

# THE COMMONWEAL

The Official Journal of the Socialist League.

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ONE PENNY.

## EDITORIAL.

THE reception, favourable and unfavourable, that has been the lot of the *Commonweal* and the variegated criticisms that have been forthcoming on the Socialist League serve to show that League and Journal, in the familiar phrase, "meet a want."

The "want," we may be pardoned for once again saying, is that of an English paper and of an English organisation which will preach in season and out of season Socialism, pure and simple, without any admixture either of political opportunism or bourgeois sentiment or national Chauvinism. The uncompromising nature of our antagonism to the capitalistic system of to-day is gatherable from the contents of our manifesto and of our journal; whilst as a particular indication of the completeness of that antagonism we may point to the resolution passed by the Provisional Council of the Socialist League in respect to the British crimes in the Soudan.

The League is, as far as we know, the only public body that has, in the very fever of the crisis due to the death of Gordon, denounced the war as in reality one of capitalistic greed. To their honour be it said that some few journals and some one or two men have tried to hush the wild and wicked cry for revenge that has gone up from a country stricken with panic and the lust for blood. But neither these journals nor these men have stripped bare the hideous monster of Capital that underlies all the fine phrases as to heroic deeds of which there is such a surfeit at this hour.

In a special article the subject that is in all men's mouths is dealt with. Every word of that article we endorse. Although we believe that in this we stand almost alone amongst English-speaking peoples, although we are sorrowful at the death of our brothers, Arab and British, yet we cannot join in the strained and pitiable cry of a false sentiment over the death of any man who has died in doing another country, and thus all countries, an irreparable wrong. Few things tell more sadly, more bitterly, of the depths of our ethical degradation, outcome of our capitalistic degradation, than the heroification of Gordon. We recognise the ability of Gordon as a soldier, the purity of his character as a man. But we cannot forget that he was the chief opponent of the rising of an oppressed people, that on the head of the popular leader he set a price, that he promised with the cold-blooded deliberation of a military despatch to sack Berber. That civilisation to-day can find no higher type to worship than this, speaks ill for civilisation. We refuse to name Gordon as hero. The best he can be called is "unhappy." An unfortunate product of our terrible system that manufactures criminals at one end of the social scale and patriots at the other.

The necessity of making the position of Socialists clear on the Egyptian business and the number of contributions from foreign Socialists welcoming the formation of our organisation and the foundation of our paper, determine in some measure the character of this second number. Our educational articles are not, as will be seen, forgotten, and in ensuing numbers they will be yet more to the fore.

In connexion with the subject of education, the first attempt of the League in that direction has met with an agreeably surprising success. The lessons in Socialism that have been given up to the present time have been productive of good audiences and good work. The four to be given on the Thursdays in March at South Place Institute at 8.30 p.m., deal respectively with Labour, the Factory Acts, Manufactures, Machinery, from the Socialistic point of view. A series of pamphlets under the general heading "The Socialistic Platform" is in contemplation.

Again we remind our readers that this paper is under the direction of the whole of the Provisional Council of the Socialist League, whose servants the editor and sub-editor are. That Provisional Council will cease to exist as soon as a general Conference of the League is called. The number of members that have already given in their adhesion and their names

warrants us in saying that such a Conference will be summoned in a very short time, and a Council no longer provisional elected.

To those who have our principles in their heads and the cause of the workers at heart, we appeal once again. Join the League, or better still, form branches of it in your various localities, read and circulate our paper, attend our lessons, discuss with your fellows the social question. For there is but one, that, Aaron's-rod fashion, swallows up those of all the magicians.

## GORDON AND THE SOUDAN.

ABOUT February last year two figures were circling round the office of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the one writing articles, the other being interviewed; they were those of the two ex-Governors of the Soudan, Sir Samuel Baker and General Gordon, then just returned from Brussels. About the same time (or a little earlier) Sir Samuel was zealously advocating in the columns of the same journal the improving of the situation provided by the defeat of his brother's Egyptian force at Tokar for the conquest of the Soudan and the establishment of a second East India Company, or syndicate of stock-jobbers, who were to administer East Africa in the interests of commercial enterprise. The ex-Governors were avowed personal friends, so much so that of the first two messages sent by Gordon to England on the resumption of communication between Khartoum and the outer world, last autumn, one was to Sir Samuel Baker, the other being to his (Gordon's) son. It is hardly, therefore, too much to assume that the two *habitués* of the *Pall Mall Gazette* office were in close communication with each other during the "hero's" stay in London, and frequent interchanged views on the matter with which their public was most intimately associated. The sentiments of Gordon, moreover, were openly known to coincide with those of Baker and the *Pall Mall Gazette*—at least, in his objection to the abandonment of the Soudan and his desire to see an English Protectorate. Shortly afterwards Gordon left England, professedly to effect the evacuation of the country and the release of the Egyptian garrisons.

Now we submit that the simple circumstances above indicated throw a light on what has followed, by which all who are not wilfully blind must see in this wretched business one of the most odious pieces of politico-commercial "jobbery" to which even this country has given birth. Whatever may have been the intention of the Government—if it had any—one thing is quite clear, to wit, that it was not the intention of Gordon or his friends that the Soudan should be abandoned if he or they could help it.

After the infuriated market-hunters had succeeded in raising the flimsiest and most baseless of cuckoo cries for British intervention, that of the rescue of cut-throats, with whose dangers England politically was as much concerned as with those of Russian garrisons in Central Asia; who were there simply to bolster up the admittedly iniquitous rule of the Pachas, the majority of whom as it has proved were only too willing to accept the easy terms of submission offered them by the Mahdi, and the rest of whom put together would not equal in number by many thousands the lives necessarily lost in a campaign even the shortest;—after having by means of this hypocritical cant procured the dispatch of their right-hand man, Gordon, what do we find ensue? Is any serious attempt made to negotiate with the Mahdi on behalf of those precious Bashi-Bazouk garrisons as to the fate of whom the pathetic voice of the lachrymose Jingo had been raised so loud in the land? No; but the "Christian hero," after making one or two obviously impossible demands on the home authorities, proceeds to fortify himself within the walls of Khartoum, and with the help of the garrison and all the fighting men he can get together, to wage war on the surrounding tribes, whom he had but just previously called his friends.

The epilogue to this action might have been easily foreseen. British troops were demanded to assist in the work of carnage. The situation thus created naturally afforded a splendid opportunity for a still louder and more pathetic wail than even that over the *Bashi-Bazouks*—a wail alone comparable in its intensity of anguish to the cry of the Nile crocodile in its midnight lair. "Gordon abandoned!" welled up from the organs of Tory-Jingo, Whig-Jingo, and—save the mark!—Democratic-Jingo, indifferently. Here was indeed a triumph for the market-hunter. The *Pall Mall*, *St. James's*, *Times*, and *Telegraph* chanting in militant harmony. An expedition could not start at once owing to the climate, but the trick was done nevertheless. A Government whose sole policy is "office" cannot afford to disregard the plainly-expressed wishes of the bulk of the upper and wealthy middle classes, its masters, even if its members individually wish to do so, which, inasmuch as they themselves belong to those classes, is intrinsically improbable. However that may be, nay, however much the Government as a Government even, would have preferred to keep out of the present quagmire, its hand was forced. A pledge was given, an expedition prepared, and at the earliest opportunity, despatched for the ostensible purpose of rescuing the "Christian hero"—who had professedly gone out on a "pacific mission," with loud protestations of his power by personal influence alone to effect the object of his mission—and to rescue him from a situation he had deliberately created by his aggressive action. Such are the facts which have led up to the Soudan War. Who cannot see in them the hand of that providence that rules our civilisation—the great god Capital, acting through his angels and ministering spirits of the bourgeois press?

Khartoum has fallen amid massacre (we are told). Gordon is killed. Who is to blame? We answer proximately Gordon himself, and ultimately the English capitalist class. Had it not been for the latter Gordon would never have been sent out. Had it not been for Gordon's inducements the inhabitants of Khartoum would never have fought against their own countrymen, and thus excited the fury of the Mahdi's victorious troops. What quarrel had they with the Mahdi? Little doubt but they would have gladly accepted the deliverance from the tyranny of the Pachas he came to offer, but for the gold and promises proffered by English spread-eagelism through its representative, Gordon.

Of course we must have the regulation gush, the regulation mock heroics, the regulation howl of indignation, the regulation yell for the re-establishment of British prestige. Spartanlike bravery, truly, to slaughter ill-armed and ill-disciplined barbarians with the odds, as proved again and again, a hundred to one in favour of your coming out with a whole skin. It may be excellent sport, rather better than pigeon shooting, to catch hordes of Arabs in a trap as at Kirbekan, and then mow them down while they are trying to escape; but do not call it fighting, and spare us talk about its involving prestige.

Let the working classes of England remember that this organised brigandage was deliberately planned from the beginning, and that Gordon's "pacific mission" was only too obviously a blind. Had the relief of the garrisons been really an object of solicitude it could have been easily effected even when the "hero" was already shrieking for British troops to help him "smash the Mahdi." Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, not a "Christian hero," perhaps, but an honest man, and one whose disinterested love for the Arab race is beyond question, was in a position to guarantee successful negotiations, had the opportunity been given him of making them. But such an issue was not quite good enough for the "influential" public for which the *Pall Mall Gazette* and its congeners write. Annexation would have been thereby indefinitely postponed, and the syndicate of stock-jobbers wanted to "leave their damnable faces and begin" at the earliest possible juncture. And they have got their way.

E. BELFORD BAX.

## THE ACTUAL POSITION OF RUSSIA.

(*Narodnaia Volia's "Messenger," January, 1885.*)

In a country like Russia, where all manifestations of public opinion are checked, and every exposure of public wrongs considered as a crime, the clandestine papers have a twofold interest. Whilst tracing the progress of the revolutionary idea, and furthering this by means of propaganda, such publications are at the same time the only windows through which one can have insight into the internal conditions of the country, as no other publications are allowed to lay bare the truth.

A paper like *Narodnaia Volia's Messenger*—a large review, published abroad, and having no urgent questions of daily politics to deal with—is particularly adapted to this double office. It is from that point of view that the paper has particular

claims upon the attention of foreign readers. Let us, then, gather up some hints as to the actual condition of Russia as reflected in the newly-published number of *Narodnaia Volia's* paper.

The movement first. Arrests, sentences, deportations, executions—here is the only measure of the intensity of a struggle carried on by conspiracy. If this be so, we may fairly presume the battle to be as fierce and unrelenting as ever. There are arrests everywhere. In some of the principal cities of the empire the number of arrests is very considerable. In St. Petersburg it reached 200 in a few months; in Moscow 250 for the year 1884. In Odessa in a few days there were 65 arrests. Hardly a single considerable city has been spared. Every class, every grade of society, is represented in the lists of proscription. There are numbers of students and young people generally, but these make no more than half of the whole number of victims. Workmen and magistrates, tradespeople and men of the liberal professions, functionaries of the government, professors of the universities, painters, singers, stage-players, members of municipalities or provincial assemblies, men of letters, men of the sword—all society is faithfully represented. No class—hardly a section of a class—is missing. There is even a clergyman (John Voinoff, of Toula) arrested for having proclaimed from the pulpit that "it is a sin to call the present emperor 'pious,' because he is the most impious of all the tzars, having inflicted loss and sorrow on all honest families." For Russia such a fact is the same as if a Turkish pasha proclaimed the sultan a scoundrel. The general discontent, the growth of opposition and the spreading of revolutionary tendencies through all the country are obvious.

But what is more alarming still for our present masters is the fact that the revolution is in a fair way to inflame a large part of the class that is now the only support of the Government—the army. The progress of revolutionary ideas in the army is certainly a point of great interest. But I will not dwell on this subject, already exposed by M. Tichomiroff to the readers of Socialist papers.

I pass to the general condition of Russia. Many interesting documents received by the editors give us a picture of the corruption at which official circles have arrived. A full account of the last disorders of Kieff University, so misrepresented in official reports, shows us what the Russian universities are. We see a rector, presumed to be the head of a learned body and who is but a common informer, sending denunciations even against the chief of the Kieff police, M. Mastizky, accusing him of helping the Socialist propaganda. And when this rector by his pusillanimity and lying, produced a student "rebellion" the government, without asking information even from the Governor-General of the province, expelled 1,000 students from the university.

The general administration is represented by a series of extracts from the private reports presented to the emperor by Senator Polov-Zeff. It is shown to demonstration how in Russia every swindler can obtain complete immunity if he contrives to make a partner of some police-agent. And as there is no country where you cannot find a heap of swindlers anxious to take advantage of impunity, it results that Russia is given as a prey, not to a reactionary policy, but to a gang of rogues who, under the cover of imperial irresponsibility, are plundering the country, ruining the state, and reducing to a chronic starvation the too patient peasantry.

But even the bovine endurance of Russian peasants seems to have its limits. At the same time that in the upper strata of the nation we witness the progress of revolutionary movement, there are facts showing that in the lower strata not all is quiet and safe. The marshalls of the nobility of the districts Uffa, Sterlitamak, Belebeier, Birska and Slatoustorsk, have stated in the name of their electors, that the nobility of their respective districts are quite unable to enjoy their landed property. Peasants of Russian as well as Bashkir origin, who commit from time to time acts of plunder on their property, have within the last two years declared open war against them. In open daylight in bands of 50, 80, even 100 men, armed with axes, clubs and guns, they come, take possession of the land and behave themselves as masters. They mow down dozens of acres of grass and cut entire forests of wood, carrying their booty on cars (under escort) to their respective villages. At the slightest sign of resistance from the manager, proprietor, servants, or representatives of local authority, the peasants use arms, inflicting severe injuries or death upon their enemies, and plunder or burn the buildings. There are many cases where their audacity goes further. The peasants turn out the hired labourers of the proprietors and begin to work on their own account large pieces of land belonging to landlords. Sometimes they are still bolder. To M. Rall, for instance, they sent a message intimating to him that they had passed at their meeting a resolu-

tion to take for their use one of his fields of fifty acres, and were firmly decided to carry their resolution into effect. An identical intimation was made to the colonel of the Body Guard, M. Tevkeleff. And the proprietor cannot but resign himself to his fate—the attacks and intrusions being repeated “every day,” as one of the nobleman’s representatives declared. The landlords were driven to despair—many of them have abandoned their property to its fate and fled to the towns, awaiting better times and laying complaint of these outrages before the government.

Better times will come to the Uffa nobility; there can be no doubt of it. Stirred by their laments the government will send a number of troops that will put all things right. But will it be for long? Will the peasants desist from attacks after the soldiers retire? And what is much more serious, are not those small disorders merely the forerunners of general disorders on the part of peasants who stand face to face with the dilemma of either starving or taking the law into their own hands. Last summer outrages of a similar character occurred in the Don province. They were suppressed by the troops; now they are repeated much more strongly and in quite spontaneous fashion at the other end of Russia. One need not be a prophet to say that if the present conditions of Russia are not changed, they will be repeated again and again.

Russia is marching towards a general revolution, a complete re-organisation of her social conditions. No opposition, no amount of obstinacy or cruelty can prevent it. But a partial revolution has taken the lead; a revolution which we may call a town revolution, a revolution of instructed classes—a political revolution, in a word. Upon the success or unsuccess of this partial revolution, it depends whether the general Russian revolution will be a pacific and humanitarian one, having at its head the most enlightened part of the working classes and the intellectual proletariat—or will be a violent, barbarous, sanguinary one, made by the outburst of despair, which knows no mercy and no laws.

STEPNIAK.

THE POLITICAL GAME OF THE POLICE IN FRANCE.

The police are preparing and contriving plots just as if the Republic and the Monarchy were one and the same thing. It is the Gambettists who have lately in France driven the police into the profession of conspirators. Their first stroke was a master-stroke. The International was suppressed here by the law of the strongest; but the police re-established an imaginary International. They published in the Gambettist journal, the *Paris*, lists of adherents, rules, etc., which enabled them to arrest Krapotkin, Bernard, and other Anarchists. On the Anarchist journal of Lyons, the *Droit Social*, they then placed one of their own men, and it was his articles, that breathed nothing but blood and thunder, which, read at the trials, contributed to the condemnation of the accused Anarchists, many of whom were sentenced to five years’ imprisonment. Proud of their success, they thought they would succeed in insinuating members into Socialist organisations, so as to catch them in its snares. In point of fact they have succeeded in getting agents into all the organisations, men who have had to limit themselves to the simple rôle of informers, having never acquired enough influence to provoke any overt action. It is only in the Anarchist party that these agents can get any influence, as is proved by the case of the policeman Druelle, denounced and exposed publicly some weeks ago: he was one of the Anarchist leaders, and was amongst those who openly preached riot and the pillaging of shops.

But an event has happened which shows that the police no longer hope to reckon on the Anarchists, but intend to get up plots themselves. On very vague information an agent of the police named Br\*\*\* was sent to Monceaux-Mines to discover there a plot which would have just suited the Government for the coming elections. After a week’s inquiries on the spot, the policeman was clear that there was no plot. But as they had promised him 5000 francs reward for the discovery of a plot, he found nothing simpler than to organise a plot himself, that he might have the merit of denouncing it. He procured dynamite, daggers and revolvers, enrolled some simple miners, blew up a chapel, and killed a gendarme with a revolver-shot. Twenty-seven persons were arrested on the denunciation of this police conspirator; but he had not taken his measures cleverly enough to escape suspicion of guilt, and Justice had him arrested. Then the police claimed their man. Even the Minister of the Interior, Waldeck-Rousseau, came forward to have him released in the interests of order and the police. But the matter was so serious that the Minister of Justice, Martin Feuillet, had to refuse this satisfaction to his colleague, declaring to him that if the policeman were released it would be impossible to keep under arrest the duped fellow-conspirators of the policeman. So that the man of the police will pay dearly for his plot, to the great despair of the whole French police, which for some time past has seen all its infamies laid bare by the Socialists. Our new Minister of War, General Lewal, who seems, happily, to have had more to do with leaden soldiers than soldiers of flesh and blood, did, however, utter a great truth in his maiden speech. He said that the army could not be kept inactive, and that for this good reason it was absolutely necessary from time to time to make little spurts of war. The police takes just the same view as the general: it organises plots from time to time to show that the police is indispensable. If this goes on, the bourgeois order will be menaced not by the revolutionists, but by the official defenders of order themselves. Thus people are beginning seriously to ask if it would not be very useful to organise a counter-police.

PAUL LAFARGUE.

“The statement that . . . a ship . . . may . . . be capsized with ease or with difficulty, according to the character or degree of stability. It may possess the very scientific truism . . . Yet . . . it has been strange, almost culpably ignored by many who are responsible for the safety of ships.”—*Nature*.

OUR CIVILISATION.

The church bells were chiming their summons to Sunday worship, as your correspondent issued forth on a mission to make a few random notes on how the “day of rest” is passed by the various classes of the population.

My first steps brought me to the belt of squares which constitutes the nucleus of his Grace of Bedford’s property east of Tottenham Court Road. This neighbourhood is a decayed Belgravia, and although outwardly the houses are hideous, inwardly they are handsome and commodious, faced by broad gardens and backed by trees, and possessing all those hygienic and sanitary conditions which make town life bearable.

Here are some of the inhabitants of this middle-class region wending their way to church. Notice this group of befurred and beflowered misses, whose attempts to keep up to every latest fashion have resulted in distorting their bodies and imparting to their gait a camel-like waddle. And see, here come Pater and Materfamilias; evidently the world has used them well, if plumpness is a sign of contentment. These are soon joined by a specimen of the petrified maiden lady type, who carries, in addition to her Church-service, a small pug dog; and, judging from the care she bestows upon it, she would not wish to enter the state of heavenly beatitude unaccompanied by her pet.

They merge at the church portals into a well-fed and well-clothed crowd containing many similar types, and settle down in their rented pews to listen to their favourite preacher expatiating on the blessings of poverty. I had noticed the heartless stare or shuddering averted gaze with which these lip-servants of the Nazarene Carpenter greeted the advent of a beggar or tramp if one chanced across their path, and my mind became filled with indignant thoughts on the condition of things which produces this contrast. I peered down into the kitchen and saw my class busily preparing the midday meal for the return of these Pharisæical parasites, and I bethought me that whilst in their comfort and affluence they employ a whole army of our brothers and sisters as helots, to minister to their wants and drive them in carriages to the scenes of their mock worship, they insultingly deny the right of the working class to a brighter or better existence even on the seventh day. Where not wholly indifferent to the misery of those who produce their wealth, and to the pressing social questions around, they are feebly and futilely endeavouring to patch the system up by soup-tickets and tract distribution, and the insulting cant of the mission-hall. As I passed through the gates which an aristocratic landlord is allowed to maintain across our public thoroughfares in order that the common herd shall not disturb the quietude of those whom I have just described, I thought the Social Revolution will find these people, and their more aristocratic congeners of Belgravia, unready, and overwhelm them.

A short, quick walk soon changes the scene, and I am in the midst of the narrow courts and streets which lie behind the deceptive frontages of Holborn. The narrow street through which I pass is filled with a choking, sooty atmosphere, which seems to begrime all it touches. On my left hand is a succession of courts, all ending in *cul-de-sacs*. In the centre of some and at the side of others are placed common dustbins, all overflowing with evil-smelling refuse. Barrow-boards and barrows lie about the entrance of the houses, and along the filthy, darksome passages, and on the flags of the narrow and horrible back-yards, is stored the unsold greenstuff belonging to the costers who rent the lower part of the houses. The intended for the close proximity to the sink-hole, down which ever and anon is poured a mass of odorous slops. In the upper portions of these places there exist, in addition about to write lives—a class of hand vegetable-sellers, too poor to have barrows, and their wares are stored in the most convenient place possible as the bedstead covers the largest space in these confined dens, the rest of the imagination can supply the rest. These bedsteads, by the way, are like the wooden partitions comprising the rooms, swarming in summer with disgusting vermin. All the efforts which the unfortunate tenants, between their struggles for a hand-to-mouth existence, make for the extirpation of these pests are unavailing, on account of the dilapidated character of the property; and to get drunk in order that they may not be disturbed by these horrible companions is their frequent expedient.

A philanthropist who has dabbled in matters pertaining to the housing of the poor, and been able to reap five per cent. from her efforts, said recently that, after all, the one-room life was not so intolerable as it seemed. The one room here is shared in many cases by two and three families, the honest amongst whom strive to maintain an existence by hand-selling and market-jobbing—a class who, when the fight becomes too severe, die by the roadside of want rather than enter the bastilles erected for the punishment of poverty; a class, moreover, whom no efforts of Trades Unions as such can affect, and to whom the utterances of a Brassey or Levy as to increased prosperity are a mockery, which some day they may reward as it deserves, if the rich will persist in shutting their eyes to these horrors, and make up their minds to defend what they know to be an iniquity. Amongst, and inextricably mixed with, them are those whose rebellion against the law and order of Society takes the form of prostitution, theft, and violence. And last, but not least, in these places are the stunted and weakened forms of the child-victims of that state of modern civilisation into which, according to religious cant, it has pleased God to call them. Unfortunate children! their homes in these sunless, poverty-stricken, crime-beggetting haunts; their playground the filthy, reeking stoves. The full weight of Society’s injustice, of man’s inhumanity to man, is endured by them; they are foredoomed to the cell, the dock, and the hospital and pauper wards; for Society will not relinquish its right to punish, though the irreparable wrongs committed by Society itself.

If you ask who are those who keep and maintain these human sties for the reverts they produce, whose monopoly of the means of production and financial juggling are responsible for this horrible condition of things, search among the sleek churchgoers I have just left, pretending to be the followers of Him who whipped the money-changers from the temple. They are the comfortablist whose comfort is purchased at the expense of the misery and degradation I have so inadequately described. How long they will enjoy their comfort so bought is a question for Revolutionary Socialists to answer.

F. KIRZ.

“In the opinion of Mr. George Richardson, the chairman of the North Metropolitan Tramways Company, about sixteen hours a day, with no day of rest in the week, is fair service to exact from a tramway conductor, and about fourpence an hour is a very good wage to pay him. But according to one or two more humane shareholders such hours are intolerable slavery and a reproach to the company. One shareholder, indeed, ventured, in the interests of humanity, to hint that men could not last long at that rate, and that the hours really worked were eighteen per cent, not last long at that rate, and that four hours rest per week. No wonder the North Metropolitan Tramways Company pays 9½ per cent.; no wonder Mr. George Richardson thought the discussion of such matters should be avoided at their public meetings.”—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

# THE COMMONWEAL.

MARCH, 1885.

All literary communications should be addressed to the Editor of THE COMMONWEAL, 27 Farringdon Street, E.C. They must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer, not necessarily for publication.

Rejected MSS. can only be returned if a stamped directed envelope is forwarded with them.

All business communications to be addressed to the Secretary of the Socialist League, 27 Farringdon Street, E.C.

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE attention of Branches, Members, and Foreign Socialist Bodies is directed to the report from the Central Office of the Socialist League. Exchanges are asked to copy the resolution on the Soudan War.

A MANIFESTO by the Socialist League on the Soudan War will be issued on March 1. Copies will be sent to anyone on receipt of stamp for postage.

M.A. (Cantab).—We never notice anonymous letters. Forgive us for saying that the tone of yours makes it difficult to believe that your *nom de plume* is genuine.

F. C. SLAUGHTER.—Your letter is not of sufficient interest for publication. We by no means admit "that the English-speaking people are by far the most advanced in both political and social forms." And even if they were, "leadership" of nations is as objectionable to the Socialist as leadership of individuals. This however does not prevent us from saying with you "any changes effected here will doubtless have a very powerful effect upon all the other nations of the civilised world."

ERNEST TIPPING.—Whoever stated that any one of the members of the Socialist League had offered to give lessons in dynamite was either unwittingly or wilfully telling an untruth.

RECEIVED.—Christian Globe—Defense des Travailleurs (organ of the Socialist and Revolutionary Workers of the north-east of France)—Co-operative News—Liberty (Boston)—Cri du Peuple (daily)—La Revue Socialiste (Paris).

THE following resolution has been unanimously passed: "That the Provisional Council of the Socialist League is convinced that the invasion of the Soudan was undertaken with the covert intention of exploiting that country for commercial greed, and that therefore the check inflicted on the British invaders should be hailed by all supporters of the Cause of the People as a triumph of right over wrong, of righteous self-defence over ruffianly brigandage."

COMRADES.—The Socialist League has heavy expenses—rent of offices, halls for meetings and lectures, printing of hand-bills, and so forth; it is necessary also that it should at once set about publishing pamphlets and leaflets setting forth the principles of Socialism, and that it should engage in organising Socialism in the provinces. Many of those who are giving the most valuable personal help to the propaganda are not in a position to give money-help to it; we therefore ask those who can afford to give money to do their best in that way also. It is most desirable that the League should have a steady income, and we ask therefore that where possible the subscriptions should be regular, weekly or otherwise. Names and subscriptions should be sent to the Treasurer, William Morris, Kelmescott House, 26 Upper Mall, Hammersmith; they will be acknowledged through the post.—WILLIAM MORRIS, Treasurer.

## THE MESSAGE OF THE MARCH WIND.

FAIR now is the springtide, now earth lies beholding  
With the eyes of a lover the face of the sun;  
Long lasteth the daylight, and hope is enfolding  
The green-growing acres with increase begun.

Now sweet, sweet it is through the land to be straying  
'Mid the birds and the blossoms and the beasts of the fields;  
Love mingles with love, and no evil is weighing  
On thy heart or mine, where all sorrow is healed.

From township to township, o'er down and by tillage  
Fair, far, have we wandered and long was the day,  
But now cometh eve at the end of the village,  
Where over the grey wall the church riseth grey.

There is wind in the twilight; in the white road before us  
The straw from the ox-yard is blowing about;  
The moon's rim is rising, a star glitters o'er us,  
And the vane on the spire-top is swinging in doubt.

Down there dips the highway, toward the bridge crossing o'er  
The brook that runs on to the Thames and the sea.  
Draw closer, my sweet, we are lover and lover;  
This eve art thou given to gladness and me.

Shall we be glad always? Come closer and hearken:  
Three fields further on, as they told me down there,  
When the young moon has set, if the March sky should darken,  
We might see from the hill-top the great city's glare.

Hark, the wind in the elm-boughs! From London it bloweth,  
And telling of gold, and of hope and unrest;  
Of power that helps not; of wisdom that knoweth,  
But teacheth not aught of the worst and the best.

Of the rich men it telleth, and strange is the story  
How they have, and they hanker, and grip far and wide;  
And they live and they die, and the earth and its glory  
Has been but a burden they scarce might abide.

Hark! the March wind again of a people is telling;  
Of the life that they live there, so haggard and grim,  
That if we and our love amidst them had been dwelling  
My fondness had faltered, thy beauty grown dim.

This land we have loved in our love and our leisure  
For them hangs in heaven, high out of their reach;  
The wide hills o'er the sea-plain for them have no pleasure,  
The grey homes of their fathers no story to teach.

The singers have sung and the builders have builded,  
The painters have fashioned their tales of delight;  
For what and for whom hath the world's book been gilded,  
When all is for these but the blackness of night?

How long and for what is their patience abiding?  
How oft and how oft shall their story be told,  
While the hope that none seeketh in darkness is hiding  
And in grief and in sorrow the world groweth old?

\* \* \* \* \*

Come back to the inn, love, and the lights and the fire,  
And the fiddler's old tune and the shuffling of feet;  
For there in a while shall be rest and desire,  
And there shall the morrow's uprising be sweet.

Yet, love, as we wend the wind bloweth behind us  
And beareth the last tale it telleth to-night,  
How here in the spring-tide the message shall find us;  
For the hope that none seeketh is coming to light.

Like the seed of midwinter, unheeded, unperished,  
Like the autumn-sown wheat 'neath the snow lying green,  
Like the love that o'ertook us, unawares and uncherished,  
Like the babe 'neath thy girdle that groweth unseen,

So the hope of the people now buddeth and groweth—  
Rest fadeth before it, and blindness and fear;  
It biddeth us learn all the wisdom it knoweth;  
It hath found us and held us, and biddeth us hear:

For it beareth the message: "Rise up on the morrow  
And go on your ways toward the doubt and the strife;  
Join hope to our hope and blend sorrow with sorrow,  
And seek for men's love in the short days of life."

But lo, the old inn, and the lights and the fire,  
And the fiddler's old tune and the shuffling of feet;  
Soon for us shall be quiet and rest and desire,  
And to-morrow's uprising to deeds shall be sweet.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

## ENGLAND IN 1845 AND IN 1885.

FORTY years ago England stood face to face with a crisis, solvable to all appearances by force only. The immense and rapid development of manufactures had outstripped the extension of foreign markets and the increase of demand. Every ten years the march of industry was violently interrupted by a general commercial crash, followed, after a long period of chronic depression, by a few short years of prosperity, and always ending in feverish over-production and consequent renewed collapse. The capitalist class clamored for Free Trade in corn, and threatened to enforce it by sending the starving population of the towns back to the country districts, whence they came: to invade them, as John Bright said, not as paupers begging for bread, but as an army quartered upon the enemy. The working masses of the towns demanded their share of political power—the People's Charter; they were supported by the majority of the small trading class, and the only difference between the two was whether the Charter should be carried by physical or by moral force. Then came the commercial crash of 1847 and the Irish famine, and with both the prospect of revolution.

The French Revolution of 1848 saved the English middle class, The Socialistic pronunciamentos of the victorious French workmen frightened the small middle class of England

and disorganised the narrower, but more matter-of-fact, movement of the English working class. At the very moment Chartism was bound to assert itself in its full strength, it collapsed internally, before even it collapsed externally on the 10th of April, 1848. The action of the working class was thrust into the background. The capitalist class triumphed along the whole line.

The Reform Bill of 1831 had been the victory of the whole capitalist class over the landed aristocracy. The repeal of the Corn Laws was the victory of the manufacturing capitalists not only over the landed aristocracy, but over those sections of capitalists too whose interests were more or less bound up with the landed interest: bankers, stock-jobbers, fundholders, etc. Free Trade meant the re-adjustment of the whole home and foreign commercial and financial policy of England in accordance with the interests of the manufacturing capitalists—the class which now represented the nation. And they set about this task with a will. Every obstacle to industrial production was mercilessly removed. The tariff and the whole system of taxation were revolutionised. Everything was made subordinate to one end, but that end of the utmost importance to the manufacturing capitalist: the cheapening of all raw produce, and especially of the means of living of the working class; the reduction of the cost of raw material, and the keeping down—if not as yet the *bringing down*—of wages. England was to become the “workshop of the world”; all other countries were to become for England what Ireland already was—markets for her manufactured goods, supplying her in return with raw materials and food. England the great manufacturing centre of an agricultural world, with an ever-increasing number of corn and cotton-growing Irelands, revolving around her, the industrial sun. What a glorious prospect!

The manufacturing capitalists set about the realisation of this their great object with that strong common sense and that contempt for traditional principles which has ever distinguished them from their more narrow-minded compeers on the Continent. Chartism was dying out. The revival of commercial prosperity, natural after the revulsion of 1847 had spent itself, was put down altogether to the credit of Free Trade. Both these circumstances had turned the English working class, politically, into the tail of the great Liberal party, the party led by the manufacturers. This advantage, once gained, had to be perpetuated. And the manufacturing capitalists, from the Chartist opposition not to Free Trade, but to the transformation of Free Trade into the one vital national question, had learnt and were learning more and more that the middle class can never obtain full social and political power over the nation except by the help of the working class. Thus a gradual change came over the relations between both classes. The Factory Acts, once the bugbear of all manufacturers, were not only willingly submitted to, but their expansion into acts regulating almost all trades, was tolerated. Trades' Unions, lately considered inventions of the devil himself, were now petted and patronised as perfectly legitimate institutions and as useful means of spreading sound economical doctrines amongst the workers. Even strikes, than which nothing had been more nefarious up to 1848, were now gradually found out to be occasionally very useful, especially when provoked by the masters themselves, at their own time. Of the legal enactments, placing the workman at a lower level or at a disadvantage with regard to the master, at least the most revolting were repealed. And, practically, that horrid “People's Charter” actually became the political programme of the very manufacturers who had opposed it to the last. “The Abolition of the Property Qualification” and “Vote by Ballot” are now the law of the land. The Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 make a near approach to “universal suffrage,” at least such as it now exists in Germany; the Redistribution Bill now before Parliament creates “equal electoral districts”—on the whole not more unequal than than those of France or Germany; “payment of members” and shorter, if not actually “annual parliaments” are visibly looming in the distance—and yet there are people who say that Chartism is dead.

The Revolution of 1848, not less than many of its predecessors, has had strange bed-fellows and successors. The very people who put it down, have become, as Karl Marx used to say, its testamentary executors. Louis Napoleon had to create an independent and united Italy, Bismarck had to revolutionize Germany and to restore Hungarian independence, and the English manufacturers had to enact the People's Charter.

For England, the effects of this domination of the manufacturing capitalists were at first startling. Trade revived and extended to a degree unheard of even in this cradle of modern industry; the previous astounding creations of steam and machinery dwindled into nothing compared with the immense mass of productions of the twenty years from 1850 to 1870, with the overwhelming figures of exports and imports, of wealth

accumulated in the hands of capitalists and of human working power concentrated in the large towns. The progress was indeed interrupted, as before, by a crisis every ten years, in 1857 as well as in 1868; but these revulsions were now considered as natural, inevitable events, which must be fatalistically submitted to, and which always set themselves right in the end.

And the condition of the working class during this period? There was temporary improvement even for the great mass. But this improvement always was reduced to the old level by the influx of the great body of the unemployed reserve, by the constant superseding of hands by new machinery, by the immigration of the agricultural population, now, too, more and more superseded by machines.

A permanent improvement can be recognised for two “protected” sections only of the working class. Firstly, the factory hands. The fixing by Act of Parliament of their working day within relatively rational limits, has restored their physical constitution and endowed them with a moral superiority, enhanced by their local concentration. They are undoubtedly better off than before 1848. The best proof is that out of ten strikes they make, nine are provoked by the manufacturers in their own interests, as the only means of securing a reduced production. You can never get the masters to agree to work “short time,” let manufactured goods be ever so unsaleable; but get the workpeople to strike, and the masters shut their factories to a man.

Secondly, the great Trades' Unions. They are the organisations of those trades in which the labor of *grown-up men* predominates, or is alone applicable. Here the competition neither of women and children nor of machinery has so far weakened their organised strength. The engineers, the carpenters and joiners, the bricklayers, are each of them a power, to that extent that, as in the case of the bricklayers and bricklayers' labourers, they can even successfully resist the introduction of machinery. That their condition has remarkably improved since 1848 there can be no doubt, and the best proof of this is in the fact that for more than fifteen years not only have their employers been with them, but they with their employers, upon exceedingly good terms. They form an aristocracy among the working class; they have succeeded in enforcing for themselves a relatively comfortable position, and they accept it as final. They are the model working men of Messrs. Leone, Levi and Giffen, and they are very nice people indeed nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general.

But as to the great mass of the working people, the state of misery and insecurity in which they live now is as low as ever, if not lower. The East-end of London is an ever-spreading pool of stagnant misery and desolation, of starvation when out of work, and degradation, physical and moral, when in work. And so in all other large towns—abstraction made of the privileged minority of the workers; and so in the smaller towns and in the agricultural districts. The law which reduces the *value* of labor-power to the value of the necessary means of subsistence, and the other law which reduces its *average price* as a rule to the minimum of those means of subsistence: these laws act upon them with the irresistible force of an automatic engine, which crushes them between its wheels.

This, then, was the position created by the Free Trade policy of 1847, and by twenty years of the rule of the manufacturing capitalists. But then a change came. The crash of 1868 was, indeed, followed by a slight and short revival about 1873; but that did not last. We did not, indeed, pass through the full crisis at the time it was due, in 1877 or 1878; but we have had, ever since 1876, a chronic state of stagnation in all dominant branches of industry. Neither will the full crash come; nor will the period of longed-for prosperity to which we used to be entitled before and after it. A dull depression, a chronic glut of all markets for all trades, that is what we have been living in for nearly ten years. How is this?

The Free Trade theory was based upon one assumption: that England was to be the one great manufacturing centre of an agricultural world. And the actual fact is that this assumption has turned out to be a pure delusion. The conditions of modern industry, steam-power and machinery, can be established wherever there is fuel, especially coals. And other countries beside England: France, Belgium, Germany, America, even Russia, have coals. And the people over there did not see the advantage of being turned into Irish pauper farmers merely for the greater wealth and glory of English capitalists. They set resolutely about manufacturing, not only for themselves but for the rest of the world; and the consequence is, that the manufacturing monopoly enjoyed by England for nearly a century is irretrievably broken up.

But the manufacturing monopoly of England is the pivot of

the present social system of England. Even while that monopoly lasted the markets could not keep pace with the increasing productivity of English manufacturers; the decennial crises were the consequence. And new markets are getting scarcer every day, so much so that even the negroes of the Congo are now to be forced into the civilisation attendant upon Manchester calicoes, Staffordshire pottery, and Birmingham hardware. How will it be when Continental, and especially American goods, flow in in ever increasing quantities—when the predominating share, still held by British manufactures, will become reduced from year to year? Answer, Free Trade, thou universal panacea?

I am not the first to point this out. Already, in 1883, at the the Southport meeting of the British Association, Mr. Inglis Palgrave, the President of the Economical section, stated plainly that "the days of great trade profits in England were over, and there was a pause in the progress of several great branches of industrial labour. *The country might almost be said to be entering the non-progressive state.*"

But what is to be the consequence? Capitalist production cannot stop. It must go on increasing and expanding, or it must die. Even now, the mere reduction of England's lion's share in the supply of the world's markets means stagnation, distress, excess of capital here, excess of unemployed work-people there. What will it be when the increase of yearly production is brought to a complete stop?

Here is the vulnerable place, the heel of Achilles, for capitalist production. Its very basis is the necessity of constant expansion, and this constant expansion now becomes impossible. It ends in a deadlock. Every year England is brought nearer face to face with the question: either the country must go to pieces, or capitalist production must. Which is it to be?

And the working class? If even under the unparalleled commercial and industrial expansion, from 1848 to 1863, they have had to undergo such misery; if even then the great bulk of them experienced at best a temporary improvement of their condition, while only a small, privileged, "protected" minority was permanently benefited, what will it be when this dazzling period is brought finally to a close; when the present dreary stagnation shall not only become intensified, but this its intensified condition shall become the permanent and normal state of English trade?

The truth is this: during the period of England's industrial monopoly the English working class have to a certain extent shared in the benefits of the monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out amongst them; the privileged minority pocketed most, but even the great mass had at least a temporary share now and then. And that is the reason why since the dying-out of Owenism there has been no Socialism in England. With the breakdown of that monopoly the English working class will lose that privileged position; it will find itself generally—the privileged and leading minority not excepted—on a level with its fellow-workers abroad. And that is the reason why there will be Socialism again in England.

FREDERICK ENGELS.

## SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

The proverbial parental relation of "the wish" to "the thought" is more easily realised if ignorance of French is knocking about. Several London journals, in dealing with the exposé of the police spies of Paris by the French Socialists, indulged in a maliciously free translation of the phrase "*exécution des espions.*" This they rendered "execution of divers spies," not knowing that "execution" here means "exposing." The French correspondent of the *Weekly Dispatch*, in our judgment the best of that ilk, was the first to notice and "execute" this blunder.

Socialists and dynamitards are not, as the American correspondent of the *Daily News* seems to think (by telegraph) convertible or even collateral terms.

The dilemma of the capitalistic press. To reconcile their diatribes against Madame Clovis Hugues with their sneaking fondness for Mrs. Dudley, would-be murderer of O'Donovan Rossa.

The crock calling the kettle smutty. Sir Stafford Northcote falling foul of Professor Thorold Rogers.

New work on India. "India for the Indians—and for England." The author is the Secretary of the National Liberal Club. He deserves to be.

The first special address to the Manchester Geographical Society has been delivered by Mr. Arthur Arnold, M.P. The subject was "Our Commercial Opportunities in Western Asia."

Mr. Arthur Arnold is a Radical. He has nothing better to talk about than our—Commercial Opportunities.

The Bishop of Manchester has been preaching on the manifesto of the Socialist League, and is much disturbed by it. His remarks on it are well meaning and amiable, and it must be said that he does not dare to deny the corruption and oppression of society which we assert; but his criticism is for the rest founded on that complete ignorance of Socialism which is the usual condition of the "educated" classes. We hope Dr. Fraser will take the occasion to correct this ignorance which the issue of our literature will give him.

A letter, signed "G. J. Holyoake," recently appeared in the *Daily News*. It was as full of fine phrasing as Mr. Holyoake's letters generally are. "Lurid figures on the horizon" became, a few lines down, under a temporary forgetfulness, "the fiery figures of strange platforms." It is not, however, with the imagery but with the reasoning that we have to do, though the two are curiously closely related. It is the plea, or rather the special pleading, for co-operation as it is today that calls for attention. "Many of the stores have more *Capital* than they know what to do with." They bear the banner, "*Profit sharing with labor.*" Industry is to have "an equitable portion of the *gain.*" But the three words we have italicised are as many impossibilities without unpaid labor and exploitation somewhere. Mr. Holyoake's co-operators as well as the capitalist individuals or companies, do "steal capital" and do "put their hands in" the pockets of others. Every farthing of their profit comes from the unremunerated toil of some of their fellow-men.

At the annual meeting of the Notts Chamber of Agriculture, Lord Belper and the Duke of St. Albans denounced the recent utterances of Mr. Chamberlain on the land question. Naturally.

The steady and self-contained attitude of the London population under the influence of dynamite explosions was well shown by the ubiquitous stampede that followed upon a clap of thunder on the day or night week after the Westminster folly and crime.

Mrs. Natalie Liebknecht's translation of Mrs. Lynn Linton's novel "Joshua Davidson," published some years ago in the *Neus Welt*, and lately issued as a volume with an introduction by Wilhelm Liebknecht, has been prohibited by the Prussian Police Government, under one of the articles of the Anti-Socialist Law.

Professor Voeglin of Zurich, the ardent advocate of International Factory Legislation, lately gave a most interesting lecture on this subject at Bale. He gave the following statistics regarding child labor in the various European countries:—In Germany children of 12 to 14 may be worked 6 hours; from 14 to 16, 10 hours. France, boys of 10 to 12 (under certain conditions); boys from 12 to 16 (under certain conditions) 12 hours. England, children under 13, 6—6½ hours; young persons and females, 10—10½ hours. Austria, children of 10 to 12 prohibited; from 12 to 14, 10 hours; from 14 to 16, 12 hours. Denmark, children of 10 to 14 may be worked 12 hours; young persons of 14 to 18, 12 hours. Netherlands, child labor for children under 12 prohibited. Spain, boys under 13 and girls under 14 may be worked 5 hours; boys of 13 to 15 and girls of 14 to 17, 8 hours. Italy and Belgium, no laws.

"Job," says a daily paper, "should have been chairman of the City Companies' Commission." Exactly: Job with a short "o."

EDWARD AVELING.

## EAST-END WORKERS.—II.

WE workers hail with great rejoicing the appearance of your new paper, and hope it soon will come out weekly. For a paper that commences with its first appearance to expose grievances should be well supported by the working classes. I am able to support your correspondent, J. Lane, in what he says about my trade, for he does not exaggerate when he says that coats are made for 6d., vests for 3d., and trousers for 4d., and find your own linen thread; but he should also say "and your own sewing machines, etc.," thus reducing your wages by 2s. 6d. per week. For this not only saves the employer going to the expense of buying machinery, but it saves him paying the rent of a workshop. Thus the masters get all these advantages without giving the work hands any more remuneration for all the expense they have to go to, and how many hundreds are there (not being able to get the necessary security to enable them to buy a sewing machine) who are therefore forced (owing to the severe competition which exists for starvation wages in our trade) to fly to the sweaters, who can give them any wages they like. Our greatest curse seems to be that we do not know each other, for if we knew and trusted each other we should be able to organise for the overthrow of the accursed system which is crushing into an untimely grave our best men and women. For it is only the cunning foxes that dare not speak their mind, or in other words, those who are devoid of any principle, that are able to get on now. You must not speak or you are sacked, and this in a country that boasts of being the most enlightened and free. Now a sweater goes to a shop, and by greasing the hand of the trimmer or taker-in he is enabled to get work and employs a few hands. For an example I will take one who lives not far from me. He employs five hands, and they make on the average 100 coats, 100 vests and 100 trousers a week. Now he pays one woman 12s. 6d. per week and one man 25s. per week, the other three girls get from 2s. 6d. to 3s. per week. He only wants those girls to put on buttons, or holes, and fell bottoms or sleeve linings, so that when they ask for a rise they get the sack and have to look out for other employment. Fancy 2s. 6d. to 3s. per week! Is it possible for them to live on this money? I say, emphatically, No! They have in most cases to eke out a living by becoming the mistresses or tools of

the trimmers or cutters, thus filling our streets with prostitutes. It sickens me to think of it, when we have men paid to teach morality at £15,000 a year, and this is the result. But let us return to the sweater. I say he makes 100 coats, 100 vests and 100 trousers.

	£	s.	d.	EXPENSES—	£	s.	d.
100 Coats -	-	-	2 10 0	Rent -	-	-	0 9 0
100 Vests -	-	-	1 5 0	Machines -	-	-	0 5 0
100 Trousers -	-	-	1 13 4	Wages -	-	-	2 5 0
				Grease for the cutter's hand -	-	-	0 5 0
			5 8 4				
			3 4 0				
			2 4 4				3 4 0

Thus leaving £2 4s. 4d. to this man for doing no work. I think that Professor Leone Levi reckoned a lot like this man in when he made his figures read that the working classes got on the average 32s. per week. Ah well, I believe there are a great many Levis and Giffens, and it is the leeches like the sweater I have mentioned that pay them their wages. They must write to suit their masters.

One thing in conclusion. We have lately had a great cry about small-pox. I know a man who makes coats, and a little while ago his girl had the small-pox while he had a lot of work at home. The prices he is paid for those coats are simply a disgrace to the master. He cannot keep himself and family clean, for he can barely earn sufficient to get food, and this is how the house is furnished. A table opposite the window, which serves for the double purpose of eating on and working on; a bed in the corner; a couple of chairs and a box; a sewing machine. I think he must be turning thrifty, for he does without fender and fire-irons, pictures or flower-pots. But I said a bed in the corner. It is with this bed that I am particularly to deal. There is no bed-clothing, therefore you may imagine a girl in bed with the small-pox. Is it natural for a father to have a few nice warm overcoats in the house to make without throwing some over his child? Why I went in and found that the work that had to go to the shop the next morning was over the girl. I spoke to him about it, and he begged of me not to tell his master, or there was nothing left for him but the workhouse. It is true we plough and sow, yet go hungry; make clothes, yet go naked; build palaces and mansions, yet live in dens and hovels. But I believe that there is a bright speck on the horizon that indicates that a change is near. Let us hope the *Commonweal* will hasten the time when we shall say together, "Freedom's day is dawning."

C. WILFRED.

### THE INDUSTRIAL REMUNERATION CONFERENCE.

*"Is the present system or manner whereby the products of industry are distributed between the various persons and classes of the community satisfactory? Or, if not, are there any means by which that system could be improved?"*

A GENTLEMAN in Edinburgh wanted to know this so badly that he actually gave a thousand pounds to have it argued out. Seven other gentlemen: Thomas Burt, M.P., J. Burnctt, Professor Foxwell (of Cambridge), Frederick Harrison, the Earl of Dalhousie, K.T., Sir Thomas Brassey, K.C.B., M.P., and Mr. Giffen, were accordingly appointed Trustees. The Statistical Society, invited to name half-a-dozen others to form a Committee, nominated Sir Rawson Rawson, K.C.M.G., C.B., Professor Leone Levi, F. G. P. Nelson, Stephen Bourne, David Dale (of Darlington), and the Rev. W. Cunningham (of Cambridge). These thirteen co-opted R. D. Roberts, A. H. D. Ackland, B. Jones, W. H. Hey, and W. Crawford (of Durham), to serve on the Committee with them. The Rev. W. Cunningham was appointed secretary; and Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, was engaged for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in the last week in January, in order to submit the questions to a Conference, at which Sir Charles Dilke undertook to preside. Now in order to have a Conference it is necessary to have persons to confer with. In this instance representative capitalists, workmen, economists, statisticians, and others specially interested in the question, 125 in all, were invited in certain proportions: 24 per cent. being Capitalists, 40 per cent. Trades' Unionists, 8 per cent. Friendly Society men, 12 per cent. Co-operators, and 16 per cent. a miscellaneous assortment of economists, socialists, individualists, philanthropists, over-populationists and so forth. None of the 125 were personally invited. They were selected and sent up as delegates by the clubs, chambers of commerce, unions or societies to which the Committee had applied; and hence they had what the English people call a representative character: that is, they had the power of saying exactly what they pleased for three days in the name of the people who voted for them, just as a member of Parliament has for seven years. It will be seen that the proportion between the representation of capital and labour was, on the whole, favorable to the latter; and the advantage so allowed to the workers was not in any way decreased by the selection of papers or speakers. The arrangements of the Conference seemed perfectly fair throughout, and Sir Charles Dilke's treatment of the speakers was much more considerate than their treatment of him.

On the first day, Wednesday, January 28, the question before the Conference was: "Has the increase of the products of industry within the last hundred years tended most to the benefit of capitalists and employers, or to that of the working classes, whether artisans, laborers or others? and in what relative proportions in any given period?"—Here was an opportunity for the statisticians. They rushed at it; and figures and percentages raged from ten o'clock until sunset. Mr. Giffen had his familiar say upon the subject; and Sir Thomas Brassey consoled the workers by pointing out that profits were constantly falling—"tending to a minimum." His paper, however, was not merely a dry economic contribution to the figures of the labour question. Towards the close it soared into eloquence. "The excesses of self-indulgence," said Sir Thomas, "have been held up to universal obloquy by the Poet-laureate in the opening lines of the *Palace of Art*. To the truly wise man, a life of ease presents no allurements. He knows how hard it is to avoid giving provocation to envy and hatred. He is humbled and saddened by the perpetual consciousness of the misery around him. Taste and the sense of duty alike point to simplicity of life. Wealth, if valued at all, will be valued only as a power which it is his duty to use as a steward for the public good." It is impossible to describe the zest which the reputation of the famous Brassey yacht and the envied Brassey diamonds gave to the applause with which this peroration was received by the assembly.

Mr. Loyd Jones followed with a paper which set forth clearly and forcibly the history and evolution of British industry much as Marx has described them. In the debate which followed, the capitalists and their retainers contended

that statistics prove that the workman is better off than he has ever been, and that his position is steadily improving. The workers, on the other hand, contended that their personal experience proves that wages, as measured by purchasing power, have fallen. The capitalists objected that the personal experience of one or two workmen proves nothing. The workmen retorted that facts are better than figures; and that workmen agree better on their facts than statisticians on their figures. Mulhall, Leone Levi, Giffen, Baxter, Mechi, and Bagehot were cited, questioned, overthrown and set up again, cheered and laughed at in turn: the general impression left by it all being that half the figures were guess-work and the rest beside the point; that the workers taken as a whole, skilled and unskilled together, have gained ground on the proprietors; and that the proprietors feel ill-used in consequence. There was the usual dispute as to the position of the agricultural labourer, some describing him as a starved helot with ten shillings a week, and others angrily insisting that he is an overfed and pampered prodigal with fourteen. An effective speech by Mr. Ball, of the Agricultural Labourer's Union, threw much light on the fourteen-shilling calculation. Mr. Saunders, of the English Land Restoration League, also contributed usefully to the discussion of the question. Mr. Glode Stapelton, from the Fabian Society, ventured on the thin ice by raising the question of the morality of interest. The honors of the day, however, were borne off by Miss Edith Simcox, whose paper made such an impression that the demand for copies outran the supply before she had finished reading it.

On the second day the question proposed was: "Do any remediable causes influence prejudicially, (a) the continuity of industrial employment, (b) the rates of wages, (c) the well-being of the working classes?" Professor Marshall, of Cambridge, one of the authors of "The Economics of Industry," which may be taken as a standard text-book of political economy, came forward with a paper which was one of the disappointments of the Conference. Professor Marshall thinks that we are much better off than we were, and admits that we might be much better off than we are; but considers that we are too apt to undervalue the former circumstance and to overrate the latter. He deplored the vagaries of fashion, thought we might easily restrain them (this was, on the whole, the wildest view advanced at the Conference), and lamented the effect on annuities of variations in the purchasing power of money. The delegates, who seemed in a vigorous revolutionary mood, evidently thought the Cambridge professor's attitude timid and his proposals paltry, and did not pause to consider whether he had not done a little service by studiously selecting for utterance points that, however insignificant, were not likely to be touched by anyone else. The discussion subsequently ran on co-operation, fair-trade, and profit-sharing, a plausible trick which was advocated by Mr. Sedley Taylor in one of the papers, and exposed by Professor Beesley in a speech admirable for its clearness and freedom from any attempt at oratorical display. Mr. Bradlaugh, as delegate of the Land Law Reform League, spoke early in the day on the impossibility of workmen ascertaining the truth as to the profits of their employers, with reference to which boards of arbitration are supposed to regulate wages. He advocated the establishment of a bureau of statistics on the model of that at Massachusetts. Mrs. Ann Ellis, of the Huddersfield and District Woollen Weavers, made a very clever speech, in the course of which she deftly whipped up the skirt of her jacket and placed it close under the eyes of the astonished President as a sample of shoddy which was retailed at nearly four times the price she received for making it. A prolonged roar of applause rewarded this capitably planned and executed appeal to the common sense of the audience against the statisticians. Mr. Burt, speaking to Mr. Lowthian Bell's paper, made the most convincing speech of the day, except perhaps Professor Beesley's.

On Friday, the last day, the Conference discussed "Whether the more general distribution of Capital or Land, or the State management of Capital and Land, would promote or impair the production of wealth and the welfare of the Community?" This was the field-day of Socialists and Land Nationalisers. Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace brought forward a scheme of compulsory allotment as a stepping-stone to his well-known Nationalisation scheme, which was advocated in a paper by Professor Newman. Mr. Balfour, M.P., in arguing against the proposals of Mr. Henry George (whose influence on the delegates was evidently strong) showed that he knew his own side of the question, which is more than can be said for many of Mr. George's opponents. Mr. J. Wilson, of the Miners' National Union, spoke with much natural eloquence on the injustice of the royalties levied by landlords from hard-working miners; but Mr. Wordsworth Donnisthorpe, as a mine-owner, assured him that the royalties, if abolished, would be saved to the capitalist and not to the miner. Lord Brauwell's paper, which without cant or compromise insisted on downright individualism, was read by Mr. Donnisthorpe, who represented the Liberty and Property Defence League, and who certainly showed himself second to no Socialist either in comprehension of the social problems under discussion or moral courage in dealing with them. Frederic Harrison, in a long paper, weak on the economic side, proposed to moralise the capitalist, as the phrase goes; or rather to wait and hope that the capitalist will grow out of his bad habits. Dr. G. B. Clark, delegated by the Highland Land Law Association, assailed Professor Nicholson with fierce and contemptuous invective for his paper on the land question. Dr. Clark wrought the delegates to the highest pitch of excitement attained during the Conference; and the subsequent speeches fell comparatively flat, with the exception of a stirring address by John Burns, of the Social Democratic Federation, and a speech on the ethics of the question from the Rev. Stewart Headlam that agreeably and completely disappointed those strangers who, seeing a clergyman rise to speak, naturally expected something essentially unchristian from him. Shortly after he left the platform the Conference broke up with the usual votes of thanks and mutual admiration drill.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

### RECORD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT.

THE members of the Socialist League are International Revolutionary Socialists. Hence, while admitting that different methods of propaganda may be necessary in different countries, under different conditions, they profess the same uncompromising principles, have at heart the same ends and aims as the Revolutionary Socialists of all other countries.

The following letters from our fellow-workers abroad will, I am sure, be read by us in England with the deepest interest, the heartiest sympathy. The knowledge that the Socialists of other lands look to us for help in the great struggle should be an incentive—if incentive is needed in such a cause as ours—to work more earnestly, more zealously than ever.

I feel I need offer no apology for putting these letters in the place of my usual notes.

The names of our friends are too well known to call for any sort of introduction from me. But perhaps I may be allowed, in the name of the Socialist

League, to thank them for their sympathy with our work and their confidence in our principles, and, above all, for putting into practice the old precept: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" ELEANOR MARX AVELING.

When there arise differences of opinion on matters of principle between fellow-workers, a split is as necessary as it is unpleasant. The energy of the workers is only weakened by such differences of opinion, and any real work rendered impossible; and clearness and definiteness of aim, the uncompromising enunciation of principles, alone are sure of success with the masses. On these grounds I hail with pleasure the fact that the members of the S.L. have freed themselves from all organisations that, on account of vagueness of ideas and indefiniteness of aims, can but harm the cause of revolutionary Socialism—and any other Socialism is a contradiction in itself. I hope and trust the S.L. will at last succeed in creating a movement in England, economically the most developed country in the world, and therefore well prepared for the reception of our ideas. Socialists of all lands are deeply interested in such a result. As Lassalle in his day could with truth say of Germany, that with a great Socialist movement in Berlin the Socialist movement in Germany would become irresistible, so International Socialism may say with regard to England: if England is gained to us, our way through the whole civilised world is won. Hence you have before you a great and most important field for active work, and I hope in the interest of us all you will succeed in cultivating it. Of our sympathy and goodwill you may be sure.—With hearty greeting, yours,  
A. BEBEL.

Planen-Dresden, Feb. 16, 1885.

I am proud of having been invited to contribute to the *Commonweal*; I consider it my duty to help you as far as I am able. Nobody knows better than myself the difficulties that are in your way, but nobody knows better also that England, in consequence of her high economical development, has, economically, the central position amongst the civilised states, and that the triumph of Socialism in England means the triumph of Socialism all over the world. Unfortunately I have been prevented by over-work (parliamentary and other) from sending you an article for your first number, and the same is the case with Bebel, who, like me, is most desirous of co-operating with you. As soon as we can snatch a leisure hour you may count upon us. I know you have the will to do the right thing; and where there is a will there is a way, is an English saying. The time cannot be distant when the working men of England will put their immense power and their unparalleled organisation into the service of their own class. With Social Democratic greeting, truly yours,  
W. LIEBKNECHT.

Berlin, Reichstag, Feb. 16, 1885.

I do not know whether I shall be able to write to you as often as I should like. Anyhow, if time is wanting, good-will is not. One thing I can say to you, that I hail with as much of joy as hope the formation of the Socialist League. Through your action, at last, revolutionary Communism is to have in Great Britain an organ, a flag, and men worthy of the party of revolution, free from all alliance with reactionaries, free from all Chauvinism. I hope heartily that your appeal will be heard, and that behind you the masses of the English proletariat will rally to take their place in the great struggle for political power and for the deliverance that we must with all our strength urge on, and can, if we choose, attain: to save modern society from the ruin towards which the capitalistic régime is dragging it, and by the revolutionary abolition of all privilege of all classes, to found the popular and communistic republic of equality, science and commonweal. The one thing wanting to the Socialist proletariat of Europe and America, the one thing wanting to the Revolution to declare war and to conquer, is the fellowship of England. The Socialist League promises us this, and will give it to us. No country will be nearer the goal than yours when once it wills to strain towards it. And if, despite the necessity that urges us, we move slowly, that you may hasten the day of triumph, and, leading the way, give us the signal and the example, is the sincere wish of your devoted friend,  
E. VAILLANT.

Ville de Paris, Conseil Municipal, Feb. 14th, 1885.

I wish you good luck in your undertaking, and I shall be at your disposal for the journal.  
P. LAFARGUE.

As a disciple of Karl Marx, and an old member of the International Working Men's Association [and we may add Minister of Public Works under the Commune] I am with all those who profess the same scientific ideas, i.e., the same principles. Presuming that the Socialist League, as well as its official organ, the *Commonweal*, serves to propagate the true, i.e., the Scientific Socialism, and thus to effect a revolution in the minds which, in my opinion has to be made ere the people can do away with all the existing rotten political and economical privileges—I shall be delighted to contribute to your paper as often as time and circumstances will allow.—Yours affectionately,  
LEO FRANKEL.

Vienna, February 11, 1885.

Permit me in my own name, and in that of many of my Austrian fellow Socialists to express to you the sympathy we feel with the efforts of the Socialist League.

We Austrians have always felt the necessity for the international solidarity of the working classes—and for a good reason. Nowhere, probably, has the development of the Social democracy been more cramped by national struggles than in Austria, whose rare national contrasts have reached a degree of intensity that, at the outside, is perhaps only to be equalled by the differences between English and Irish men. In these national struggles a great part of the attention and strength of the working classes is absorbed that would be far more advantageously spent upon the international class-struggle against capital. The Socialist movement itself is in Austria no united one. We have a German, a Bohemian, a Hungarian, a Polish, a Servian, an Italian working class movement, each independent of the other, as the means for a common understanding are wanting. Only the most earnest lessons of internationalism make it possible for the workers recognising the class struggle, on the one hand, to abstain from taking part in the national struggles and thus wasting their strength, and on the other hand to maintain if only a feeble link between the working class movements in Austria, so that they may in decisive moments act in common against the common enemy.

But there is also another matter that forces us always to bear in mind our international solidarity. We are a small party fighting a desperate battle with unequal weapons on a disadvantageous soil. This struggle would for the moment have appeared hopeless under our present political condition and in face of the small class-consciousness of Austrian workers, recruited to a

great extent from backward undeveloped races. But one thing has supported us—the sense of international solidarity. However unsatisfactory conditions in Austria may be, when we look upon the whole European movement we can still cry "And yet it moves."

An Austrian Social democracy we are weak and insignificant; as part of the great International Social democracy we are strong and full of import. The victories of our brethren in Russia, France, Germany, are our victories; also, strengthening us also, and giving us courage to toil on in the work of emancipation of the proletariat.

Hence the development of the Social democracy in different lands is not indifferent to us, and we have long awaited the time when the motherland of capitalistic production would join the Socialistic movement. Russia and England are the two poles of modern society. When Russian absolutism shall be conquered, when the mass of English workers has been won to Socialism the last hour of Capitalism will have come. The Socialists of England do not fight for themselves, for the English working classes alone. They fight for the exploited of the whole world. The more conscious they are of this, the more resolutely they devote themselves to the thought of international solidarity, the greater will be the sympathy with which the whole proletariat will watch their struggle.  
K. KAUTSKY.

I hope you have not doubted that I am heart and soul with you and the other friends and *correligionnaires*. . . My best greetings and good wishes to all.  
PIERRE LAVROFF.

Yes. I will collaborate with your *Commonweal* as much as my time will allow me. The cause of Russian liberty quickly wins the public opinion of English-speaking people, without any distinction of class or party. All preconceived ideas are melting away before facts that every-day life brings forth. But among English Socialists—and I daresay English workmen in general—no prejudice against the Russian Revolutionary movement has ever existed. From the very beginning their sympathies were with us. And the toast proclaimed by their representatives at Paris was that of frank approbation and unconditional sympathy with Russian Socialists, struggling for the liberty of their country. I am proud of your invitation and will lose no opportunity of addressing such people.

London, Feb. 19th.

S. STEPNIAK.

If my collaboration can be of any use to your journal, I shall make it my duty to contribute to the success of an organ which has for its aim the propagation of Socialistic ideas in England. I wish every success to the *Commonweal*.  
TICHOMIROFF (*Messenger de la Volonte du Peuple*).

When I find time, I'll send you some notes of events in our country. All that happens in England interests me very much; the economical development of that country makes it the most ripe for the accomplishment of our aims.  
F. DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS.

## REPORTS.

SCOTTISH LAND AND LABOUR LEAGUE (The Scottish Section of the Socialist League), Glasgow Branch, Albion Halls, College Street.—January 25, J. Mavor read a paper on "Poor Living and Rich Living;" Feb. 1, M. Melliet Prevot spoke on "The Solidarity of the Workers;" Feb. 8, J. B. Glasier on "Genius and Art in the Coming Socialism;" Feb. 15, Replies to recent attacks on Socialism by Professor Flint, Mr. Goschen, and Lord Reay, by C. F. Jamieson, Glasier, and Mavor; Feb. 22, a discussion on "Mr. Chamberlain and Socialism." Membership, 55. A reading room in connexion with this branch is to be opened. The leading journals, Socialist and labour papers, and books will be supplied. Funds being needed for carrying out these objects, contributions in books or money are solicited, and will be acknowledged by the treasurer, J. Adams, 92 South Wellington Street.

LEEDS.—At a special general meeting of the members of the Leeds Branch of the Social Democratic Federation, held at the Royal Sovereign Inn, Vicar Lane, on Sunday, Feb. 8, the following resolution, was carried *nem. con.*: "That this Branch of the Social Democratic Federation be declared dissolved, and that henceforward this body be identified as the Leeds Branch of the Socialist League." On Sunday, Feb. 15, comrades C. Reilly, Finn, Woolley, Malone, Connell and McHale, were elected to form the Committee of the Branch; Kelly, Maguire and Corpwell, treasurer and secretaries. Open-air meetings every Sunday afternoon at Vicar's Croft.

## LECTURE LIST FOR MARCH.

**Canning Town Branch**, L. E. L., 144 Barking Road. Sundays at 7.30. 1, Robert Banner, "Social Revolution." 8, Frank Kitz, "Rent." 15, H. Charles, "Society versus State." 22, C. W. Mowbray, "The Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Movements of the Present Century." 29, E. J. Baxter, "How Profit is Made."

**Glasgow**.—1, A. K. Donald. 8, J. M. Cherrie. 15, J. Adams. 22, J. Mavor. 29, A. Scheu. At 7 p.m.

**Hammersmith**.—1, W. Bridges Adams, "Internationalism." 8, Debate. 15, J. H. Watts. 22, Stewart D. Headlam. 29, G. Bernard Shaw.

**Hoxton Branch**, L. E. L., Academy Schools, Hoxton Street, Sundays at 8.15. 1, Frank Kitz, "Some Socialistic Experiments." 8, C. W. Mowbray, "Why the Revolutionary Movements of 1848-9 Failed." 15, W. J. Clark, "Divine Right." 22, Joseph Lane, "Poverty, its Cause and Cure." 29, J. L. Mahon, "The Meaning of the Revolution."

**Manchester**.—Sundays at 7, open air meetings at the Viaduct, Chester Road, Hulme.

**Manchester Square, W.**—"Westmoreland Arms," George Street. Sundays at 8. 1, Edward Aveling, "The Curse of Commercialism." 8, William Morris, "Work, as it is and as it might be." 8 p.m.

**Merton Abbey Branch**.—6, Edward Aveling; 13, Wm Morris. 20, Frank Kitz. 27, H. Charles. 7.30 p.m.

**Mill End Branch**, L. E. L., 110 White Horse Street, Whitechapel. Sundays at 8. 1, C. W. Mowbray, "Why the Revolutionary Movements of 1848-9 Failed." 8, S. Mainwaring, "Society." 15, J. L. Mahon, "The Meaning of the Revolution." 22, Eleanor Aveling, "The Factory Acts." 29, William Morris, "Socialism."

**Notting Hill**, Magdala Castle, Blechynden Street.—1, J. C. Mahon. 8, R. Banner. 15, Edward Aveling. 22, H. Charles.

**Scottish Land and Labour League**.—Edinburgh City Branch, Picardy Hall, 20 Picardy Place.—6, J. Glasier, "The Prophecy of Socialism;" 13, R. Aitken, "A Plea for Laissez faire;" 20, A. Scheu, "Capitalism and the Law of Population;" 27, A. J. Anderson, "Feudalism." NOTICE.—Intending members please hand names to Secretary. Executive meetings after lectures. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays the hall is open as a reading-room. The Treasurer will attend on lecture nights. The *Commonweal* and other literature of the Socialist League on sale.

**Southwark**.—Cavender's Coffee Tavern, 60 Blackman Street, Borough. Sundays at 7.45. 1, H. Charles, "State Socialism, Socialism and Anarchism." 8, Eleanor Aveling, "The Factory Acts." 15, Frank Kitz, "Some Socialistic Experiments." 22, W. J. Clark, "The Housing of the Wage-Earning Class." 29, Joseph Lane, "The National Loaf; Who Earns it and Who Eats it."

**Tower Hamlets Radical Club**—Sunday 29, 11.30, Edward Aveling.

Several reports are omitted for want of space. That of the League for February and March will be given in our next issue.