

# THE COMMONWEAL

## The Official Journal of the SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

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WEEKLY; ONE PENNY.

### MONOPOLY.

(Concluded from page 394.)

Now I ask you to conceive of a society in which all sound and sane persons can produce by their labour on raw materials, aided by due tools, a due and comfortable livelihood, and which possesses a sufficiency of raw material and tools. Would you think it unreasonable or unjust that such community should insist on every sane and sound person working to produce wealth in order that he might not burden the community; or, on the other hand, that it should insure a comfortable livelihood to every person who worked honestly for that livelihood, a livelihood in which nothing was lacking that was necessary to his development as a healthy human animal, with all its strange complexity of intellectual and moral habits and aspirations?

Now, further, as to the raw material and tools of the community, which, mind you, are necessary to its existence: would you think it unreasonable if the community should insist that these precious necessities, things without which it could not live, should be *used* and not *abused*? Now, raw material and tools can only be *used* for the production of useful things; a piece of tillage, for instance, is not used by sowing it with thistles and dock and dodder, nor a bale of wool by burning it under your neighbours' window to annoy him; this is abuse, not use, of all these things, and I say that our community will be right in forbidding such abuse.

Again, would it be unreasonable for the community to say that these means of production, if they are to be used and not abused, must be used by those who *can* use them, that is, by all the sane and sound persons engaged in earning their livelihood in concert; that they are to be so used according to fair and natural regulations agreed upon by the whole community in its sane mind; and that, furthermore, since they are to be used by all, they must not be exclusively possessed, *i.e.*, owned by any; because, if any private persons, or groups of such, held the exclusive possession or ownership of them, they could withhold the use of them from those who could use them except on terms which would place the useful persons in a position of inferiority to the useless; in other words they would be their masters, and would impose such a life on them as they chose. Therefore, I say those raw materials and tools would be the property of the whole community, and would be used by every one in it, on the terms that they should repair the waste in them and not engross undue shares of them.

Here, then, is our reasonable community, in which all can produce, all do produce, no one has to pay poll-tax to be allowed to work, that is to live; in which no man need be badly off unless by his own will; a society whose aim it is to make the most of their natural conditions and surroundings for the benefit of each and all of its members. These people I call reasonable men; but they have been called by other names, as breakers of the eighth commandment (or of all the commandments in the lump), brigands, assassins, greedy pillagers, enemies of society,—in a word, Socialists.

Look at another society, and see if we like it better. In it, as in our first one, all sane and sound persons can produce wealth by their labour on raw material aided by tools; nor is there any lack of raw materials and tools in *this* society; yet there the resemblance ceases, for one part of those who could do useful work will not, and consequently another part cannot; some of this second part can get no work to do, and are starved outright; others can get nothing but useless work to do, and thereby help to starve their brethren; and all those who produce anything, as we have seen before, are in an inferior position to those who do not.

The law of nature, that livelihood follows labour, is thus reversed, since those who work hardest get least, and those who work least fare best. Is this reasonable? Yet it is the direct and necessary result of those rights of property which the whole of our army, navy, police, judges, lawyers, parsons, etc., are banded together to sustain by whatever amount of fraud and violence may be necessary for its safeguarding. It is the result of monopoly; for now the field is no longer used only for its primary use, the growing of corn, the feeding of beasts, the building of a house upon it; it is also *abused* by being employed as a rent-squeezing machine for the supposed benefit of an

individual, and the like is the case with the tools of labour; the stored up labour of past generations, the machinery, the means of transit, all these things are no longer used merely as means of production, that has now become their secondary use, which the law does not trouble itself with at all, since it has all its attention turned to its enforcing their abuse (now become their primary use) for the benefit of the owners; their abuse as instruments for squeezing rent, interest, and profit out of the producers.

Those that thus according to the (middle-class) ten commandments are so anxious to prevent what they call theft, are thus the masters—nay, the owners—of all society under our present system; outside them there is nothing whatever but machinery, metal, brutal, and human, for enabling them to produce, not the greatest amount of wealth, but the greatest amount of profit; and when the masters fall short in getting what they consider the due amount of profit produced by this said machinery, they say times are bad, even though the warehouses and granaries are full, and the power of producing wealth with decreasing labour is every day growing. High prices to them and also, unluckily, to their human machines, mean prosperity, because these latter are not in the least in the world rewarded for producing wealth for themselves, but for producing profits for their masters; the destruction of wealth by war and other calamities is good for their profit-grinding, therefore we have war; the waste of labour in all kinds of stupidities and fatuities is good for trade, therefore we have sham literature, sham art, sham enjoyment, newspapers, advertisements, jubilees, and all kinds of disgraces, to help our failing system to totter on a little longer, so that our sons instead of ourselves may have to face the inevitable ruin which, on these terms, must bring about the peace to come.

What help is there out of it all? I have spoken of the workers as the helpless machinery of commerce; and helpless they are as long as they are apathetically accepting their position as mere machinery in the hands of the masters of society; and yet it is they who have to bring about the change, and sweep away monopoly. The capitalists for any radical change are far more helpless than they are, because as capitalists, as a class, they cannot even conceive of any other means of living except as pensioners on others, and it is their accepted duty, nay, their religion, to resist all change in this direction; nor as individuals have they any means of earning their livelihood, if you take away their pensions before you have begun to reconstruct a new world in which they would find a place like other people; it is, therefore, impossible that the change can be made from above to below. No, it is the classes which are necessary to what of real society still hangs together behind the monstrous machinery of monopoly, it is the workers themselves that must bring about the change. And it is at least an incidental purpose of Socialist propaganda that the change should be, if possible, brought about or at least guided by the conscious intelligence of the workers, that it may not be left altogether to the blind forces of hunger, misery, and despair, which the capitalist system is so steadily piling up for its own overthrow. Apart from all the conscious politics, all the pushing this way and that, of semi-extinct Toryism and vague crude democracy, which is undoubtedly paving the way for revolution, the time is coming when the monopoly of the means of production will lose its value, when the employers will begin to cease to employ. Cut-throat competition ever cheapening means of production and exhausting markets on one hand; on the other, the unceasing struggle of the workers to improve their condition at the expense of the capitalists, will make employment for profit more difficult both to get and to give; will, in fact, bring about deadlock and ruin in spite of occasional improvements in trade. But if the workers have learned to understand their position, which means if they have become determined to make the best of the nature which they have so far conquered, in despite of artificial restrictions on labour for the benefit of a class, they need not fear the coming crisis. That very increase in the productivity of labour, which will ruin capitalism, will make Socialism possible, and it cannot be doubted that the progress of the cheapening of production will be quickened prodigiously in the very first days of the new social order, and we shall all find it easy enough to live a very few years after the time when we found it so difficult to make profits.

Nevertheless, it would be disingenuous if I seemed to try to create the impression that the abolition of monopoly—of the artificial restrictions on production—would be plain sailing, that it would come quite peacefully and without strenuous effort of various kinds. Things now going on do not encourage one to think that; hypocrisy where the movement seems weak in power or limited in aim, unscrupulous and relentless repression where it seems threatening and well instructed; no real signs of privilege yielding a jot without compulsion. And you must remember that all our law and government, from Parliament to a County Court, has now got to be just an elaborate defence of that very monopoly which it is our business to clear away, though they by no means began with that. True it is that if the whole class of workers could be convinced on one day or in one year of the necessity of abolishing monopoly, it would pass away like the clouds of night. But the necessities of the miserable, and the aspirations of the intelligent will outrun the slower process of gradual conversion, and the anti-monopolists will find themselves in a position in which they will be forced to try to get hold of the executive in order to destroy it, and thus metamorphose society not in order to govern by it and as they are now governed; in other words, they will have to sweep away all the artificial restrictions that stand in the way of free labour, and they will have to *compel* this step by some means or other. Those who set before them this necessity will doubtless differ at present as to the means whereby this will be done; but they should at least agree, and will agree when the time comes for action, that any means that are means, and are not unhuman, are good to use.

I have then tried to point out to you that the producing or useful class are in an inferior position to the non-producing or useless class; that this is a reversal of the law of nature that bids all to labour in order to live. That this monstrosity is the necessary result of private persons being allowed to treat the matters that are necessary to the fructification of labour as their *property*, and to abuse them by employing them as mere means of compulsion on the worker to pay tribute for leave to live. I have asked you to learn to agree with us Socialists in thinking it necessary to abolish this monopoly, and to combine together for its abolition and the reconstruction of society on the basis of the freedom of labour and the abolition of all privilege. I must add further that no programme is worthy the acceptance of the working-classes that stops short of the abolition of private property in the means of production. Any other programme is misleading and dishonest; it has two faces to it, one of which says to the working-man, "This is Socialism or the beginning of it" (which it is not), and the other says to the capitalist, "This is sham Socialism; if you can get the workers, or part of them, to accept this, it will create a new lower middle class, a buffer, to push in between Privilege and Socialism, and save you, if only for a while.

But this true programme, which means the abolition of privilege, is enough, for it must and will lead directly to full Socialism. It will draw the teeth of the dragon of capitalism, and make a society of equality possible; a society in which, instead of living among enemies in a state of things where there is nothing but a kind of armed truce between all men, we shall live among friends and neighbours, with whom indeed our passions or folly may sometimes make us quarrel, but whose interests cannot really be dissociated from our own. W. M.

### THE RUSKIN READING GUILD.

It is no criticism on Socialism to say that Socialists show some resemblance to schoolboys, in their tendency to despise what is not of their own set. We are apt to be intolerant of independent opinion; and this the more if amongst ourselves, where we most look for uniformity, than in a stranger who followeth not with us. Like the new boy in a school, the latter is kicked and passed by; but a pitched battle ensues upon any division in our own ranks. Some apprehension may be felt for the Cause when at these times difference of opinion, like a sharp knife, slices important sections from the main body of Socialists. Yet is such division not fatal. The cuttings take root and grow. As in vivisection of the hydra of our duck-ponds, the dissevered parts assume the parent form and become new organisations. Perhaps in the end apprehension may prove groundless, since it is with ideas as in organic life—the more crowded the struggle the more rapid is the evolution, and the development more adapted to survive. Only, if *Socialism* is to result from the struggle, superiority should be shown in those characteristics that make for Socialism. In generosity we must excel, and by wisdom vanquish. From sarcasm comes no help; and to those who deal in personalities or scandal, to hear it eagerly, and harshly to howl it, what can result but long ears and a bray? Bitterness and rancour can develop only meanness and distrust, to prolong the era of individualism. Out of these, no Socialism can arise to shed its summer glory on the world. We must be tolerantly calm; then with the spread of wisdom brotherhood will increase. Isolated facts will seem contradictory for a time; but let all be admitted. When the general law is deduced, it will explain them all, and peace will be more secure than before. So long as our contest be friendly, what matters the number of competitors? The more hands digging in the field of truth the better. Presently the trenches shall run together; the traversed space will increase, and the buried treasure unearthed will be the common property of all.

Socialists have no monopoly of wisdom, and their sympathy should go out to all honest enquirers; not omitting such as are going over the old ground once more. Something overlooked may turn up; gold may yet be found in the ore we washed and left; our pyramid may be strengthened by another brick added somewhere at its base. At any

rate it will be better for the searchers, as well as for us, to prove the admitted truth again. "Every mind must know the whole lesson for itself," says Emerson; and we who believe in brotherhood must acknowledge the kinship of every learner.

Amongst the claimants for our sympathy is the Ruskin Reading Guild. Many have tasted the rich fruit that Ruskin offers; others, in their haste, have passed him by. Here, accordingly, is this society making a fresh search of the tree. What they find will be to the former a serviceable reminder; to the latter it may be a revelation. Let not our theories be too narrow to include what treasure they bring. And they, for their part, must assay their metal with the touchstone of free-thought, and cast out the dross from their gold. In their monthly publication, the *Ruskin Reading Guild Journal*, the results of their labour are displayed; and having read a recent number, I am of opinion that they deserve some recognition from us.

In so far as they accept Ruskin's authority for their conclusions, these may be considered worthless—at least to them. Their opinions may be correct; but the coin is borrowed, and they must make it their own. "Re-examine," says Walt Whitman, "everything that you have been told"; and this good advice is good applied to Ruskin as to any other. So only shall the truth be sifted out. But an imitation of Ruskin's literary style—the double-barrelled adjectives, the slippery argument from epithets, the headlong sentiment unseasoned with any salt of humour—are not re-examination. Without the fire of Ruskin's native strength, the writers' enthusiasm sometimes borders on the comic. Yet their earnestness will save them; as a swift horse, it will carry them on to overtake the important truths they are following, which Socialists too will do well to keep in view. For face to face, as so many of our comrades are, with the facts of actual starvation, the elementary needs of the body push into the background all further aspirations; whereby it happens that some, listening to these and not understanding our aims, fear lest Socialism should bury culture in a dismal barrack-like existence. Nay, are there not some Socialists who have no higher ideal? But the Ruskin Reading Guild looks beyond. Its claims for a cultured life are intense, if narrow. Perhaps we must admit them to be narrow. One writer, describing a picture, ignores the æsthetic side of art—the mere delight in lovely form and colour—so enthusiastic is he for the *meaning* conveyed by the artist. Indeed, throughout the book pleasure is rather frowned upon, except as a means of educating "the soul." Education is divided into two sorts, and this on the "Master's" own authority: the false, namely, which delights us, and the true, which makes us unhappy. A rash statement, or over-statement rather; but typical of the energy of its authors, which sometimes carries them beyond the goal of their own meaning. Nevertheless, it is fair criticism to say that in their desire to exalt the "spiritual" they deny the "material." Their culture is to be didactic, and their art symbolical, rather than sensuous and in itself sufficient. One feels disposed to kick at this asceticism, and to claim the widest possible enjoyment for this present life.

Yet is *width* of happiness not all. The quality of it is to be reckoned as well as the quantity; perhaps even before it. I heard one child ask another, "Would you sooner have little and good, or much and not so good?" and the same question is ever before us to be answered. The Ruskinians say, *Good*, if only little; and can we find fault with their decision? Narrowness may be compensated for by depth. If our cup be deep *enough*, who knows but, like Thor's drinking-horn, its bottom may communicate with the infinite ocean? Very intense is the joy aimed at by Ruskin and his followers. In Carlyle's words, they seek "a higher than happiness in *blessedness*." So did the Chicago Anarchists, and none dare call them mistaken.

Much is to be learnt from a study of Ruskin; and for this the Reading Guild is making systematic preparations. Mazzini, too, and Tolstoi and Carlyle are in their programme, as throwing light on the "Master." Pity that the light should be so much of one colour. Why should the faithful doubt? Only the play-actor needs footlights: the hero shows best in the blazing sunshine. Is he truly greater than his worshippers? Then should they call in others to discourse with him—his equals, to whom alone he can fully disclose himself. Whitman, Darwin, Ibsen—what will he say to these, and these to him? The seeds of wisdom are sown in the mind where men like these compare notes.

The Idea is the first cause of progress. Duly the effects follow, clothing the cause in fact, until the ideal becomes actual. To-day's dream is of to-morrow's doing; but the dream is first and the other follows it, as the day follows the sun. The future society will be our creation rather than our manufacture. The thing we really want is mightier than all our conscious efforts to attain it, and it will grow in its own way. The Ruskinians have their ideal, the Collectivists another, and the Anarchists a third. Be very sure that none of these would flourish without some root in fact; and of these, that one which is to survive must never be partial, it must *cover the whole ground*, and possess that fact.

I say *not partial*, for I have little belief in parties. They savour too much of trade, with its advertisements. Let us rather have societies. Your party man has his pill to puff, and public analysis may ruin his profits. Not so the farmer, feeder of men. He knows no advertisements, and loves the light of the sun to enrich his harvest; and like him let us gather in truth, rejoicing in the plenty of our neighbours' fields. It is the true economy, whether applied to corn or to wisdom, to labour together as comrades in useful work; for neither can advertisements feed us, nor wrangling make us wise. Not amongst the advertisers do we class the Ruskin Reading Guild. Though not in the Socialist ranks, they are walking the same road with us, and it is good to give them greeting as we draw near together. G. S.

## IN THE UNITED STATES.

**HURRAH!** We are nearing the land which shall be peopled by the faithful only! What's the reason of all this joy? Well, a big clothing house doing business has given 20,000 copies of Bellamy's book 'Looking Backward.' And to-day I read the following advertisement in the papers:

"WE SHALL GIVE AWAY  
**25,000 BOOKS**  
containing

EDWARD BELLAMY'S LATEST EFFORT,  
**LOOKING FORWARD,**

Which will appear in the December number of the *Nationalist Magazine*,  
Together with an excellent PORTRAIT OF MR. BELLAMY.

These books are for the working men and women entirely, and will be ready for distribution Dec. 2. To avoid the enormous rush that will occur on and after Dec. 2, you can apply at once in person for the book, and it will be mailed to your address in the order in which the applications occur."

But what does this prove? It proves that people over here begin to take so much interest in the social question that books dealing with the subject are supposed by commercial people to serve as a good means of advertising their wares. A pity, however, these gentry do not hit upon better works than those for which Bellamy is responsible. But I suppose we must be thankful even for small mercies.

The police of the city of New York appear to be permeated by Socialism. An "inferior" member of that body died lately, true up to the last moment to his belief in the correctness of the theory of Henry George and as an Atheist. He desired that some expression to his creed should be given in the orations over his grave. Sergeant Tims undertook this task, and delivered a good radical speech. In consequence the New York *Volkzeitung* sent a reporter to interview Tims. He said that he had always taken great interest in the writings of Marx, George, and Lassalle, and he added that according to his opinion every fifth man in the police force of New York believed in radical doctrines upon the social question. This gave the capitalistic press an opportunity for a series of most sensational articles. Flaming headlines like "Is the New York police force an Anarchistic body?" "Sergeant Tims, the friend of Herr Most and of the Anarchist Shevitsk," and so on, appeared in the dailies. The capitalists didn't know what to think of this. They believed the New York police the "finest" in the world, always ready to bludgeon into a jelly all enemies of property and all those opposed to law-'n'-order. Now all at once they have to learn that every fifth man of the force intended to protect property is himself a Socialist, an enemy of property and of the ruling classes. What is the world coming to! Action has not as yet been taken in the matter, but some people may take a friend's advice and look out for a "job" in some more congenial quarter.

The next annual convention of the Farmers and Labourers' Union will be held at St. Louis, December 3. The committee expect that there will be fully 500 delegates present. One of the features of the convention will be a proposition from the Northern Farmers' Alliance for a union of the two bodies, and several delegates will be present to effect that object if possible.

Trust certificates are in a bad way just now. A few days ago lead fell to below 20 dols. again and sugar to 68 dols., against 35 and 126 respectively attained by the certificates in June. There is too much "water" in this kind of business.

On the 18th of November the General Assembly of the Knights of Labour devoted the morning session to a full discussion in committee of the land question. By a nearly unanimous vote the following resolution was embodied in the constitution of the order:

"That the land, including all the natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of all the people and should not be subject to speculative traffic. Occupancy and use should be the only title to the possession of land, and the taxes upon land should be levied upon its value for use, exclusive of improvements, and should be sufficient to take for the community all unearned increment."

This is not quite Georgeism. George wants a single tax, whereas the above resolution leaves a loophole open for an additional income-tax. Later General Master Workman Powderley and A. W. Wright of the General Executive Board were appointed a committee on behalf of the General Assembly to attend the convention of the farmers' organisations to be held at St. Louis, December 3rd, 1889.

In regard to taking independent political action, it was concluded to leave each member free, as heretofore, to act as he saw fit, but that the agitation for independence be kept up in the columns of the organ of the order. It was voted that the ritual of the order shall be printed in the Hebrew language.

The following resolution was also adopted:

"Whereas, the accumulation of vast fortunes in the hands of a few, and the growth of a plutocracy, threatening the stability and existence of free institutions, render important a knowledge of economic conditions to successfully resist aggression from these dangers; therefore, be it

"Resolved, by the General Assembly of the Knights of Labour, that it is our judgment that the next census of the United States should show what proportion of the people of this country occupy their homes and farms, what proportion have their property free from debt, and, of the homes and farms under mortgage, what percentage of the value is so mortgaged.

"Resolved, that the secretary of the General Assembly be and he is hereby instructed to transmit a copy of these resolutions to the President of the United States, and to Hon. John W. Noble, secretary of the interior, Washington, D.C.

"Resolved, further, that all local assemblies be urged to at once adopt resolutions requesting congressmen from their respective districts to use their influence to have those facts collected and published."

The 19th of November was devoted to the discussion of the eight hour question. A letter was read from Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labour, of which I gave a summary in my last. Some surprise was expressed that the letter detailed no fixed plan of action. The eight hour committee submitted the following resolutions, which have been adopted:

"Resolved, that we coincide with the last expressed views of the President of the American Federation of Labour, expressing as they do the sentiments of that organisation that no general strike should be inaugurated upon May 1, 1890, and that the movement should be confined to such trades as are in condition to put the plan in operation on May 1, 1890.

"Resolved, that we call upon the President of the American Federation of Labour to indicate the trade or trades organised within the folds of that society

which is or are prepared to successfully inaugurate the eight hour movement on May 1, 1890, confident that the Knights of Labour will lend their moral support to the movement in favour of such trade or trades."

It was also resolved that the Assembly recommend that, wherever practicable, the members should arrange for a reduction of the hours of labour to nine and a-half hours per day, or 57 hours per week, for the year beginning March 30, 1890, and a reduction of one half-hour daily each succeeding year, until the eight hour point is attained.

In the debate preceding the adoption of the report, all who spoke expressed themselves in favour of a reduction of hours, but that to set any special day when a big strike should be made for a reduction of hours from ten to eight without being amply prepared for it, would be worse than foolish—it would be criminal.

The action of the Knights has given the *coup de grace* to the so-called eight hour movement. When will labour organisations cease to engage in such Sisyphus-like work? I suppose when doomsday is near at hand.

The Assembly came to a close on the 20th of November. In future all local assemblies attached to the General Assembly will pay a per capita tax of 10 cents per quarter instead of 6 cents as heretofore. The general executive board were empowered at their discretion to put on an assessment tax of not more than 20 cents for the next year.

The most interesting vote was that over the place of holding the next General Assembly. There were a number of applicants, the most prominent being Toledo, Ohio, Albany, Denver, and Birmingham, Eng. Under the rules of the Knights, the final selection is made by the executive board, which takes one from the three cities receiving the highest votes. Toledo will, in all probability, be the scene of the next General Assembly. The large vote received by Birmingham is taken as an indication of a strong tendency to extend the order across the water. Birmingham showed such strength that it will undoubtedly be chosen for some future General Assembly.

Grand Master Workman Powderley's request to cut down his salary from 5,000 dols. to 2,500 dols. was refused by the Assembly. Everybody from the beginning regarded this request as only meant in a "Pickwickian sense." Powderley closed the convention. He impressed upon members the necessity for pursuing the present conservative policy.

November 30 will be the twentieth anniversary of the Knights of Labour.  
Boston, Mass., Nov 25, 1889.

HENRY F. CHARLES.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## CO-OPERATIVE TYRANNY AND COMPETITION.

Dear Sir,—A meeting of the Co-operative Wholesale was held at Manchester on Saturday, December 7th, and one of the most important recommendations was to purchase land outside Leicester with the object of obtaining cheap labour to successfully compete with another co-operative shoe works and *smash* it. Here is proof that in this case co-operators are profit mongers, and care for very little else. A number of delegates were sent from Leicester to get the matter postponed for three months, so that the members might have time to consider it; but when one of the delegates arose for the third time to put the matter fully before the meeting, he was voted down and not allowed to speak. I simply state the facts. The evils of unchecked competition were felt to be a mighty leech sucking the very vitals from the masses, when co-operation arose to check it, stamp it out, or put it on a rational basis.

But what does the action at Manchester prove? It proves that co-operators generally are moving on the very lines they feared and condemned, so much so that they used their might to crush the right of a fellow delegate to speak on the subject that he was specially appointed to deal with by an influential society in the Midlands. He claimed the right to vindicate the action of those who took a different view of the matter to the board. Improper motives were attributed to the delegates from Leicester, and dishonourable innuendoes were levelled at them, yet he was denied the right to explain and repudiate. Such an action is one of the meanest and most contemptible of its kind; and no men but profit-seekers and bigots would be guilty of such a tyrannical act. This will put the workers on their guard, and teach them what to expect from men, who though co-operators, when interest and profit are concerned can act like this. Does not such action prove that Socialists are not far wrong when they say that co-operation is only joint-stockism? And that the statements made in the Trades Union Congresses that co-operations are worse and more tyrannical than private firms as employers of labour, are true. To estrange these two sections of the community from the movement will be its death knell.

Can co-operation be a remedy for the evils of competition while the fundamental factors of rent, interest, and profit are the same in both cases? In both co-operation and competition this is a very serious question for all to consider. The masses have looked for social salvation from co-operation, and it is to be feared that they have been deceived. Let us look at a few facts:—The Co-operative Wholesale have become boot and shoe makers, but fail in the first essential of true co-operation—bonus to labour—this they do not give, besides the unfair or unsatisfactory way the work is given out. The men in the trade refuse to go to work there in busy times, because they are treated so shabbily. A new society of working-men is formed; they succeed, and give bonus to labour, and the conditions are first-class. But they are independent of the wholesale, and have succeeded well in getting work for about 250 men and women. To smash this society seems to be the object of the official gang, and no doubt it is so; else how is it they passed the resolution so hurriedly through—denying the right of full discussion. So, to effect that object, they leave one of the best and most healthy factories in the town to go outside with about £17,000 invested, and no prospect of letting it, in order to destroy this new co-operative society; and at the factory they are going to leave there is room for enlarging it to last about 10 years.

Thus to get profit, and crush out a new society that has dared to start, succeed, and give bonus to labour, the co-operators are imitating the worst employers by going into the county for cheap labour. What can be said to this?

JAMES HOLMES, *Delegate*.

Rutland Street, Leicester.

CHelsea S.D.F., Co-operative Lecture Hall, 312 Kings Road, Chelsea.—Sunday December 22, at 8 p.m., Hubert Bland, "Nihilism." 29th. Songs and Recitations by the Hammersmith S. L. Choir and Friends.



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 HEARD 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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### CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
Monopoly (concluded) .. .. .	WILLIAM MORRIS 401
The Ruskin Reading Guild .. .. .	G. STURT 402
In the United States .. .. .	H. F. CHARLES 403
Correspondence .. .. .	403
Notes on News .. .. .	SPARLING & MAY MORRIS 404
International Notes .. .. .	VICTOR DAVE & MAY MORRIS 405
The Labour Struggle .. .. .	D. J. NICOLL 406
Revolutionary Calendar .. .. .	406
Executive Announcements, Reports, Lecture Diary, and Notices of Meetings ..	407
Advertisements, New Publications, etc., etc. .. .. .	408

### Periodicals received during the week ending Wednesday December 18.

ENGLAND	Twentieth Century	HOLLAND
Brotherhood	Workmen's Advocate	Middelburg—Licht en Waarheid
Labour Elector	Boston—Woman's Journal	BELGIUM
Labour Tribune	Investigator	Ghent—Vooruit
Norwich—Daylight	Buffalo—Arbeiter-Zeitung	SWITZERLAND
Railway Review	Chicago (Ill)—Vorbote	Arbeiterstimme
Seafaring	Detroit—Der Arme Teufel	SPAIN
Worker's Friend	Milwaukee—National Reformer	Madrid—El Socialista
INDIA	San Francisco Arbeiter-Zeitung	PORTUGAL
Bankipore—Behar Herald	S. F.—Coast Seamen's Journal	Lisbon—O Protesto Operario
UNITED STATES	St Louis—Anarchist	AUSTRIA
New York—Der Sozialist	Philadelphia—United Labour	Wien—Arbeiter-Zeitung
Truthseeker	FRANCE	HUNGARY
Volkzeitung	Rouen—Le Salarial	Arbeiter-Wochen-Chronik
Jewish Volkszeitung		

### NOTES ON NEWS.

THE Home Secretary "does not feel justified in departing from the decision" to keep George Harrison in prison up to the full period of his sentence—five years. In the hurried rush of great events, which seems to have become chronic, there is always danger that he will be forgotten; but all those interested in him, and they are many, should make a point of periodically bringing up his case and refreshing the public memory.

The citizens of this great metropolis have been gratified by the news of an addition of a thousand more lambs to the law-'n'-order flock. That is to say, those of the citizens have been gratified for whose benefit the addition will be made. But those who work and suffer among the citizens, are not so very grateful as they reflect upon the thousand more batons ready for their benighted heads if they are ever raised an inch above the mud of their ordinary lives. A thousand more protectors for scabs and sweaters; a thousand more repressors of any effort at improvement on the part of under-paid workmen, this is what it means.

"There is one moral to be learned from Silvertown, and that is that the whole labour movement is not to be carried by strikes. The impetuous rush on the position has been stayed; the workers have been

taught by sad experience that a fight with unorganised forces and scanty funds may be beaten back by a determined resistance on the part of a cool, hard, unrelenting employer. The lesson must be taken to heart. It should teach the workers to perfect their organisations." So says the *Star*, which then proceeds to spoil a good note by feebly adding, "and also to keep a weather-eye open for legislative remedies."

There would be small need of fooling with any "legislative remedies" if only the workers would "perfect their organisations."

To follow the docker's victory with the Silvertown defeat; the wonderful solidarity of labour which had gladdened all hearts, with the eager scramble after the gasmen's places by a degraded mob of blacklegs; this is one of the salutary lessons of experience, one of the reverses which mean renewed victory. Anyone who had watched the fighting of labour battles for any length of time, knew well that the successes, such as they were, in recent conflicts would mean a crushing defeat in the near future.

There is nothing more fatal in war than to under-estimate your enemy, or to over-estimate your friends. The winning of so many battles in so short a time has for the moment demoralised the labour army, and has made it less careful and far-seeing than it should be in meeting its powerful enemy. Seeing how large the floating army of unorganised, and for the present unorganisable, "blacklegs" still is, will serve to force home the fact that there will have to be wider and much more cautious preparations before another fight is begun.

It is not possible to believe that the Executive of the Amalgamated Engineers is anything else than a collection of hide-bound self-seekers, a mere clique which has fastened itself upon a powerful organisation and paralyses all the centres of its activity. Were it anything else it would not have behaved as it has done over the Silvertown strike; nor would its members have remained so calmly under the rain of scorn that has covered them.

And if the engineers as a body were much better than their "leaders," they would long since have leaped into rage under the sting of the contempt which is expressed for them by the bulk of awakened working-men, since "engineer" has become synonymous with "rat." Could they even confess their membership in the Amalgamated Society without a blush?

At this time also it would be well if the London Trades' Council were brought to book. What this detestable gang of hypocritical reactionaries really are and mean to be we know right well. Also we have some idea of what a true trades council might be made. What we are anxious to know is, how long the London trades are going to allow their name to be taken in vain and their efforts neutralised by this worse than nullity?

But it may be that the bulk of the London trades are like the Amalgamated Engineers, rats at heart, and only anxious for themselves. Even in that case, though, one would have thought they had sense enough to see that the best way of helping themselves was by combination with their fellows. "Two heads are better than one any day, even if one be a sheep's!"

Papers to hand by last mail from the Argentine speak of renewed strikes and labour troubles. Among others, the men in the Southern Railway workshops had to come out because some of the older hands among them were being dismissed for their part in the former strike. The works were guarded by police, and everything was done upon the "civilised" plan obtaining in the effete and corrupt European monarchies. Republics in the new world, as in the old, don't seem to be the happy hunting-grounds for workmen that some people would make them out to be.

The fatuities of the *Pall Mall* are beyond measure. In one column of one issue it advocated the knighting of Stanley for his plunder-raid in Africa, and the more complete police-censorship of literature in London. A good record for one evening! In the same column it warmly endorsed a "Commons Preservation Society" and other means of enforcing public rights. As I came upon that after reading the gush about Stanley, an eager regret came over me that some of the poor natives of Mid-Africa had not preserved *their* commons a little better from the enterprising pioneer of exploitation and monopoly! Also that one of these days a "Readers' Protection Society" should take up the defence of freedom of speech, even for pornography, making it hot in the meantime for the McDougall-Stead-policeman who is the guardian of Mrs. Grundy.

In the same column there is an attack on "the detestable French custom of giving Government monopolies to certain favoured individuals." But why, then, ask for a Government monopoly of morality on behalf of the pharasaical combination of prudens and prurient ascetics?

A lady who works among the poor in the South of London told me the other day with much unction and feeling that in Price's candle-factory none but girls of "good moral character" are employed; that the moment a girl "loses her character" she is dismissed. The wages

are fairly good and the employes well treated. Virtuous and pious citizens and citizenesses, please note, and buy of Price's! (This "par" is not an advertisement.)

Seriously, is it not time that even the pious and virtuous made a mental effort, and tried at last to understand what they drive men and women to by their false sentiment and false notions of social purity? Price sheds his shining light amid a crowd of less virtuous factories "of extremely bad character," as my friend said with bated breath, "where prostitutes are content to take a low wage to eke out their shameful trade." Is it not just possible that the houses of fair fame send them thither on casting them out of doors? The religious mind turns a deaf ear to all argument, however; I receive a pious smile, and—"The Lord's will be done!"

The stout-hearted women who step among the dead and wounded on a battle-field, accepting the waste and destruction of life as heaven-sent, and those, no less courageous, who spend their lives in succouring the poor and administering comfort and advice after their own fashion—there is something ghastly about their resignation and inability to grasp the true meaning of the ills and vices they live amongst, and something pitiable and exasperating in the enthusiasm, self-satisfaction, and self-completion they feel in their minute and isolated corner of the world. Given a woman addicted to good works who lives near a slum and works hard in it, sees and talks to some scores of working-folk in the week, and must necessarily accumulate a good deal of interesting facts about work and wages, and learn something about the lives and troubles of the workers, and you have usually a complete example of how not to assimilate useful information and deduct inferences from it!

M. M.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

GERMANY.

The Elberfeldt monster-trial is still going on, and nearly every day a new police spy comes to the front. It seems that the Social Democratic party in Germany is as much infested with this abominable vermin as the Anarchist party. It is said that the trial got up by all these Kamhoffs and other beasts has already cost the State 60,000 mk.; and the accused will be at a loss of 25,000 mk. (loss of wages, travelling, and other expenses). Further, 31 workers have already been dismissed by their employers on account of their being connected with the trial. In spite of all these trumped-up conspiracies, the cause of Socialism "marches on" in Germany as everywhere else, and this trial will have the same result as all the former ones, namely: for one man lost by imprisonment, one or two dozen won to Socialism!

A new issue of our Hamburg contemporary *Der Zeitgeist* has just been published, and contains the following articles:—Conception, contents, object and meaning of popular hygiene; Saving; Contributions to the solution of the question of industrial arbitration; Chambers of Trade; Truth pierces every obstacle; Decay of small trade; What is to become of me in future; German fundamental rights of 1848; The origin of the wage system; The revision of the laws relating to relief societies; On the causes of the increasing consumption of spirits; The poverty and degradation of the working women of Berlin: The destitution of the miners and the riches of the mine-owners in Westphalia, etc., etc.

At Brünswig the *Vereinsblatt für Maurer* (The Mason's Trade Paper) has been suppressed by the muzzle-laws of the Iron Chancellor.

Comrade Oscar Wieske, for having laid down a wreath with the following inscription, "All honour to the deceased and may his example be followed," got three months imprisonment, because the silly Nupkinsses of Kottbus considered that dreadful inscription to be a Socialist demonstration!

BELGIUM.

All the weavers of La Linière, at Liège, are on strike, and it is now a good long time since they first left off working. The masters have tried to get "blacklegs" from other towns, especially Mechelen, but they have tried in vain, and the workers are bound to win. They are well supported by the Liège section of the Belgian Socialistic Party, and the co-operative society "La Populaire" distribute daily bread and vegetables to the strikers and their families. Numerous meetings are held also, and the propaganda of Socialist ideas is carried on with great success. The workers used to go to their meeting-places in processions, but the very liberal burgomaster of Liège, M. d'Andrimont, has put a stop to it, and street demonstrations are no longer allowed. We hope that the workers will see that the Liberal party, and even the so-called Radical section of it, is exactly as bad for them as the Clerical party, and that they will no longer go in for these electioneering business politics, by which they can only waste their energies and compromise even the cause they intend to serve—the revolutionary Socialist cause.

In order to show what these Liberals and Clericals over there really are, one more example. Pourbaix, the scoundrel who has acted as agent provocateur in the miners' strikes of 1887 and 1888, has finally got two years' imprisonment—which, by the by, he is not even likely to undergo, because he is the Premier's good friend. Bara, a former Minister of Justice in a Liberal Cabinet, fulminated during a five hours' speech against De Volder, the present and Clerical Minister of the Interior, because this De Volder, along with the Premier Beernaert, had allowed a number of innocent men to be prosecuted, knowing, as he did, that Pourbaix, who caused the prosecution to be instituted, was a paid agent of the secret service. "You are unworthy to be a Councillor of the Crown, your true place is in the dock, you ought to be sent to prison yourself; you have no longer any claim to the respect of honest men." And so on for five hours. In the evening of that very same day, M. Anspach-Puissant, an influential moneybag at Brussels, gave a banquet, at which the Liberal Bara and the Clerical De Volder occupied the places of honour on the right and left of the financial magnate! What do you think, then, Belgian workers, of the "unworthy" De Volder and of the "worthy" Bara? Are they not exactly the same sort of mountebanks?

Comrade L. Bertrand, of Brussels, has started a new paper for the special propagation of the Socialist co-operative ideas. It is called *Les Co-opérateurs Belges*, and appears monthly.

On the 1st of January next another paper will be issued by the "Young Socialist Vanguard" of Brussels. It is to be called *Le Conscrit*, and will mostly deal with the military question: abolition of conscription, permanent armies, and kindred subjects.

In order to incite our English comrades to make somewhat more vigorous efforts in their propaganda by way of spreading our Socialist literature, papers, pamphlets, leaflets, etc., we may as well give here the amount of printed matter sent out in one year (October 1888-89) by one town—Ghent:

NEWSPAPERS.		
Vooruit, socialistic daily paper	Copies sold	2,353,456
"	given away	46,550
Toekomst, socialistic weekly paper	" sold	91,238
Loteling, an occasional paper	" "	15,000

BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS.		
Almanack "Vooruit," 1889 ...	Copies sold	5,000
Socialist Chants ...	"	5,000
Co-operation and Socialism ...	"	6,000
Women in Modern Society ...	"	2,250
The Ruins of Volney (3rd edition) ...	"	3,500
History of "Vooruit" ...	"	10,000
Socialists of Eecloo ...	"	1,500
Situation of Dockworkers ...	"	500
History of the French Revolution ...	"	5,000
The Great Conspiracy Trial ...	"	4,000
The "Salon" of Ghent (art critics) ...	"	1,000
Six months in the Argentine (2nd edition) ...	"	10,000
Appeal to the Students ...	"	1,000

OTHER PRINTS.		
Circulars for the various Socialist groups	"	10,495
Leaflets for Socialist propaganda	"	120,475
Circulars for the Co-operative Soc.	"	220,900
" for the relief societies	"	42,680
" for the various trades unions	"	102,295

For the announcement of the various public meetings held by the Ghent Socialists in the town itself and in the neighbouring Flemish places, 1,394 various posters have been printed.

English Socialists, follow that example and "go ahead!"

AUSTRIA.

A new Socialist paper has been started last week at Vienna, and will appear on the 2nd and 4th Monday in each month, under the editorship of comrade R. Hauser. It is entitled *Die Volkspresse* (The Press of the People), and intends to bring the Socialist ideas to the indifferent masses of the people. The first issue of the paper contains an official communication, stating that the new organ will be edited in accordance with the views and principles laid down at the last Congress at Hainfeldt, where the Austrian Socialists, as our readers will remember, have come to a mutual understanding, and dropped all their former differences of opinion. We hope that the new venture will do considerable good among those workers who have not as yet grasped the principles of Socialism. The administration of the paper, published by comrade A. Heimann, is situated in Vienna, Neulercheufeld, Herbsstrasse, 3, 3rd floor 28.

ITALY.

The tribunal of Forli has granted Amilcare Cipriani one year jail and a goodish fine of 1,000 lire, for provocation to civil war. But as Cipriani has thought it better to live outside the sacred frontiers of his "generous" Italy, he is alright for all that. He has just answered his judges, as it were, by an article which appeared in *La Revue Européenne* of Paris, under the heading of "Force against Force."

*L'Associazione* says that in the recent communal elections in Italy abstention from voting has been very marked. "To select a few of the most important figures, we note that in Rome out of 45,000 electors only 16,000 have voted; in Naples, 12,000 out of 35,000; in Florence, 8,000 out of 18,000; Leghorn, 8,400 out of 17,000; Turin, 13,620 out of 261,30; Milan, 21,000 out of 41,000; Ferlé, 2,300 out of 4,300." The *Associazione* puts a great deal of this down to the abstentionist propaganda work of the Anarchist party; this may have had some influence, but the probabilities are that it is principally due to *laissez faire*, the apathy of some, the hopelessness of others among the disinherited, and the cynicism of modern well-to-do society.

SPAIN.

MADRID.—There is a strike among the paper factory employes, and as it bids fair to remain firm the mill-owners have published in the journals a notice asking for hands from the provinces and abroad.

ALCOX.—A strike is declared in a paper-mills here also, and the employes in the other establishments are manifesting their solidarity and intend to support them.

M. M.

"Seafaring"

We are glad to see that the printing of our bright little contemporary *Seafaring*, organ of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union, has been transferred to a fair house, Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Co., of Whitefriars. Our readers will remember that the *Commonweal* was the first to call attention to the fact that the paper was printed at an unfair house.

The End of the Manchester Gas Strike.

We are sorry to say the Manchester gas stokers have been beaten in their plucky attempt to get rid of blacklegs. The treason of those who are a disgrace to the workers, and the money power at the back of a rich Corporation, has proved too strong for them. Such a defeat, though it involves intense suffering, does not dishonour the men. It is rather the victors who should be ashamed of their victory.

Impending Strike of Scottish Railway Men.

The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants met on Sunday in Glasgow to consider the replies received to their demand for ten hours daily. Mr. Tait (secretary) said the replies left the members practically the same as when they met on the 1st December, but the Glasgow and South-Western Company had advanced the wages in several departments. The meeting approved the recommendation of the executive that the men give notice to cease work on a given day and remain out till the demand was conceded, but that the men all over the country should be first asked whether they approved of this step.

## THE LABOUR STRUGGLE.

### The Gas-stokers Strike.

The gas-stokers' strike marks a crisis in the revolt against the sweater. The attack by Mr. Livesey upon the gas stokers, taking as it has done the insidious form of a profit-sharing scheme, is a blow aimed not only at that union alone but at the whole labour movement, the rapid spread of which has struck terror into the hearts of every slave-driving capitalist in England. It may be doubted very much if Mr. Livesey is the only person responsible for the scheme. It is quite certain that his company would not be the only one to profit by it, if it were successful. The various gas companies all agreed to accept the men's terms last summer, when they were forced upon them by a threatened strike. Is it to be too suspicious to say that they have also agreed in common to attack the men in their weakest position, and at the time of the year when there are plenty of unemployed men in town and country to act as blacklegs? One thing is quite certain, i.e., not only the gas companies but every sweater would rejoice at Mr. Livesey's success. The market would be flooded at once with profit-sharing schemes, to which the conditions prefixed would be that the money would be held in hand by the sweaters, and would be forfeited at once if the work-people went on strike or joined a union. It behoves, therefore, not only the gas-stokers, but every workman in London to fight to the death on the side of the gas-stokers. If these men are defeated not only will they sink into hopeless slavery, but every union that has sprung up within the last few months throughout the country will be in danger. These unions will not only have to fight for the advantages they have gained but for very life itself; the gas-stokers must not be defeated. If it is necessary to gain the victory, London must not only be plunged in darkness and the supply of coal stopped, but every new union must be prepared to bring out its men, and tramways, railways, and docks alike be idle. A good lesson might be learnt from the events of last week; the coal-porters threatened to stop the supply of the coal of London; the middle-class press wailed, raved, and cursed, but *the men have got their demands*. The gas-stokers were moderate, they only proposed to stop the supply of gas in what is essentially a working class quarter, where the wealthy do not reside; they are out in the cold at the present moment, and they are likely to remain so for all the middle-class care. What does it matter to them if South London is without light, so long as the West End and other "respectable" parts are well illuminated? Now, I do not advise that these extreme means be taken at once, but it strikes me that if the middle and upper classes knew that the organised workmen of London were prepared to paralyse trade throughout the whole metropolis rather than allow the gas-stokers to be beaten, very strong influence would soon be brought to bear upon Mr. Livesey to make him give way.

Of course, we shall be told that such action will alienate "public sympathy," that means, of course, the sympathy of the very people whom every worker, who wishes to gain his own, will have to fight. A labour agitation conducted in accordance with the opinion of the middle and upper classes would be a very tame and spiritless thing indeed. We know very well what it is. We have had plenty of it under the leadership of Broadhurst, Shipton, and Co., for the last twenty years, but the people haven't got much "forrarder" in consequence. The New Trade Unionism is surely going to do better than that.

The strike has not been devoid of interesting and amusing incidents. The funniest story is that told by the manager of the West Greenwich Gas Works, who stated that he was glad the union men had gone, because they had got into the inconvenient habit of suddenly leaving off work to search the place for blacklegs. Sometimes they found them, and then the manager had to turn the wretched blacklegs out.

The shameful way in which the whole forces of the Government have been placed at the disposal of Mr. Livesey is worthy of remark. This is most apparent even in the reports of the reactionary press. We have always thought that picketing was legal, but the horde of police and mounted men would not allow the pickets even to approach the blacklegs, the footmen driving them away, and the mounted men charging upon them and completely scattering them. Not only was this terrorism carried on by the police in the interest of our modern shareholders, but there cannot be the least doubt that after the blacklegs left the railway stations in the custody of the police they were virtually prisoners. Those who have lived in the country know that that wretched serf, the agricultural labourer, of whom there were many among the blacklegs, always stands in the utmost dread of those who are set in authority over him, and it is hardly likely if any of the "new hands" had felt repentant that they would have dared to have broken through the strong cordon of police who surrounded them to join the strikers. The police, too, appeared, quite willing to use force upon occasion, as at the Old Kent Road, where one unfortunate man, who was inclining his ear to what the pickets had to say, was dragged by the active and intelligent officers into the gas-works to be a blackleg whether he liked it or not. It is even now certain that the large force of police that garrisons every one of the companies' works are there less to protect the blackleg from the strike than to keep them to their work. It is a known fact that many of the "new hands" would have bolted long ago from the dismal hells in which they are confined were it not for the police. Mr. Livesey has been endeavouring to enliven the monotony of their confinement by a "religious" service on Sunday, in which we presume the god was invoked who presides over dirty actions. We mean the god who took Jacob into favour because he had done his brother Esau out of his birthright. We hear that the blacklegs smoked during the service; if Mr. Livesey could only have had a few pots of beer handed round, it would have made the thing complete. That philanthropic gentleman directly he got his blacklegs forced them to slave for 12 hours daily; the union time, eight hours, has been abolished. Can we doubt now why the profit-sharing scheme was introduced?

At Rotherhithe on Friday, December 13th, a large number of blacklegs were brought from Birmingham. Many of these, directly they found there was a strike on, scaled the wall of the gas-works to get out, thus proving that the police would not let them out by the gates. One of these men in the ardour of his conversion began trying the strength of a policeman's helmet with a piece of granite. Unfortunately his experiments in the public interest have been checked by a sentence from a police magistrate of 21 days. A worthy constable, Marchant 511 B, struck a striker, cutting his lip; the magistrate bound the striker (not the constable) over to keep the peace for three months.

The police have been having quite a good old time of the Trafalgar Square pattern. W. Thorne, the secretary of the Gas Stokers' Union, has had

enough of their kindness. First, he was hustled off the platform of the Old Kent Road station when endeavouring to speak to some blacklegs. Again, he sought an interview with Major Gilbert at Vauxhall to know if picketing was permitted. The worthy gentleman answered by setting his police bullies on to him, who literally threw him out of the place. We were told a little while ago that both the Tory Government and the police were friendly to striking workmen. Their friendship does not last long, and seems to depend upon the number and strength of the strikers. I cannot help quoting the remark of a stoker, when he saw the huge force of police collected to maintain blacklegism as part of the law and constitution. "What need is there for 400 police to watch a few poor, half-starved stokers?" It will take a great deal to persuade workmen that the Tories are their friends after this shameful police tyranny. Why the very blacklegs and police are recruited from places where Toryism is rampant. The events of last week should shake the faith of workmen in both political parties, for while the strikers have been hounded down by police acting under the orders of a Tory Government, the middle-class Liberals and their organs, like the *Daily News*, stood by and applauded. But despite the efforts of both political parties, the men stand a fair chance of winning. The fog we had last week has nearly used up Livesey's supply of gas. The coal boycott of the sailors and coal porters promises to be effective; and it is to be hoped that Mr. Livesey and his company will get a good thrashing.

### German Capitalists and English Trades Unions.

According to the Berlin correspondent of the *Sheffield Independent*, it appears that some German capitalists have recently visited England in order to see for themselves the working of our trades unions, and to obtain information upon the labour question generally. They were of course informed by the orthodox officials of old-fashioned trade-unionism that the English workers did not favour Socialism, and were generally "reasonable." The German capitalists have come to a different conclusion. They say they have found that Socialism is spreading in England, and that the trade unions encouraged it. They were quite right in their opinion that Socialism is spreading; but if they think that Messrs. Shipton, Broadhurst, and Co. encourage Socialism they labour under one of those curious delusions as to English affairs peculiar to the "intelligent foreigner." The German Government would be only too happy to have such "reasonable" people to deal with as the present chiefs of English trade-unionism. N.

## REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR.

DECEMBER 22—31, 1889.

22	Sun.	1620. Landing of the "Pilgrim Fathers." 1797. Trial at Dublin of Peter Finerty, printer of the <i>Press</i> , the organ of the United Irishmen, for "seditious libel" in connection with the murder of William Orr. 1806. At Longford, George Thomas, informer against the "Threshers," transported for seven years for perjury. 1832. First number of <i>The Bee</i> , Liverpool, edited by John Finch and M. J. Falvey. 1876. Baron, ex-delegate to the accountant's department of the Workmen's Congress, sentenced to imprisonment in a fortress as a Communard. 1881. "Ghost of the Czar" seen in Kazan Cathedral. 1884. After "trial" at Leipzig on a charge of attempting to kill the German Emperor (see Sept. 28), Reinsdorf, Rupsch, and Kuchler sentenced to death; Holshauer and Bachmann to ten years' imprisonment; three acquitted.
23	Mon.	1789. Heine born. 1864. Bronterre O'Brien died.
24	Tues.	1794. "Law of Maximum" abolished at Paris. 1795. Trial of Michael Maguire for high treason. 1814. Peace between England and the United States. 1829. First Socialist tea-party at Manchester, arranged by Joseph Smith, the "sheep-maker." 1850. H. and W. Packman and J. Dyke hanged on Penenden Heath, near Maidstone, for rick-burning. 1833. Arabi Pasha leaves Egypt an exile. 1887. Strike on Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.
25	Wed.	1066. Inauguration and election of William the Conqueror at Westminster Abbey. 1825. First number (for Jan. 1826) of the <i>Co-operative Magazine</i> , with engraving of Robert Owen's proposed community building.
26	Thur.	1825. Revolutionary rising of several guard regiments against accession of Nicholas to the throne ( <i>Decembrists</i> ). Sentences: death, 5; hard labour, 88; banishment, 18; enlisted as soldiers, 9. 1888. Indian National Congress at Allahabad.
27	Fri.	1838. Arrest of the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, Chartist, for "dangerous speech" at Leigh, Cheshire, on Nov. 13. 1842. Great Chartist conference at Birmingham, 27th—30th. 1867. Fenian attack on Fota Martello Tower. 1880. Trial begins of Parnell and others for "conspiracy to prevent tenants from paying their rent."
28	Sat.	1795. Trial of John Leary for high treason as a "Defender." 1870. Marshal Prim shot at and fatally wounded.
29	Sun.	1832. First number of the <i>Workman's Friend</i> , London weekly. 1834. T. R. Malthus died. 1883. Colonel Soudeikh and his chief assistant found dead.
30	Mon.	1797. Peter Finnerty pilloried in Green Street, Dublin, for an article in the <i>Press</i> on the murder of William Orr. 1870. Death of Marshal Prim. 1878. Henry Vincent died. 1884. Socialist League founded.
31	Tues.	1857. Sepoys blown from guns. 1874. Ledru Rollin died. 1882. Gambetta died.

Samuel Gompers and Henry George were to debate the eight-hour question before the New York Central Labour Federation, but Mr. George sent an extraordinary letter in which he stated that he did not know what kind of discussion would be carried on, that the time was not convenient, and as he did not believe that he differed much from Mr. Gompers on the reducing of the number of working hours, he considered it best to stay at home.

# THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

OFFICES: 24, GREAT QUEEN ST., LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.

The Offices of the Socialist League will be open for the sale of *Commonweal* and all other Socialist publications from 8.30 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day except Sunday. The Secretary will be in attendance from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

**Commonweals for 1888**, handsomely bound in red, are now ready, price 5s.; per post, 5s. 6d.

**Branch Subscriptions Paid.**—1888:—Oxford, to end of September.

1889:—Bradford and Hammersmith, to end of April. Norwich, Glasgow, and Yarmouth, to end of May. North Kensington and Manchester, to end of September. Clerkenwell and East London, to end of October. North London, Mitcham, and Leicester, to end of November. St. Georges East, to end of December.

**Notice to Branch Secretaries.**—Please remit to Central Office your Branch Capitation fees as soon as possible.

**Propaganda Fund.**—J. Bines, Is.; St. Georges' East Branch, 5s.

**Notice.**—All letters on League business, except those intended for Editors of *Commonweal*, to be addressed to me. No other person is authorised to sign any official communication.  
FRANK KITZ, Secretary.

## "COMMONWEAL" GUARANTEE FUND.

The following further sums have been received towards this fund:—Webb, Is.; B. W., 6d.; Kitz, 6d.; C. Saunders, 2s.; H. Rogers, Is.; Albert, Is.; J. A. Morris, 2s. 6d.; and Chesterfield Socialist Society, 15s.

## BRANCH SECRETARIES PLEASE NOTE.

As we are going to press a day earlier next week, on account of Christmas Holidays, comrades are asked to send in their reports and lecture notices by first post on Monday morning.

## REPORTS.

**STREATHAM.**—Good number of comrades turned up at the Liberal Club debate, "England a Republic," a Socialist in the chair. A collection after the meeting for the gas strikers was not allowed by the committee, and was returned to each one in the room who had contributed; 4s. 8d. was, however, collected by the secretary of Streatham Labourer's Union on the pavement outside the club. The general feeling was one of heartfelt sympathy with the strikers, and indignation at the mean cowardice of the Streatham "Liberals." A carman of the Labourers' Union has been sacked at a minutes notice on Saturday night by a master noted for working his men 17 hours a day.

**ABERDEEN.**—At meeting on 9th, Mrs. Lynn Linton's article "About Ireland," in the *New Review*, was read and discussed.

**GLASGOW.**—On Monday evening Joe and Tim Burgoyne spoke on Cathedral Square to a good audience; on Wednesday Dan McCulloch gave a lecture on "Education under Socialism" to the Springburn Literary Society, the criticism which followed being entirely favourable; on Sunday, at 1 o'clock, Joe Burgoyne spoke on Jail Square, and at 5.30 at Paisley Road Toll.

**LEICESTER.**—Chambers and Barclay spoke in Russell Square on Sunday morning; an adjourned discussion of a lively character in the Radical Club in the evening. Chambers also gave an address in the Irish National Club.—A. G.

**YARMOUTH.**—No meeting in the morning; in the afternoon at the discussion class there was a good attendance; comrade Brightwell opened a discussion on "Socialism and Anarchy," followed by Headley, Edwards, and Willmott. In the evening, at Colman's Granary Quay, we opened by singing "The Starving Poor," followed by comrade Ruffold, closing with "Leisure and Pleasure;" we then marched along the quay, under the red flag, singing "Trafalgar Square;" three new members, and all the *Weals* sold out.

**WALSALL.**—At the Socialist Club, 18, Goodall Street, December 8th, J. Rowson delivered a lecture on "The Present System." On Sunday last H. Sanders lectured on "A Socialist Programme for Town Councils." Both well received, and several new members joined.

**DUBLIN.**—At the Progressist Club, 87, Marlborough Street, on December 14th, in the absence of the appointed lecturer, T. Fitzpatrick delivered an address on "The Coming Slavery"—an exhaustive attack on the theories of collectivism; very good discussion; Hamilton, Wilson, Kavanagh, and Wiedesleder, a German comrade, spoke.

**EDINBURGH (S.S.F.).**—We had a good meeting on Sunday night in the Moulders' Hall, when comrade McCulloch (Glasgow) delivered a very interesting lecture on "Wealth and its Producers," which gave rise to an animated discussion on the blessings and otherwise of trades-unionism, and the wisdom of directing our energies more in the way of unionism. The "soon" comrades feared that thereby the central idea might be lost sight of, and stoutly championed pure and unadulterated Socialism.

**NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST CLUB.**—On Sunday evening, in our hall, we had a capital paper from comrade Doleman, "Is Socialism Practicable?" Discussion followed, in which several members took part. We are just starting our winter campaign and hope to follow up with larger meetings.

**SHEFFIELD.**—On Saturday a good meeting was held at Gower Street at 12. Large attendance of men employed in ironworks at Pinstone Street at 8 p.m. On Sunday good meetings were held at Gower Street; Monolith, Fargate; Steam Clock, Brightside; and Pump, Westbar—addressed by comrades Charles, Bingham, Palfryman, McBride, and Mowbray (of London). Our ideas were received with great enthusiasm. Good collections for the strikers at Brown's Flue Department made at all meetings. Sale of literature very good; we sold out our *Commonweal*—three quires—on the Saturday, and had to telegraph for three quires more for Sunday, all of which were sold. Some 18s. was taken for *Commonweal* and pamphlets.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE.

To those who have obtained copies of the *Commonweal* through the propagandist work of our comrades, by free distribution in the streets and public conveyances, or by purchase at our outdoor stations, we ask if in agreement with our principles to help the sale of the *Commonweal* by ordering it of their newsagents, and sending on to us the names of newsagents willing to sell it; and still better, as our outdoor work must shortly be reduced, by joining the local branches and helping on the work.

A SOCIAL EVENING to members of the Socialist League will be given by the Propaganda Committee, at the Hall of the Socialist League, 24 Great Queen St., on New Year's Eve, at 8 p.m. Secretary of Propaganda Committee will read report of work done during last half year, to be followed by discussion and Concert; Recitations by comrade Darwood. Meeting and Concert free to all members.

# LECTURE DIARY.

## LONDON.

**Battersea.**—All communications to E. Buteux, 20 Aberrombie Street, Battersea Park Road.  
**Clerkenwell.**—Socialist League Hall, 24 Great Queen Street, Holborn, W.C.  
**East London.**—Crown Coffee Tavern, 2 Columbia Road, Hackney Road.  
**Hammersmith.**—Kelmescott House, Upper Mall, W. Lecture every Sunday at 8. French Class, Friday, 8 to 9.  
**Merton.**—3 Clare Villas, Merton Road.  
**Mitcham.**—"Lord Napier," Fair Green. Meets every Sunday at 12.30, to carell members, etc.  
**North Kensington.**—Clarendon Coffee Tavern. Meets every Wednesday at 8 p.m. On Sunday December 22, at 8 p.m., a Lecture.  
**North London.**—6 Windmill Street, Tottenham Court Rd. Meets every Friday evening at 8 o'clock.  
**Southwark.**—Secretary, George Evans, 56 Lucy Road, Bermondsey, S.E. Hill's Coffee Tavern, Great Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road, S.E.  
**Streatham.**—Meets every Thursday at the "Leigham Arms," Wellfield Road, at 8.30 p.m.  
**Whitechapel and St. Georges in the East.**—Branch meetings at International Club, 40 Berner Street, Commercial Road. J. Turner, organising secretary.

## PROVINCES.

**Aberdeen.**—Organiser, J. Leatham, 7 Jamaica Street. Branch meets in Odd-fellows' Small Hall, Crooked Lane, on Monday evenings at 8. Singing practice at 46 Marischal Street on Thursdays at 8 p.m.  
**Bradford.**—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Albion Court, Kirkgate. Meets every Tuesday at 7.30.  
**Dundee.**—Address to W. Cameron, 17 Laurence Street, Dundee.  
**Glasgow.**—Ram's Horn Hall, 122 Ingram Street. Branch meets on Thursday evenings at 8 o'clock and Sundays at 7 o'clock. Annual Hogmanay Social Meeting will be held in Rams Horn Hall, at 8 o'clock, when the New Year will be brought in with songs, readings, and dancing.  
**Halifax.**—Socialists meet every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. at Helliwell's Temperance Hotel, Northgate.  
**Leeds.**—Clarendon Buildings, Victoria Road and Front Row. Open every evening. Business meeting Saturdays at 8 p.m.  
**Leicester.**—Exchange Buildings, Rutland Street. Branch meets on Monday and Thursday, at 8 p.m.  
**Manchester.**—Working Men's Educational Club, 122 Corporation Street, corner of Hanover Street. Weekly meeting of members every Tuesday at 8 p.m.  
**Norwich.**—Sunday, at 8, Gordon Hall. Tuesday, at 8.30, Members' meeting. Thursday, at 8, Discussion Class. Saturday, Social Meeting. Hall open every evening from 8 p.m.  
**Oxford.**—Temperance Hall, 25½ Pembroke Street. First Friday in every month, at 8.30 p.m.  
**Walsall.**—Socialist Club, 18 Goodall Street, Walsall. Meetings every night.  
**Yarmouth.**—Branch meets at comrade Headley's, near Co-operative Stores, every Tuesday evening. Elocution Class Friday at 8 p.m. On Sunday afternoons during winter a Discussion Class will be held at 3 o'clock. Comrade C. W. Mowbray will deliver three addresses on Sunday Dec. 22. On Tuesday Dec. 24, comrades Headley and Brightwell will debate on "Are we Prepared for a Revolution?" Comrades please turn up.

All persons who sympathise with the views of the Socialist League are earnestly invited to communicate with the above addresses, and if possible help us in preparing for the birth of a true society, based on equality, brotherhood, and freedom for all.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

SATURDAY 21.  
8.30..... Mile-end Waste .....Cores and Presburg  
SUNDAY 22.  
11 ..... Latimer Road Station.....R. J. Lyne, Dean, and Crouch  
11.30..... Kilburn—"Old Plough," Kilburn Lane .....Mainwaring,  
11.30..... Commercial Road—Union Street .....Cores  
11.30..... Mitcham—Fair Green .....The Branch  
11.30..... Regent's Park .....Cantwell and Nicoll  
11.30..... Southwark—Flat Iron Square .....The Branch  
3.30..... Hyde Park—Marble Arch .....Cantwell and Mowbray  
3.30..... Victoria Park .....The Branch  
7 ..... Welteje Road, Ravenscourt Park .....Hammersmith Branch  
7.30..... Walham Green—back of Church .....Hammersmith Branch  
TUESDAY 24.  
8 ..... Walham Green—back of Church .....Hammersmith Branch  
THURSDAY 26.  
8.15..... Hoxton Church .....The Branch

## PROVINCES.

**Glasgow.**—Sunday: Jail Square at 2 o'clock; Paisley Road at 5 o'clock. Tuesday: Cathedral Square, at 8 p.m.  
**Leeds.**—Sunday: Hunslet Moor, at 11 a.m.; Vicar's Croft, at 7 p.m.  
**Manchester.**—Sunday: Philips Park Gates, at 11; Stevenson Square, at 3.  
**Norwich.**—Sunday: St. Faiths, at 11; Market Place, at 3.  
**Yarmouth.**—Sunday: Priory Plain, at 11; Colman's Granary Quay, at 7.

LIVERPOOL SOCIALIST SOCIETY, 1 Stanley Street, Dale Street.—Meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

DUBLIN.—At Progressist Club, 87 Marlboro' Street, Saturday Dec. 21, at 8, J. O'Gorman, "The Demands of Organised Labour."

STAR RADICAL CLUB, 8 Mayall Road, Herne Hill.—Sunday Dec. 22, at 8.30, John Sinclair, "The Better Classes and the Lower Orders."

WOOLWICH RADICAL CLUB, William Street.—Sunday December 22, at 8 p.m., George Bernard Shaw, "Radicalism and Social Democracy."

NOTTINGHAM SOCIALIST CLUB, Woodland Place, Parliament Street.—Sunday Dec. 22, at 7.30, T. Proctor on "The Unskilled Labour Movement."

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE LEAGUE, "Three Doves," Berwick St., Oxford St., W.—Sunday Dec. 22, at 8.45 p.m., Chas. Murray, "Fifty Years of Radical Progress."

EDINBURGH—SCOTTISH SOCIALIST FEDERATION.—In Moulders' Hall, High St., on Sunday December 22, at 6.30, Comrade Davidson lectures on "The Classes and the Masses."

CHILD'S HILL.—Co-operative Hall, near Midland Railway Station, Sunday Dec. 22, at 7.30, J. R. Macdonald, "Practicable Socialism for England and Scotland."

ENTERPRISE CLUB AND INSTITUTE, Manchee House, High Road, South Tottenham, N.—Sunday December 22, at 11.30 a.m. W. S. De Mattos, "A Socialist Programme for London."

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Bush, Wellfield-road, Streatham

W.

O'Neill, 69 Farnhead-road, Harrow-road  
Wilson, 620 Harrow-road, Queens-park  
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Gardner, 32 Lexington-street  
Loffmagun, 17 Carnaby-street  
Stocker, 30 Berwick-street  
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Anderson, 15 Grays Inn-road  
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## STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES.

THE Socialist League advocates International  
Revolutionary Socialism. That is to say the  
destruction of the present class society, which  
consists of one class who live by owning prop-  
erty and therefore *need not work*, and of  
another that has no property and therefore  
*must work* in order that they may live to keep  
the idlers by their labour. Revolutionary  
Socialism insists that this system of society,  
which is the modern form of slavery, should  
be changed to a system of Society which would  
give every man an opportunity of doing useful  
work, and not allow any man to live without  
so doing, which work could not be useful unless  
it were done for the whole body of workers  
instead of for do-nothing individuals. The  
result of this would be that livelihood would  
not be precarious nor labour burdensome.  
Labour would be employed in co-operation,  
and the struggle of man with man for bare  
subsistence would be supplanted by harmo-  
nious combination for the production of com-  
mon wealth and the exchange of mutual  
services without the waste of labour or mate-  
rial.

Every man's needs would be satisfied from  
this common stock, but no man would be  
allowed to own anything which he could not  
*use*, and which consequently he must *abuse* by  
employing it as an instrument for forcing  
others to labour for him unpaid. Thus the  
land, the capital, machinery, and means of  
transport would cease to be private property,  
since they can only be *used* by the combination  
of labour to produce wealth.

Thus men would be *free* because they would  
no longer be dependent on idle property-owners  
for subsistence; thus they would be *brothers*,  
for the cause of strife, the struggle for subsis-  
tence at other people's expense, would have  
come to an end. Thus they would be *equal*,  
for if all men were doing useful work no man's  
labour could be dispensed with. Thus the  
motto of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality,  
which is but an empty boast in a society that  
upholds the monopoly of the means of produc-  
tion, would at last be realised.

This Revolutionary Socialism must be In-  
ternational. The change which would put an  
end to the struggle between man and man,  
would destroy it also between nation and  
nation. One harmonious system of federation  
throughout the whole of civilisation would  
take the place of the old destructive rivalries.  
There would be no great centres breeding race  
hatred and commercial jealousy, but people  
would manage their own affairs in communities  
not too large to prevent all citizens from taking  
a part in the administration necessary for the  
conduct of life, so that party politics would  
come to an end.

Thus, while we abide by the old motto—

Liberty, Fraternity, Equality,

we say that the existence of private property  
destroys Equality, and therefore under it there  
can be neither Liberty nor Fraternity.

We add to the first motto then this other  
one—

FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS  
CAPACITY, TO EACH ACCORDING  
TO HIS NEEDS.

When this is realised there will be a genuine  
Society; until it is realised, Society is nothing  
but a band of robbers. We must add that  
this change can only be brought about by com-  
bination amongst the workers themselves, and  
must embrace the whole of Society. The new  
life cannot be *given* to the workers by a class  
higher than they, but must be *taken* by them  
by means of the abolition of classes and the  
reorganisation of Society.

COUNCIL OF THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE.

### NOTICE.

Subscribers who find a red mark against this notice  
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