

# **Workshop Talks**

**The meaning of socialism**



**James Connolly**

**A Repsol Pamphlet. No. 1.**

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## INTRODUCTION

'WORKSHOP TALKS' was written in 1909 by James Connolly as an introduction to socialism. Even today, the points made here are very relevant to our economic and political situation. The vested interests use the same tactics of confusion and misrepresentation of the aims of the socialist republicans as they used in Connolly's day.

What Connolly had to say reads like a prophecy of the later development of history: the warnings about the nature of freedom, and the need to guard against those who wave flags and mouth slogans.

These talks will never become dated because they contain the essence of socialism. The basis of republicanism. In simple and straightforward terms Connolly unravels the mysteries of economics, and destroys the feeble lies of capitalist propagandists. Any republican who wishes an immediate introduction to socialism in Ireland can do no better than read and study this valuable pamphlet.

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'WORKSHOP TALKS' is the first of a series of Repsol pamphlets to be published by the Education Department, Republican Movement, 30 Gardiner Pl. Dublin 1.

## WORKSHOP    TALKS

*Socialism is a foreign importation!*

I know it because I read it in the papers. I also know it to be the case because in every country I have graced with my presence up to the present time, or have heard from, the possessing classes, through their organs in the press and their spokesmen upon the platform, have been vociferous and insistent in declaring the foreign origin of Socialism.

In Ireland Socialism is an English importation, in England they are convinced it was made in Germany, in Germany it is a scheme of traitors in alliance with the French to disrupt the Empire, in France it is an accursed conspiracy to discredit the army which is destined to reconquer Alsace and Lorraine, in Russia it is an English plot to prevent Russian extension towards Asia, in Asia it is known to have been set on foot by American enemies of Chinese and Japanese industrial progress, and in America it is one of the baneful fruits of unrestricted pauper and criminal immigration.

All nations today repudiate Socialism, yet Socialist ideas are conquering all nations. When anything has to be done in a practical direction towards ameliorating the lot of the helpless ones, or towards using the collective force of society in strengthening the hands of the individual, it is sure to be in the intellectual armoury of Socialists the right weapon is found for the work.

A case in point.    There are tens of thousands

of hungry children in New York today as in every other large American city, and many well meant efforts have been made to succour them. Free lunches have been opened in the poorest districts, bread lines have been established and charitable organisations are busy visiting homes and schools to find out the worst cases. But all this has only touched the fringe of the destitution, with the additional aggravation that anything passing through the hands of these charitable committees usually cost ten times as much for administration as it bestows on the object of its charity. ALSO that the investigation is usually more effectual in destroying the last vestiges of self-respect in its victims than in succouring their needs.

In the midst of this difficulty Superintendent Maxwell of the New York Schools sends a letter to a committee of thirteen charitable organisations which had met together to consider the problem, and in this letter he advocates the method of relieving distress long since initiated by the Socialist representatives in the Municipality of Paris. I quote from the New York World:-

*"A committee of seven was appointed to inquire more fully into the question of feeding school-children and to report at a subsequent meeting. School Superintendent Maxwell sent a letter advocating the establishment in New York Schools with city money of lunch kitchens, these to sell food at actual cost and to give to needy children tickets just like those paid for, to the end that no child might know that his fellow was eating at the expense of the city by the colour of his ticket. This is done in Paris."*

Contrast this solicitude for the self-respect of the poor children, recognised by Superintendent Maxwell in the plan of these "foreign Socialists" with the insulting methods of the capitalist "bread lines" and charitable organisations in general.

But all the same it is too horrible to take practical examples in relieving the distress caused by capitalist society from pestilant agitators who wish to destroy the society whose victims they are succouring, and mere foreigners too. The capitalist method of parading mothers and children for an hour in the street before feeding them is more calculated to build up the proper degree of pride in the embryo American citizens, and make them appreciate the benefits their fathers and brothers are asked to vote for.

Read this telling how hungry children and mothers stood patiently waiting for a meal on the sidewalk, and whoop it up for pure ecstasy of joy that you are permitted to live in a system of society wherein a great metropolitan daily thought that the fact of five hundred children getting a "hearty luncheon" was remarkable enough to deserve a paragraph:

*"Five hundred ill-fed children who attend the schools on the lower east side got a hearty luncheon yesterday when the first of the children's lunch-rooms was opened at Canal and Forsyth streets. Long before noon there was a large gathering of children, some of them accompanied by their mothers, awaiting the opening of the doors."*

Well, I am not interested in internationalism. This country is good enough for me.

Is that so? Say: are you taking a share in the Moscow-Windau-Rydinsk Railway?

No. Where is that?

My dear friend, where that railway runs has nothing to do with you. What you have to do is simply to take a share, and then go and have a good time whilst the Russian railway workers, whom you do not know, working in a country you never saw, speaking a language you do not understand, earn your dividends by the sweat of their brows. Curious, ain't it?...

We Socialists are always talking about the international solidarity of labour, about the oneness of our interests all over the world, and ever and anon working off our heaving chests a peroration on the bonds of fraternal sympathy which should unite the wage slaves of the capitalist system.

But there is another kind of bond - Russian Railway bonds - which join, not the workers, but the idlers of the world in fraternal sympathy, and which creates among the members of the capitalist class a feeling of identity of interest, of international solidarity, which they don't perorate about but which is most potent and effective notwithstanding. You do not fully recognise the fact that the internationality of Socialism is at most but a lame and halting attempt to create a counter-poise to the internationality of Capitalism. Yet so it is.

Here is a case in point. The Moscow-Windau-Rydinsk railway is, as its name indicates, a railway running, or proposed to be run, from one part of Russia to another. You would think that that concerned the Russian people only, and that our patriotic capitalist class, always so ready to declare

against working-class Socialists with international sympathies, would never look at it or touch it.

You would not think that Ireland, for example- whose professional patriots are forever telling the gullible working men that Ireland will be ruined for the lack of capital and enterprise - would be a good country to find money in to finance a Russian Railway. Yet, observe the fact. All the Dublin papers of Monday, June 12th, 1899, contained the prospectus of this far-away Russian railway, offered for the investment of Irish capitalists, and offered by a firm of London stockbrokers who are astute enough not to waste money in endeavouring to catch fish in waters where they were not in the habit of biting freely.

And in the midst of the Russian revolution of 1905 the agents of the Czar succeeded in obtaining almost unlimited treasures in the United States to pay the expenses of throttling the infant Liberty. As the shares in Russian railways were sold in Ireland, as Russian bonds were sold in America, so the shares in American mines, railroads and factories are bought and sold on all the stock exchanges of Europe and Asia by men who never saw America in their lifetime.

Now, let us examine the situation, keeping in mind the fact that this is but a type of what prevails all round; you can satisfy yourself on that head by a daily glance at our capitalist papers.

#### CAPITAL IS INTERNATIONAL

The shares of Russian railways, African mines, Nicaraguan canals, Chilian gas works, Norwegian timber, Mexican water works, Canadian fur trappings,

Australian kanaka slave trade, Indian tea plantations, Japanese linen factories, Chinese Cotton mills, European national and municipal debts, United States bonanza farms, are bought and sold every day by investors, many of whom never saw any one of the countries in which their money is invested, but who have, by virtue of so investing, a legal right to a share of the plunder extracted under the capitalist system from the wage workers whose bone and sinew earn the dividends upon the bonds they have purchased.

When our investing classes purchase a share in any capitalist concern, in any country whatsoever, they do so, not in order to build up a useful industry, but because the act of purchase endows them with a prospective share of the spoils it is proposed to wring from labour. Therefore every member of the investing classes is interested to the extent of his investments, present or prospective, in the subjection of Labour all over the world.

THAT is the INTERNATIONALITY of CAPITAL and CAPITALISM.

The wage worker is oppressed under this system in the interest of a class of capitalist investors who may be living thousands of miles away and whose very names are unknown to him. He is, therefore, interested in every revolt of Labour all over the world, for the very individuals against whom that revolt may be directed may - by the wondrous mechanism of the capitalist system - through shares, bonds, national and municipal debts - be the parasites who are sucking his blood also. That is one of the underlying facts inspiring the

internationalism of Labour and Socialism.

*But the Socialist proposals, they say, would destroy the individual character of the worker. He would lean on the community, instead of upon his own efforts.*

YES: Giving evidence before the Old Age Pensions Committee in England, Sir John Dorrington, M.P., expressed the belief that the *"provision of Old Age Pensions by the State, for instance, would do more harm than good. It was an objectionable principle, and would lead to improvidence."* There now! You will always observe that it is some member of what an Irish revolutionist called "the canting, fed classes", who is anxious that nothing should be done by the State to give the working class habits of "improvidence", or to do us any "harm". Dear, kind souls.

To do them justice they are most consistent. For both in public and private, their efforts are most whole-heartedly bent in the same direction, viz., to prevent improvidence - ON OUR PART. They lower our wages - to prevent improvidence; they increase our rents - to prevent improvidence; they periodically suspend us from our employment - to prevent improvidence, and as soon as we are worn out in their service they send us to a semi-convict establishment, known as the Workhouse, where we are scientifically starved to death to prevent improvidence.

Old Age Pensions might do us harm. Ah, yes! And yet come to think of it, I know quite a number of people who draw Old Age Pensions and it doesn't do them a bit of harm. Strange, isn't it? Then

all the Royal Families have pensions, and they don't seem to do them any harm; royal babies, in fact, begin to draw pensions and milk from a bottle at the same time. Afterwards they drop the milk, but they never drop the pension - nor the bottle. Then all our judges get pensions, and are not corrupted thereby - at least not more than usual. In fact, all well paid officials in governmental or municipal service get pensions, and there are no fears expressed that the receipt of the same may do them harm.

But the underpaid, overworked wage-slave. To give him a pension would ruin his moral fibre, weaken his stamina, debase his manhood, sap his integrity, corrupt his morals, check his prudence, emasculate his character, lower his aspirations, vitiate his resolves, destroy his self-reliance, annihilate his rectitude, corrode his virility - and - and - other things.

*Let us be practical. We want something pr-r-ractical.* Always the cry of hum-drum mediocrity, afraid to face the stern necessity for uncompromising action. That saying has done more yeoman service in the cause of oppression than all its avowed supporters. The average man dislikes to be thought unpractical, and so, while frequently loathing the principles of distrusting the leaders of the particular political party he is associated with, declines to leave them in the hope that their very lack of earnestness may be more fruitful of practical results than the honest outspokenness of the party in whose principles he does believe. In the phraseology of politics, a party too indifferent to the sorrow and sufferings of humanity to raise its voice in protest, is a

moderate, practical party, whilst a party totally indifferent to the personality of leaders, or questions of leadership, but hot to enthusiasm on every question affecting the well-being of the toiling masses, is an extreme, a dangerous party. Yet, although it may seem a paradox to say so, there is no party so incapable of achieving practical results as an orthodox political party; and there is no party so certain of placing moderate reforms to its credit as an extreme - a revolutionary party.

The possessing classes will and do laugh to scorn every scheme for the amelioration of the workers so long as those responsible for the initiation of the scheme admit as justifiable the "rights of property"; but when the public attention is directed towards questioning the justifiable nature of those "rights in themselves", then the master class alarmed for the safety of their booty, yield reform after reform - in order to prevent revolution.

MORAL - Don't be "PRACTICAL" in politics. To be practical in that sense means that you have schooled yourself to think along lines, and in the grooves those who rob you desire you to think. In any case it is time we got rid of all cant about "politics" and "constitutional agitation" in general. For there is really no meaning whatever in those phrases.

Every public question is a political question. The men who tell us that labour questions, for instance, have nothing to do with politics, understand neither the one nor the other. The Labour Question cannot be settled except by measures which

necessitate a revision of the whole system of society, which, of course, implies political warfare to secure the power to effect such revision. If by politics we understand the fight between the outs and ins, or the contest for party leadership, then Labour is rightly supremely indifferent to such politics, but to the politics which centre round the question of property and the administration thereof, Labour is not, cannot be, indifferent.

To effect its emancipation Labour must re-organise society on the basis of labour; this cannot be done while the forces of government are in the hands of the rich, therefore the governing power must be wrested from the hands of the rich peaceably, if possible, forcibly if necessary.

In the phraseology of the master class and its pressmen the trade unionist who is not a Socialist is more practical than he who is, and the worker who is neither one nor the other, but can resign himself to the state of slavery in which he was born, is the most practical of all men. The heroes and martyrs who in the past gave up their lives for the liberty of the race were not practical, but they were heroes all the same. The slavish multitude who refused to second their efforts from a craven fear lest their skins might suffer were practical, but they were soulless serfs, nevertheless.

Revolution is never practical - until the hour of the Revolution strikes. THEN it alone is practical, and all the efforts of the conservatives and compromisers become the most futile and visionary of human imaginings.

For that hour let us work, think and hope;  
For that hour let us pawn our present ease  
in hopes of a glorious redemption; for that  
hour let us prepare the hosts of Labour  
with intelligence sufficient to laugh at  
the nostrums dubbed practical by our slave-  
lords, practical for the perpetuation of  
our slavery; for that supreme crisis of  
human history let us watch, like sentinels,  
with weapons ever ready, remembering always  
that there can be no dignity in Labour un-  
til Labour knows no master.

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### CONFISCATION - CAPITALIST AND SOCIALIST

*Would you confiscate the property of the capitalist class and rob men of that which they have, perhaps, worked a whole lifetime to accumulate?*

Yes sir, and certainly not. We would certainly confiscate the property of the capitalist class, but we do not propose to rob anyone. On the contrary, we propose to establish honesty once and forever as the basis of our social relations. This Socialist Movement is indeed worthy to be entitled the Great Anti-Theft Movement of the Twentieth Century. You see, confiscation is one great certainty of the future for every business man outside of the trust. It lies with him to say if it will be confiscation by the Trust in the interest of the Trust, or confiscation by Socialism in the interest of ALL.

If he resolves to continue to support the capitalist order of society he will surely have

his property confiscated. After having, as you say, "*worked for a whole lifetime to accumulate*" a fortune, to establish a business on what he imagined would be a sound foundation, on some fine day the Trust will enter into competition with him, will invade the market, use their enormous capital to undersell him at ruinous prices, take his customers from him, ruin his business, and finally drive him into bankruptcy, and perhaps to end his days as a pauper.

That is CAPITALIST CONFISCATION. It is going on all around us, and every time the business man who is not a Trust Magnate votes for capitalism, he is working to prepare that fate for himself. On the other hand, if he works for Socialism it also will confiscate his property. But it will only do so in order to acquire the industrial equipment necessary to establish a system of society in which the whole human race will be secured against the fear of want for all time, a system in which all men and women will be joint heirs and owners of all the intellectual and material conquests made possible by associated effort.

SOCIALISM will confiscate the property of the capitalist and in return will secure the individual against poverty and oppression; it, in return for so confiscating, will assure to all men and women a free, happy, and unanxious human life. And that is more than capitalism can assure anyone today. So you see the average capitalist has to choose between two kinds of confiscation. One or the other he must certainly endure. Confiscation by the Trust and consequently bankruptcy, poverty and perhaps pauperism in his old age, or confiscation by Socialism and consequently security, plenty,

and a care-free life to him and his to the remotest generation. *Which will it be?*

*But it is their property. Why should Socialists confiscate it?*

Their property, eh? Let us see: Here is a cutting from the *New York World* giving a synopsis of the Annual Report of the Coats Thread Company of Pawtucket, Rhode Island, for 1907. Now, let us examine it, and bear in mind that this company is the basis of the Thread Trust, with branches in Paisley (Scotland) and on the continent of Europe. Also bear in mind that it is not a "horrible example" but simply a normal type of a normally conducted industry, and therefore what applies to it will apply in greater or less degree to all others.

This report gives the dividend for the year at 20% per annum. Twenty per cent. dividend means four shillings in the pound profit. Now, *what is a profit?* According to Socialists, profit only exists when all other items of production are paid for. The workers by their labour must create enough wealth to pay for certain items before profit appears. They must pay for the cost of raw material, the wear and tear of machinery, buildings, etc., (depreciation of capital), the wages of superintendence, their own wages, and a certain amount to be left aside as a reserve fund to meet all possible contingencies. After, and only after, all these items have been paid for by their labour, all that is left is profit. With this company the PROFIT AMOUNTED TO 20 CENTS ON EVERY DOLLAR INVESTED. *What does this mean?* It means that in the course of five years - five

times 20 cents equals one dollar - the workers in the industry had created enough profit to buy the whole industry from its present owners. It means that after paying all the expenses of the factory, including their own wages, they created enough profit to buy the whole building, from the roof to the basement, all the offices and agencies, and everything in the shape of capital. *ALL THIS IN FIVE YEARS.*

And after they had so bought it from the capitalists it still belonged to the capitalists. It means that if a capitalist had invested £1,000 in that industry, in the course of five years he would draw out a thousand pounds, and still have a thousand pounds lying there untouched; in the course of ten years he would draw two thousand pounds, in fifteen years he would draw three thousand pounds. And still his first thousand pounds would be as virgin as ever.

You understand that this has been going on ever since the capitalist system came into being; all the capital in the world has been paid for by the working class over and over again, and we are still creating it, and re-creating. And the oftener we buy it the less it belongs to us.

The capital of the master class is not their property; it is the unpaid labour of the working class - "the hire of the labourer kept back by fraud."

*Oh, the capitalist has his anxieties, too. And the worker has often a good time!*

Sure: Say, where were you for the holidays? Were

you tempted to go abroad? Did you visit Europe? Did you riot, in all the abandonment of a wage slave let loose, among the pleasure haunts of the world? Perhaps you went to the Riviera; perhaps you luxuriated in ecstatic worship of that glorious bit of Nature's handiwork where the blue waters of the Mediterranean roll in all their entrancing splendour against the shores of classic Italy. Perhaps you rambled among the vine clad hills of sunny France, and visited the spots hallowed by the hand of that country's glorious history.

Perhaps you sailed up the castellated Rhine, toasted the eyes of bewitching German Frauleins in frothy German beer, explored the recesses of the legend haunted Hartz mountains and established a nodding acquaintance with the Spirit of the Brocken.

Perhaps you traversed the lakes and fjords of Norway, sat down in awe before the neglected magnificence of the Alhambra, had a cup of coffee with Memelik of Abyssinia, smelt afar off the odours of the streets of Morocco, climbed the Pyramids of Egypt, shared the hospitable tent of the Bedouin, visited Cyprus, looked in at Constantinople, ogled the dark-eyed beauties of Circassia, rubbed up against the Cossack in his Ural Mountains, or - perhaps you lay in bed all day in order to save a meal, and listened to your wife wondering how she could make ends meet with a day's pay short in the weekly wages.

And whilst you thus squandered your substance in riotous living, did you ever stop to think of your master - *your poor, dear, overworked, tired master?* Did you ever stop to reflect upon the

pitiable condition of that individual who so kindly provides you with employment, and does no useful work himself in order that you may get plenty of it? When you consider how hard a task it was for you to decide in what manner you should spend your holiday; where you should go for the ONE DAY, then you must perceive how hard it is for your masters to find a way in which to spend the practically perpetual holiday which you force upon them by your love of work.

*Ah, yes, that large section of our masters who have realised that ideal of complete idleness after which all our masters strive, those men who do not work, never did work, and with the help of God - and the ignorance of the people - never intend to work, how terrible must be their lot in life!*

We who toil from early morn till late at night, from January, till December, from childhood to old age, have no care or trouble or mental anxiety to cross our mind - except the landlord; the fear of loss of employment; the danger of sickness; the lack of common necessities, to say nothing of luxuries, for our children; the insolence of our superiors; the unhealthy condition of our homes; the exhausting nature of our toil; the lack of all opportunities of mental cultivation, and the ever present question whether we shall shuffle off this mortal coil in a miserable garret, be killed by hard work, or die in the Poorhouse.

With these trifling exceptions we have nothing to bother us, but the boss, *ah, the poor, poor boss!*

He has everything to bother him. Whilst we are amusing ourselves in the hold of a ship shovelling coal;

swinging a hammer in front of a forge;  
toiling up a ladder with bricks;  
stitching until our eyes grow dim at the board;

gaily riding up and down for twelve hours per day, seven days per week, on a trolley car;

riding around the city in all weather with teams or swinging by the skin of our teeth on the iron framework of a skyscraper;

standing at our ease OUTSIDE the printing office door listening to the musical click of the linotype as it performs the work we used to do INSIDE;

telling each other comforting stories about the new machinery which takes our places as carpenter, harness-makers, tin-plate-workers, labourers etc.;

in short whilst we are enjoying ourselves, free from all mental worry, our unselfish tired-out bosses are sitting at home, with their feet on the table, softly patting the bottom button of their vests.

Working with their brains. Poor bosses! Mighty brains! Without our toil they would never get the education necessary to develop their brains; if we were not defrauded by their class of the fruits of our toil we could provide for education enough to develop the mental powers of all, and so deprive the ruling class of the last vestige of an excuse for clinging to mastership, viz., their assumed intellectual superiority. I say "assumed", because the greater part of the brain-

work of industry today is performed by men taken from the ranks of the workers, and paid high salaries in proportion as they develop expertness as slave-drivers.

As education spreads among the people, the workers will want to enjoy life more; they will assert their right to the full fruits of their labour, and by that act of self-assertion lay the foundation of that Socialist Republic in which the labour will be so easy, and the reward so great, that life will seem a perpetual holiday.

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## SOCIALISM AND RELIGION

*But Socialism is against religion. I can't be a Socialist and be a Christian.*

O, quit your fooling! That talk is all right for those who know nothing of the relations between capital and labour, or are innocent of any knowledge of the processes of modern industry, or imagine that men, in their daily struggles for bread or fortunes, are governed by the Sermon on the Mount. But between working men that talk is absurd.

We know that Socialism bears upon our daily life in the workshop, and that religion does not; we know that the man who never set foot in a church in his lifetime will, if he is rich, be more honoured by Christian Society than the poor man who goes to church every Sunday, and says his prayers morning and evening; we know that the capitalists of all religions pay more for the service of a good lawyer to keep them out of the clutches of the law than for

the services of a good priest to keep them out of the clutches of the devil; and we never heard of a capitalist, who, in his business, respected the Sermon on the Mount as much as he did the decisions of the Supreme Court.

These things we know. We also know that neither capitalist nor worker can practice the moral precepts of a religion, and without its normal precepts a religion is simply a sham. If a religion cannot enforce its moral teachings upon its votaries it has as little relation to actual life as the pre-election promises of a politician have to legislation.

We know that Christianity teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves, but we also know that if a capitalist attempted to run his business upon that plan his relatives would have no difficulty in getting lawyers, judges and physicians to declare him incompetent to conduct his affairs in the business world. He would not be half as certain of reaching Heaven in the next world as he would be of getting into the "bughouse" in this.

And, as for the worker. Well, in the fall of 1908, the New York World printed an advertisement for a teamster in Brooklyn, wages to be \$12 per week. Over 700 applicants responded. Now, could each of these men love their neighbours in that line of hungry competitors for that pitiful wage? As each man stood in line in that awful parade of misery could he pray for his neighbour to get the job, and could he be expected to follow up his prayer by giving up his chance, and so making certain the prolongation of the misery of his wife and little ones?

No, my friend. Socialism is a bread and butter question. It is a question of the stomach. It is going to be settled in the factories, mines and ballot boxes of this country and is not going to be settled at the altar or in the church.

This is what our well-fed friends call a "*base material standpoint*," but remember that beauty, art genius, poetry and all the finer efflorescences of the higher nature of man can only be realised in all their completeness upon the material basis of a healthy body, and not only an army but the whole human race marches upon its stomach, and then you will grasp the full wisdom of our position.

That the question to be settled by Socialism is the effect of private ownership of the means of production upon the well-being of the race; that we are determined to have a straight fight upon the question between those who believe that such private ownership is destructive of human well-being and those who believe it to be beneficial; that as men of all religions and of none are in the ranks of the capitalists, and men of all religions and of none are on the side of the workers, the attempt to make religion an issue in the question is an intrusion, an impertinence and an absurdity.

Personally, *I am opposed to any system wherein the capitalist is more powerful than God Almighty.* You need not serve God unless you like, and may refuse to serve him and grow fat, prosperous and universally respected. But if you refuse to serve the capitalist your doom is sealed; misery and poverty and public odium await you.

No worker is compelled to enter a church and to serve God; every worker is compelled to enter the employment of a capitalist and serve him. As Socialists we are concerned to free mankind from the servitude forced upon them as a necessity of their life; we propose to allow the question of all kinds of service voluntarily rendered to be settled by the emancipated human race of the future.

I do not deny that Socialists often leave the church. *But why do they do so? Is their defection from the church a result of our attitude towards religion, or is it the result of the attitude of the church and its ministers towards Socialism?*

Let us take a case in point, one of those cases that are being paralleled every day in our midst. An Irish Catholic joins the Socialist movement. He finds that as a rule the Socialist men and women are better educated than their fellows, he finds that they are immensely cleaner in speech and thought than are the adherents of capitalism in the same class; that they are devoted husbands and loyal wives, loving and cheerful fathers and mothers, skilled and industrious workers in the shops and office, and that although poor and needy as a rule, yet that they continually bleed themselves to support their cause, and give up for Socialism what many others spend in the saloon.

He finds that a drunken Socialist is as rare as a white blackbird, and that a Socialist of criminal tendencies is such a rare avis that when one is found the public press heralds it forth as a great discovery. Democratic and republican jail-

birds are so common that the public press do not regard their existence as "news", to anybody, nor yet does the public press think it necessary to say that certain criminals belong to the Protestant or Catholic religions. That is nothing unusual, and therefore not worth printing. But a criminal Socialist - that would be news indeed!

Our Irish Catholic Socialist gradually begins to notice these things. He looks around and he finds the press full of reports of crimes, murders robberies, bank swindlers, forgeries, debauches, gambling transactions, and midnight orgies in which the most revolting indecencies are perpetrated. He investigates and he discovers that the perpetrators of these crimes were respectable capitalists, pillars of society, and red-hot enemies of Socialism, and that the dives in which the highest and the lowest meet together in a saturnalia of vice contribute a large proportion of the campaign funds of the capitalist political parties.

Some Sunday he goes to Mass as usual, and he finds that at Gospel the priest launches out into a political speech and tells the congregation that the honest, self sacrificing industrious, clean men and women, whom he calls "comrades", are a wicked, impious, dissolute sect, desiring to destroy the home, to distribute the earnings of the provident among the idle and lazy of the world, and revelling in all sorts of impure thoughts about women.

And as this Irish Catholic Socialist listens to this foul libel, what wonder if the hot blood of anger rushes to his face, and he begins to

believe that the temple of God has itself been sold to the all desecrating grasp of the capitalist?

While he is yet wondering what to think of the matter, he hears that his immortal soul will be lost if he fails to vote for capitalism, and he reflects that if he lined up with the brothel keepers, gambling house proprietors, race-track swindlers, and white slave traders to vote the capitalist ticket, this same priest would tell him he was a good Catholic and loyal son of the Church.

At such a juncture the Irish Catholic Socialist often rises up, goes out of the church and wipes its dust off his feet forever. Then we are told that Socialism took him away from the church. *But did it?* Was it not rather the horrible spectacle of a priest of God standing up in the Holy Presence lying about and slandering honest men and women, and helping to support political parties whose campaign fund in every large city represents more bestiality than ever Sodom and Gomorrah knew?

These are the things that drive Socialists from the Church, and the responsibility for every soul so lost lies upon those slanderers, and not upon the Socialist movement.

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## SOCIALISM AND NATIONALISM

*Well, you won't get the Irish to help you. Our Irish American leaders tell us that all we Irish in this country ought to stand together and use our votes to free Ireland.*

*Sure, Let us free Ireland!* Never mind such base,

carnal thoughts as concern work and wages, healthy homes, or lives unclouded by poverty.

*Let us free Ireland!*

The rackrenting landlord; is he not also an Irishman, and wherefore should we hate him? Nay, let us not speak harshly of our brother - yea, even when he raises our rent.

*Let us free Ireland!*

The profit-grinding capitalist, who robs us of three-fourths of the fruits of our labour, who sucks the very marrow of our bones when we are young, and then throws us out in the street, like a worn-out tool, when we are grown prematurely old in his service, is he not an Irishman, and mayhaps a patriot, and wherefore would we think harshly of him?

*Let us free Ireland!*

"The land that bred and bore us". And the landlord who makes us pay for permission to live upon it.

*Whoop it up for liberty!*

"Let us free Ireland," says the patriot who won't touch Socialism. Let us all join together and cr-r-rush the br-r-rutal Saxon. Let us all join together, says he, all classes and creeds.

And, says the town worker, after we have crushed the Saxon and freed Ireland, what will we do?

Oh, then you can go back to your slums, same as before.

*Whoop it up for liberty!*

After Ireland is free, says the patriot who won't touch Socialism, we will protect all classes, and if you won't pay your rent you will be evicted same as now. But the evicting party, under command of the sheriff, will wear green uniforms and the Harp without the Crown, and the warrant turning you out on the roadside will be stamped with the arms of the Irish Republic.

*Now, isn't that worth fighting for?*

And when you cannot find employment, and giving up the struggle of life in despair, enter the Poorhouse, the band of the nearest regiment of the Irish army will escort you to the Poorhouse door to the tune of "St. Patrick's Day."

Oh, it will be nice to live in those days! "*With the Green Flag floating o'er us*" and an ever-increasing army of unemployed workers walking about under the Green Flag, wishing they had something to eat. Same as now.

*Whoop it up for liberty!*

Now, my friend, I also am Irish, but I'm a bit more logical. The capitalist, I say, is a parasite on industry; as useless in the present stage of our industrial development as any other parasite in the animal or vegetable world is to the life of the animal or vegetable upon which it feeds

The working class is the victim of this parasite - this human leech, and it is the duty and interest of the working class to use every means in its power to oust this parasite class from the

position which enables it to thus prey upon the  
vitals of Labour.

Therefore, I say, -

Let us organise as a class to meet our  
masters and destroy their mastership;

Organise to drive them from their hold  
upon public life through their political power;

Organise to wrench from their robber  
clutch the land and workshops on and  
in which they enslave us;

Organise to cleanse our social life  
from the stain of social cannibalism,  
from the prey of man upon his fellow  
man.

ORGANISE

FOR A FULL, FREE AND HAPPY LIFE

FOR ALL OR FOR NONE.

~~~~~

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