workers can be happy when they are not robbed of all the pleasure of life by the idlers that live upon their labour?

Moreover, the events of the last twelve months are producing a different spirit in the mass of the workers, and they are now beginning to learn how to combine in earnest. It is now far more hopeful than it was five years ago to turn their attention from the Parliament of their masters to their own organisation. In short, the true weapon of the workers as against Parliament is not the ballot-box but the *Boycott*. Ignore Parliament; let it alone, and strengthen your own

organisations to deal directly with your masters in the present, and to learn how to manage your own affairs both now and for the future, and keep steadily in mind, and work for, the day when you will have to use the great weapon which your own wretched position of unrewarded toil puts into your hands, the weapon of the *general strike*. See to this, and let politicians elect politicians; let the upper and middle classes by themselves choose for themselves members of the Committee for the Continuance of Slavery, which should be the name of the House of Commons, and you will see what terror you will inspire in the hearts of the canting hypocrites who call themselves statesmen. A terror which will be fully warranted by events; for such an anti-parliamentary boycott will show your determination to be free, and will give you the instrument of attaining your freedom.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

FRANCE.

Republican France has rendered to despotic Russia the service of arresting a number of Russian Socialists who were engaged, as it appears, in some scientific experiments destined to advance the progress of chemistry. The Czar and his Government don't like chemistry, and the pseudo-republican ministry of democratic France must, of course, now and then do something, however contemptible it may be, to preserve their alliance with autocratic czardom. Hence the arrest of comrades Reichstein (man and wife), Feodorovna, Bromberg, Nakatchiz, Stepanoff, Katchinzen, Peploff, Wolgrine, Lavremius, Atschiazzi, Diemski, and Mendelsohn. The police have also searched the apartments of our esteemed comrade Peter Lavroff, but without success. According to French law, the possession of such engines as those found in the lodgings of some of the arrested Socialists would bring them within the power of the criminal code. It is very strange indeed that people should not be allowed to study chemistry as much as they like.

The French Possibilists have sustained a great loss through the death of their most prominent leader, the veteran Chabert, member of the Municipal Council of Paris, who died a few days ago, at the age of seventy-two. He took an active part in the revolutionary movements of February and June 1848, June 1849, December 1851, and of the Commune of 1871.

The fifth issue of the monthly review, *L'Idee nouvelle* (The New Idea) has appeared at Paris, and we are requested by the editors to note the contents of the May number. Here they are: The First of May; The German Bully, by Chirac; The Relativist Altruist Socialists, by Jac; The Victims of Work, by J. Dormoy; Gambling, by Caron; The Social Republic; Socialist Ephemerides; Evolution and Darwinism, by Rendoz; Economic and Social Enquiry, by Bopartz; Literary Review, by Lefebvre; Belgian Correspondence, by Herriou; Ascanio, by Gervaise; International Socialist Gallery: Edouard Vaillant, by Pasquin.

Comrades August Chirac, one of the editors of *L'Egalité*, and Chaumien, publisher of the same paper, who had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a heavy fine for having incited to rebellion, have now been acquitted by a superior court.

GERMANY.

The Socialist muzzle-laws are not to be renewed, as our readers know, but it seems that the magistrates are inclined to replace them, as well as they possibly can, by increasing the dose of "jail" for those who happen to fall within the power of the penal code. A fortnight ago Karl Schulze, editor of the *Thüringer Tribune*, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment for having "offended" the Director of the Royal Gun-manufacture at Erfurt, by saying that he had reduced the wages of his workers. At Zwickau, a labourer was found guilty of having libelled a director of a coal-pit by asserting that he had committed a breach of confidence, and he got one year's imprisonment for it!

The strike funds of the lightermen at Hamburg, together with the whole of the papers of their committee, have been seized by the police. The money found only amounted to some two hundred marks. The strike is now regarded as at an end.

Through combination of the manufacturers of Maingau, ten thousand workers, engaged in the shoe-materials trade, have been thrown out of work, and relief is badly wanted. Friedrich Weinreich, Herronstrasse, 46, Offenbach on the Main, has volunteered to receive any assistance that may be sent. At Gera, three thousand weavers have also received notice to quit the works, because they refused to submit to new regulations which they considered as being unfair and oppressive. Fifteen thousand of their fellow-workers in the town and neighbourhood have resolved to stop work "on principle."

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY.

On the 28th of last month the first issue of a weekly Socialist organ, entitled *Dělnický Listy*, has appeared at Vienna, under the editorship of comrade Joseph Tobola. The offices of the paper are: VI, Gumperdorferstrasse, 79, Vienna.

From the 1st of June appears, also at Vienna, another working-men's paper, under the title of *Arbeiterschütz* (Protection of Workers), which will be published fortnightly by the Central Committee of the Austrian Relief Societies. The editors intend to deal chiefly with insurance and labour legislation questions. Offices: VI, Gumperdorferstrasse, 64.

BELGIUM.

Several conferences have of late taken place in Belgium. The International Miners' Conference at Jolimont, Province of Hainault, has so far resulted in a considerable success. It has been resolved that a general strike shall be set on foot next May Day. This decision, if the miners stick to it, is certainly a very important one.

Another congress, that of the Belgian Relief Societies, has been held at Ghent, under the auspices of the Executive of the Belgian *Parti ouvrier*. Twenty delegates represented some seventy thousand confederates. It has been decided to create a Federation of all the Relief Societies working under Socialistic principles, and also to hold another conference in September next, for the purpose of examining and discussing the rules and regulations of the new Federation.

A new Socialist paper has appeared at Brussels, under the title of *La*

Réforme Sociale (the Social Reform), and will be issued weekly, with comrade Octave Berger as chief editor. The offices of the paper are: 15, rue des Petits-Carmes. The new venture intends to do popular and conciliatory work in the field of revolutionary, independent, and scientific Socialism. We hope that comrade Berger, who is an acute thinker, will succeed in his task. At any rate, he has our best wishes.

DENMARK.

The stonemasons of Copenhagen are still out on strike, and their energy in the battle has from the very beginning been really astounding. They claim a workday of nine hours and wages at the rate of 34 cents an hour. Five hundred masons have already left Copenhagen, in order to work elsewhere, and so to relieve their fellow-labourers on strike. The committee of the strike, however, finding that outside assistance has become necessary, have issued an appeal for help and solidarity, and ask that all subscriptions may be sent to P. C. Olsen, 22, Romersgade, Copenhagen.

Our friends of the *Fedraheimen* have issued a very good pamphlet of sixty-four pages, entitled "Kann politikken hjelpe oss?" (Can Politics Help Us?), and, of course, the question is answered in the negative. The author of the pamphlet is our comrade R. Steinsvik, one of the editors of the *Fedraheimen*.

ENGLAND.

The East London Communist-Anarchist Group have started the monthly issue of a paper, entitled *The Anarchist Labour Leaf*. The first number contains three articles very well written indeed, and we have no hesitation in saying that this *Leaf* of our East-end comrades deserves to be encouraged and spread as widely as possible. I understand that some three or four thousand copies have been sent *gratis*, and that in future a larger number still will be circulated in the same way, but for that purpose money is of course urgently needed. Those who feel inclined to help the little paper, can enter into communication with comrade H. McKenzie, 12, Basing Place, Kingsland Road, London, E.C.

This week appears, also in London, the first issue of a 20 pp. journal, called *Free Russia*, which contains information for Western Europe concerning the atrocities of Czardom. V. D.

IN AUSTRALIA.

HENRY GEORGE has been here, as you already know, and the visit has done us good in many ways. Not that the profit-hunter of San Francisco is any more on our side now than for a long while past. Oh no! he is even more decorous and modestly but firmly respectable than ever before. But he has been troubling the waters, and we have been fishing therein. Before he came, there had been a good deal of talk about his double-posing campaign as a quick-change artiste, appearing alternately as a Free Trade hack and the "inspiring influence" of the Single Tax, and there were several controversies in the papers, of which we duly took all the advantage we were allowed to. While he was here we heckled him all we could, and the result was that his "arguments" against us got worn too smooth by constant use to pass current any more, and he finally refused to answer us anywhere, or to meet any of us in debate. However, we still managed to keep up a scattering fire of correspondence in different papers, and have also held lectures and debates upon his alleged panacea. I don't think he will ever have much of a following here, whatever he may have elsewhere; not that I should imagine it likely that the Single Tax would ever arouse much enthusiasm in the most eager and soulful breast—it is such a queer and undefined halting-place that those who have once started on the road of progress are not likely to stop short there; for there is nothing to stick to or hold by, and if they didn't go further on they would soon find themselves sliding down again on the back-track. We have published a pamphlet on the subject, which has been having a great run at George's meetings.

On Sunday last (Easter Sunday, April 6th), W. H. McNamara lectured at our rooms on "Henry George and Charles Bradlaugh: their attitude on the Labour Question," and the lecture was well reported in Friday's *Australian Star*. There was a right good audience, as there usually is now, both in numbers and in attention and enthusiasm, who punctuated the various points made by the lecturer with cheers and laughter. After referring to the action of the Trades and Labour Council of New South Wales, in refusing to take any part in the reception of Henry George as "he was no friend of labour," our comrade went on to detail the various phases of "the prophet's" picturesque and varied career, giving chapter and verse for most of his statements, and in all the large audience there wasn't a hand or a heart for George when the record was closed. That is only one meeting, of which I tell you as a sample, because it happens to be the last; the same sort of thing has been going on pretty widely, and has had, and will still more have, far-reaching effects. Bradlaugh was also handled without gloves. I will say there for Australians, that Bradlaugh began to be seen through here even before you on that side woke up to what he was.

But beating Henry George has not been our only work; we have only used him and the stir he made as a means of increasing our propaganda. We have to thank our chief enemy for helping us, at second-hand and reflectively as it were, by helping him. The *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, like its name-sake over your way, a snuffing compound of hollow cant, self-seeking hypocrisy, and ready prostitution for profit's sake, started correspondences on George and the Single-tax, and, following the example of its notorious name-sake, hired penny-a-liners to fight as gladiators on either side in the arena of its correspondence columns. So that it worked up quite a boom, and "everybody" talked of its conversion to the Single-tax. But the *Telegraph* was only playing a game, and it played it pretty low down too. The *Bulletin* comments on the affair in words that some of you at home might think of with profit as well as us:

"The Single-taxers now realise that they have been tricked and deceived. We are not sorry for them. Had their aggregated *crania* contained one grain of common-sense they would not have expected any other result. What—the *Telegraph* go straight for confiscation? What would become of Chairman Carey's mortgages? of Director Robert Sands' land-boom money? of largest Shareholder Gorman's enormous real-property-sales commissions? of Shareholder Walter Hall's Mount Morgan dividends? Did the cranks ever dream that a journal of which Bruce Smith, of the British Liberty and Property Defence League, is a reputed, and land-auctioneer Mills, a certain stockholder, would ever yell boldly for plunder by Act of Parliament, and shriek for legislative sanction to grasp it and smash at one swoop both the major source of its advertising income—land-sale "ads."—and the chief element of its subscription revenue—the pennies of Bill Jones and Tom Smith, who have sunk a life-time's hard-earned savings in a suburban allotment? If they did they are crankier than even we considered them. The Single-taxers merit no sympathy. They