

James Connolly

The New Evangel

Socialism And Political Reformers

Workers' Republic, 8 July 1899

Among the many developments of Socialist activity at which the man in the street is apt to be astonished, perhaps none are more difficult to comprehend at first sight than the implacable hostility shown by the Socialist parties of the world towards the political parties hitherto identified with the agitation for political reform. The uninitiated find it hard to understand why there should be such marked hostility between parties, both of whom place on their programme planks of political reform seemingly almost identical in character; why the Socialist party, which represents the most revolutionary ideas of our day, should seek the downfall of political reform parties with a zest and eagerness which the most bigoted Conservative could never hope to excel. It is observed that wherever the Socialist party is strong, as in Germany, France, or Belgium, it is the Liberal party – the party of mere political reformers – which has been the first to suffer in loss of prestige and membership in exact proportion as Socialism has advanced.

Strange, though the circumstance may seem to the unreflective mind, it is but what might have been expected to result from the appearance upon the political field of a force which like the Socialist party had at once a programme of political reform embracing all and more than the old reform parties had striven for, and a programme embodying demands for economic changes which receive no support from middle-class reformers, though a crying necessity of the times. The development of acute economic problems, side by side with the extension of the franchise – economic problems are, in fact, most acute in the politically freest

countries – has borne in upon the minds of the working-class voters the conviction that, except as a means to an end, political freedom is a valueless acquisition for their class. They therefore demand the right to use that political power in the direction of their own class interests, but on making such demand are surprised to see their quondam middle-class leaders the first to denounce them and call upon the State to oppose them. When this point has been reached, as in the countries above named and to a lesser degree in England and America, the thoughtful observer of politics cannot but see that middle-class parties of reform have outlived their usefulness; that whatever political change is still required to establish the democracy in power can be sought for as well under the banner of the new political force of Socialism as under the old banner of Liberalism, and that this new power by basing its agitation upon the material wants of the producing class gathers to its aid a potential power, in the passion and self-interest of the majority of the nation, which the mere doctrinaires – Liberal, Radical, or Republican – could never hope to rally. Therefore political reform parties decay as the Socialist Parties thrive; the latter early the political demands of the former on their banner side by side with the economic demands of their class, and thus deprived of their sole reason for existence the capitalist reform parties lose their attraction for the multitude – now pressing eagerly onward to the inspiration of a new and better hope.

On the other hand Conservatism is, as a party, secure of an existence as long as the present system lasts. It may be set down as an axiom that there will always be a Conservative party as long as there is tyranny and privilege to conserve. Hence we find the old reform parties shedding their members at both ends – the wealthier section falling over into the ranks of Conservatism, in order to strengthen the only party able to defend their monopolies, and the working class section joining hands with the Socialists as the only party embracing the cause alike of political and industrial liberty. The Socialists are naturally desirous of hastening this process, in order that the political battlefield may be left clear and open for the final struggle between the only two parties possessed of a logical reason for existence – the Conservative party defending the strongholds of monarchy, aristocracy and capitalism; and the Socialist party storming those strongholds in the interest of human freedom. This consummation cannot be

realised as long as there exists a political party which, like the Liberals of England and the Continent, and the Home Rule parties of Ireland, attempts to blend the principles of progress and reaction – now blatantly declaring for political freedom, now vigorously defending economic slavery. Therefore the Socialists uniformly seek the discomfiture of Liberalism, regarding it as a buffer between the contending forces of tyranny and freedom; and hence the clear-sighted workmen of the Continent have already reduced that once formidable party to a mere cypher in politics, and win ore long completely wipe it out of existence.

The fact is not without its lesson to us here in Ireland. We too have so-called parties of reform – Home Rule in all its phases is now but a cloak for the designs of the middle class desirous of making terms with the Imperial Government it pretends to dislike. It is but capitalist Liberalism, speaking with an Irish accent. As such it is the enemy of every effort at working-class emancipation, and if the workers of Ireland as are alive to the interests of their class as are their brethren on the Continent, they will help build up that Socialist Party which is destined to march over the grave of Home Rule Liberalism to the final assault and destruction of the strongholds of oppression.

James Connolly

Home Thrusts

(1898)

Workers' Republic, 1 July 1899.

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Peace, blessed Peace!

The Peace Conference summoned by the Czar of Russia is now sitting at the Hague – and the Czar is busy using military force to suppress the constitution of Finland.

Peace, blessed Peace! Britain prepares for war with the Transvaal in the interests of the capitalist speculators who desire to exploit that territory.

Peace, blessed Peace! The United States troops are busily engaged in massacring the Filipinos; looting their towns and burning whatever they cannot carry off.

Peace, blessed Peace! Lock out in Berlin, lock out in Paris, lock out in Scotland, lock out in Dublin, lock out of workers by the masters, desirous of reducing their wage slaves to subjection.

Peace, blessed Peace! The Peace Conference is sitting at the Hague – and the Prince of Hades enjoys the joke.

When nations go to war the women and children are exempted from molestation by the contending forces, but in the industrial struggle – the *class war* – it is the sufferings of the women and children upon which the capitalist class depends to defeat and subdue us.

You see, it works out in this fashion. There is no antagonism between the workmen and those by whom Labour is employed (eh, Mr McCarron) but when the masters desire to provide their wives or daughters with some fresh luxury – a dainty diamond bracelet or a Continental trip – then the workers are called upon to submit to a reduction of wages –

Just to show their friendly feelings and their humble Christian spirit.

Sad to say, the workers most inconsiderately refuse. Some foolish idea about the duty of providing the necessaries of life for their own wives and children gets into their heads, and as a result of this little difference of opinion there is a lock out.

A lock out! You know what that means. It means that the master class as its weapon against the workers uses the powers of slow and maddening *starvation*. It means that your master in order to defeat you, takes the food from your table, the clothes from your body, the coals from your fires, that he condemns you, as far as in him lies, to hunger and misery, and that he calculates, with a fiendish ferocity, that you will submit to his terms rather than see those dear to you perish for lack of proper nourishment.

That is a lock out. During the lock out the masters want for nothing, the workers are in want of everything. A fair fight? Hem.

At the ballot box the master would only count as one against his workers; their force could, if properly used, ensure the triumph of Labour as certainly as on the industrial plane the power of the master's purse will nearly always win.

Yet it is upon the industrial field alone that the workers prefer to fight.

In the workshop they fight the masters – at the ballot box they elect the master or his lackeys to rule them.

Yet it is the men elected at the ballot box who make the laws which govern the fight in the workshop.

When will the workers learn that the political power they could wield as an organised body is the greatest weapon in their hands, that the field of politics is the only field upon which the workers can win emancipation from the domination of capital?

In other words, when will the workers copy the masters who, not content with their tremendous economic power, unceasingly strive to secure every atom of political power in order to entrench their class in its position of supremacy.

Let the workers organise to seize political power; let them remember that all industrial institutions can be moulded responsive to the will of the class wielding the governmental power, and, so remembering, let them direct their energies toward the only object worth striving for, viz, to wrest the private ownership and control of industry from the hands of a robber class, and prepare the ground for the harvest of freedom – the Socialist Republic.

Then we shall have peace. Not the peace of imperial hypocrites, military bullies, lying diplomats and commercial pirates, nor yet the peace of beaten slaves, but the peace of a free people, paying tribute to no exploiter, fully masters of their own destiny.

Peace, blessed Peace?

SPAILPÍN.

James Connolly

Father Finlay, S.J., and Socialism

(1899)

From **Workers' Republic**, July 1, 1899

“Those who seek a comprehensive remedy for the sufferings of the working classes look beyond trades unionism. They perceive that they must modify more

profoundly the relations between labour and capital; to bridge across the chasm dividing them, and so to abolish that rivalry of interest out of which has grown so much inhumanity to man. One class of reformers propose to effect this change by the absolute abolition of private capital – by taking capital, or the material instruments of wealth production, out of the hands of the individuals and classes, and making it the property of the community, vesting it in the State. This scheme, a dream of the socialist – impossible to work out in practice, hopelessly breaking down wherever it has been tried, violates the fundamental conception of all property. What a free man creates by his labour, that is his property; if it is his property he can do with it what he wills – consume it by present use or reserve it for further production. To forbid him the right to reserve it or use it as capital would be to deny him the right to possess property. From this point of view – as well as from others – socialism is seen to have much in common with slavery.”

The above quotation, from the paper on *Cooperation* read by Father Thomas A. Finlay, S.J., before the fourth general meeting of the Maynooth union, calls for more than a passing notice, is deserving of more intelligent criticism than our capitalist contemporaries have been able to bring to bear upon it. For this reason we propose to place before our readers a brief statement of our position in so far at least as it is affected by the assertions contained in the paper quoted from above.

We readily allow that no man in Ireland within the clerical body, and few men in Ireland outside the ranks of the adherents of scientific socialism, can bring to bear upon questions of political economy, and the effect which theories of political economy have had upon the industrial life of the people, such a wealth of knowledge as the reverend gentleman whose paper we are now discussing. The feeble and ineffective efforts of the Home Rule pressmen to criticise the cooperative movement to which Father Finlay devotes so much of his energy and ability is in itself proof enough that, however efficient our journalistic guides may be as caterers to the palate of a reading public ready to forgive every inconsistency of statement or colouring of fact, if only it is seasoned with a dash of ‘patriotism’ or ‘true religion,’ as helps to the intelligent discussion of an economic question they are worse than useless.

The economic theories held by the non-socialist parties in Ireland today and voiced by their publicists on press and platform, are in fact the theories which prevailed in England more than fifty years ago – during the agitation for the repeal of the corn laws, and for free trade in general. Such ideas are now regarded throughout the remainder of the world as outworn and obsolete; it is only in Ireland they survive, and in Ireland only among men, who having failed to keep step with the intellectual march of the world, would fain convince themselves that the intellectual incapacity which shuts them off from sympathy with the thought of the age is the distinguishing birthmark of a true celt. That the criticism of such persons should be of little effect in adding to our knowledge any important truth on an economic subject is, of course, to be expected, and we do not propose to waste our own or our readers' time in discussing them. But the arguments of Father Finlay naturally carry more weight, and deserve, we repeat, a much more serious study.

To begin with we would like to remind the reverend lecturer that he did not place before his hearers such a dear and definite idea of the true socialist position as he himself possesses. In a lecture delivered in Dublin before the Statistical Society some few years ago, in dealing with the teachings of Karl Marx – the ablest exponent of socialism the world has seen, and the founder of that school of thought which embraces all the militant socialist parties of the world – Father Finlay laid before his hearers an exposition of the evolutionary nature of the socialist doctrine, its historical derivation and materialistic basis, which is not at all compatible with the crudely false conception of socialism to be found in the foregoing quotation. Modern socialism, he showed, is not the product of the brains of any man nor of any number of men; it is the legitimate child of a long, drawn-out historical evolution, and its consummation will only be finally possible when that evolutionary process has attained to a suitable degree of development. As capitalist society – the system of wage-labour and 'free contract' between master and man – was only developed according as the system of feudalism – or serf labour under a hereditary landowning nobility – broke down owing to the demand for new methods of industry produced by the opening up of new markets through the discovery of America, and the perfection of means of transit and communication, in like manner will socialism also come when the development

of capitalism in its turn renders the burden of a capitalist class unbearable, and the capitalist system unworkable.

Socialists point out that the capitalist system depends upon the maintenance of an equilibrium between the producing and consuming powers of the world; that business cannot go on unless the goods produced can find customers; that owing to the rapid development of machinery this equilibrium cannot be maintained; that the productive powers of the world are continually increasing whilst the virgin markets of the world are as continually diminishing; that every new scientific process applied to industry, every new perfecting of machinery, increases the productivity of labour, but as the area of the world remains unaltered the hope of finding new markets for the products of labour grows ever less and less; that a time must come when all the world will be exhausted as a market for the wares of commerce, and yet invention and industrial perfecting remain as active as ever; that then capitalism – able to produce more in a few months than would supply its customers for years – will have no work for the workers who, constituting the vast majority as they do, will have to choose between certain starvation and revolt for socialism. That the same economic development which will create the necessity for revolt will also provide the conditions required to make that revolt successful, in so far as it will have forced out of business the multitude of small capitalists, and replaced them by huge Companies, Stores, and Trusts – huge aggregations of Capital under one head, a unification of industry, requiring only the transference of the right of ownership from the individual to the democratic community to bridge the chasm between capitalism and socialism. That the private property which the worker should possess in the fruits of his toil is continually confiscated today by the capitalist process of industry, and that socialism by making all citizens – society – joint heirs and owners of the tools of production, will restore to the workers that private property of which capitalism deprives them.

Here then is a statement of the aims and principles of modern socialism. The intelligent reader will observe that this is not a mere piece of speculative philosophy, nor yet the product of disordered brains acted upon by hunger-weakened stomachs. On the contrary it is primarily a scientific analysis of the

past and present structure of society, a comprehensive *summing up of the facts of history*.

In face of this fact, which we would most respectfully remind Father Finlay he has himself most lucidly explained here now what becomes of his statement at Maynooth that socialism had “hopelessly broken down wherever it has been tried.” The statement was crudely false, mischievous, and misleading, and Father Finlay would not risk his reputation by repeating it before any audience of scientists in the world. That he thought it quite safe to make such an utterance at Maynooth is an interesting indication of the low estimate in which he held the intellectual grasp of his hearers on the thought of their generation. Socialism has not “broken down wherever it has been tried,” because, being the fruit of an historical evolution yet to be completed, *it has never been tried*.

If Father Finlay can tell when and where such an industrial order as would be recognised by the socialist parties of the world as socialism has been tried and failed then we will publicly recant our errors. Wanting such information we, and with us an ever-increasing band of the wage-slaves of capitalism, will continue to prepare for that revolt which shall establish the socialist republic.

James Connolly

The New Evangel

Socialism and Religion

The Known and the Unknowable

Workers' Republic, 17 June 1899

Perhaps upon no point are the doctrines of Socialism so much misunderstood, and so much misrepresented, as in their relation to Religion. When driven into a corner upon every other point at issue; when from the point of view of economics, of politics, or of morality, he is worsted in argument, this question of Religion invariably forms the final entrenchment of the enemy of Socialism – especially in Ireland.

“But it is opposed to Religion,” constitutes the last words, the ultimate shift, of the supporters of capitalism, driven from every other line of defence but stubbornly refusing to yield. “Socialism is Atheism, and all Socialists are Atheists,” or “Your Socialism is but a fine name to cover your Atheism in its attack upon the Church;” all these phrases are so commonly heard in the course of every dispute upon the merits or demerits of the Socialist doctrine that we require no apology for introducing them here in order to point their illogical character. So far from it being true that Socialism and Atheism are synonymous terms, it is a curious and instructive fact that almost all the prominent propagandists of Freethought in our generation have been, and are, most determined enemies of Socialism. The late Charles Bradlaugh, in his time the most aggressive Freethinker in England, was to the last resolute and uncompromising in his hatred of Socialism; G.W. Foote, the present editor of the **Freethinker**, the national organ of English Secularism, is a bitter enemy of Socialism, and the late Colonel Bob Ingersoll, the chief apostle of Freethought doctrine in the United States, was well known as an apologist of capitalism.

On the continent of Europe many other quite similar cases might be recorded, but those already quoted will suffice, as being those most easily verified by our readers. It is a suggestive and amusing fact that in the motley ranks of the defenders of Capitalism the professional propagandists of Freethought are comrades-in-arms of His Holiness the Pope; the ill-reasoned and inconclusive Encyclicals lately issued against Socialism make of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church belated camp followers in the armies marching under the banners raised by the agnostic exponents of the individualist philosophy. Obviously, even the meanest intelligence can see that there need be no identity of thought between the Freethinker as such, and the Socialist as a Socialist. From what then does the

popular misconception arise? In the first instance from the interested attempt of the propertied classes to create such a prejudice against Socialism as might deter the working class giving ear to its doctrines – an attempt too often successful; and in the second instance, from a misconception of the attitude of the Socialist party towards the theological dogma in general. The Socialist Party of Ireland prohibits the discussion, of theological or anti-theological questions at its meetings, public or private. This is in conformity with the practice of the chief Socialist parties of the world, which have frequently, in Germany for example, declared Religion to be a private matter, and outside the scope of Socialist action. Modern Socialism, in fact, as it exists in the minds of its leading exponents, and as it is held and worked for by an increasing number of enthusiastic adherents throughout the civilised world, has an essentially material, matter-of-fact foundation. We do not mean that its supporters are necessarily materialists in the vulgar, and merely anti-theological, sense of the term, but that they do not base their Socialism upon any interpretation of the language or meaning of Scripture, nor upon the real or supposed intentions of a beneficent Deity. They as a party neither affirm or deny those things, but leave it to the individual conscience of each member to determine what beliefs on such questions they shall hold. As a political party they wisely prefer to take their stand upon the actual phenomena of social life as they can be observed in operation amongst us to-day, or as they can be traced in the recorded facts of history. If any special interpretation of the meanings of Scripture tends to influence human thought in the direction of Socialism, or is found to be on a plane with the postulates of Socialist doctrine, then the scientific Socialist considers that the said interpretation is stronger because of its identity with the teachings of Socialism, but he does not necessarily believe that Socialism is stronger, or its position more impregnable, because of its theological ally. He realises that the facts upon which his Socialist faith are based are strong enough in themselves to withstand every shock, and attacks from every quarter, and therefore while he is at all times willing to accept help from every extraneous source, he will only accept it on one condition, viz., that he is not to be required in return to identify his cause with any other whose discomfiture might also involve Socialism in discredit. This is the main reason why Socialists fight shy of theological dogmas and religions generally: because we feel that Socialism is based upon a series of facts requiring only unassisted human reason to grasp

and master all their details, whereas Religion of every kind is admittedly based upon 'faith' in the occurrence in past ages of a series of phenomena inexplicable by any process of mere human reasoning. Obviously, therefore, to identify Socialism with Religion would be to abandon at once that universal, non-sectarian character which to-day we find indispensable to working-class unity, as it would mean that our members would be required to conform to one religious creed, as well as to one specific economic faith – a course of action we have no intention of entering upon as it would inevitably entangle us in the disputes of the warring sects of the world, and thus lead to the disintegration of the Socialist Party.

Socialism, as a party, bases itself upon its knowledge of facts, of economic truths, and leaves the building up of religious ideals or faiths to the outside public, or to its individual members if they so will. It is neither Freethinker nor Christian, Turk nor Jew, Buddhist nor Idolator, Mahomedan nor Parsee – it is only *human*.

James Connolly

The New Evangel

State Monopoly versus Socialism

Workers' Republic, 10 June 1899

One of the most significant signs of our times is the readiness with which our struggling middle class turns to schemes of State or Municipal ownership and control, for relief from the economic pressure under which it is struggling. Thus

we find in England demands for the nationalisation of the telephone system, for the extension of municipal enterprise in the use of electricity, for the extension of the parcel system in the Post Office, for the nationalisation of railways and canals. In Ireland we have our middle class reformers demanding state help for agriculture, state purchase of lands, arterial draining, state construction of docks, piers and harbours, state aid for the fishing industry, state control of the relations between agricultural tenant and landlord, and also nationalisation of railways and canals. There is a certain section of Socialists, chiefly in England, who never tire of hailing all such demands for state activity as a sign of the growth of the Socialist spirit among the middle class, and therefore worthy of all the support the working-class democracy can give. In some degree such a view seems justifiable. The fact that large sections of the capitalist class join in demanding the intervention of the State in industry is a sure sign that they, at least, have lost the overweening belief in the all-sufficiency of private enterprise which characterised their class a generation ago; and that they have been forced to recognise the fact that there are a multitude of things in which the 'brain', 'self-reliance', and 'personal responsibility' of the capitalist are entirely unnecessary. To argue that, since in such enterprises the private property-holder is dispensed with, therefore he can be dispensed with in all other forms of industrial activity, is logical enough and we really fail to see in what manner the advocates of capitalist society can continue to clamour for such state ownership as that alluded to – ownership in which the private capitalist is seen to be superfluous, and yet continue to argue that in all other forms of industry the private capitalist is indispensable. For it must be remembered that every function of a useful character performed by the State or Municipality to-day was at one time performed by private individuals for profit, and in conformity with the then generally accepted belief that it could not be satisfactorily performed except by private individuals.

But all this notwithstanding, we would, without undue desire to carp or cavil, point out that to call such demands 'Socialistic' is in the highest degree misleading. Socialism properly implies above all things the co-operative control by the workers of the machinery of production; without this co-operative control the public ownership by the State is not Socialism – it is only State capitalism.

The demands of the middle-class reformers, from the Railway Reform League down, are simply plans to facilitate the business transactions of the capitalist class. State Telephones – to cheapen messages in the interest of the middle class who are the principal users of the telephone system; State Railways – to cheapen carriage of goods in the interest of the middle-class trader; State-construction of piers, docks, etc. – in the interest of the middle-class merchant; in fact every scheme now advanced in which the help of the State is invoked is a scheme to lighten the burden of the capitalist – trader, manufacturer, or farmer. Were they all in working order to-morrow the change would not necessarily benefit the working class; we would still have in our state industries, as in the Post Office to-day, the same unfair classification of salaries, and the same despotic rule of an irresponsible head. Those who worked most and hardest would still get the least remuneration, and the rank and file would still be deprived of all voice in the ordering of their industry, just the same as in all private enterprises.

Therefore, we repeat, state ownership and control is not necessarily Socialism – if it were, then the Army, the Navy, the Police, the Judges, the Gaolers, the Informers, and the Hangmen, all would all be Socialist functionaries, as they are State officials – but the ownership by the State of all the land and materials for labour, combined with the co-operative control by the workers of such land and materials, would be Socialism.

Schemes of state and municipal ownership, if unaccompanied by this co-operative principle, are but schemes for the perfecting of the mechanism of capitalist government-schemes to make the capitalist regime respectable and efficient for the purposes of the capitalist; in the second place they represent the class-conscious instinct of the business man who feels that capitalist should not prey upon capitalist, while all may unite to prey upon the workers. The chief immediate sufferers from private ownership of railways, canals, and telephones are the middle class shop-keeping element, and their resentment at the tariffs imposed is but the capitalist political expression of the old adage that “dog should not eat dog.”

It will thus be seen that an immense gulf separates the ‘nationalising’ proposals of the middle class from the ‘socialising’ demands of the revolutionary

working class. The first proposes to endow a Class State – repository of the political power of the Capitalist Class – with certain powers and functions to be administered in the common interest of the possessing class; the second proposes to subvert the Class State and replace it with the Socialist State, representing organised society – the Socialist Republic. To the cry of the middle class reformers, “make this or that the property of the government,” we reply, “yes, in proportion as the workers are ready to make the government their property.”

James Connolly

The Sweating System

(1899)

Workers' Republic, 3 June 1899.
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We are unfeignedly glad to see the members of the tailoring trade in Dublin bestirring themselves to put an end to the sweating system in connection with that industry. Unfortunately in a great many of our most important trades any discontent which exists is too often attributed to merely imaginary causes, and the money and energy of the workers frittered away in a foolish effort to win the co-operation of the employers in an attempt to better the condition of Labour.

In this move of the tailoring craft, however, there are to be found the tokens of a recognition on the part of the men that, from whatever quarter assistance

may voluntarily come, from the side of the masters nothing can be hoped for, – except by pressure of the Union on the one hand or the threat of withdrawal of custom on the other. This fact helps to clear the air and will, no doubt, be highly beneficial to the men in so far as it will serve to solidify their ranks and compel them to realise that it is only by the financial and moral strength of their organisation they can hope to achieve success, and not at all by any reliance upon the goodwill of employers.

For the benefit of the general public we may here set down some of the principal factors in the dispute alluded to. The central grievance upon which attention is directed, if not the only one at present, lies in the employment of what are known as ‘outworkers’. Such outworkers are men or women for whom the employer provides no workshop or other facilities, but who execute at home whatever work they receive. This system has a double disadvantage for those workers who work only in the shop, or as it is technically termed, on ‘the board’. In the first place, it makes impossible any effective supervision of the conditions under which the work is performed – and thus opens the way for all manner of inroads on the ‘log’, or price list, and provides the employing class with a reserve of unorganised labour continually competing with the organised workers, and continually offering facilities to the employer in his struggles with his workmen. In the second place, whereas the regular union worker can only work for one employer at a time, and must take all chances incidental to the fluctuations of that employer’s business, the outworkers can serve two or three firms at once and thus assure themselves of work, if not from one, then from the other. The result being that the union worker, having insecurity of employment to reckon with, must necessarily seek for such a rate of wages as will counterbalance such insecurity, but the outworkers having greater facilities for procuring work can, and do, accept lower wages. Add to this the fact that even if both sections of workers got the same wages IN CASH yet, owing to their peculiar circumstances, the outworkers would be the less costly to the employer as they would be providing their own workshop, fires, etc. Under such conditions it is no wonder that the regularly organised members of the tailoring craft regard the existence of the outworking, or sweating, system as a danger to their best interests. Indeed it were a wonder were it otherwise, for the facts herein set forth give but the faintest

outline of the evils contained in the system of outworking. For instance the fact of such work being performed within the small compass of a working-class 'home' is fatal to the health of those employed upon it, and engenders fever and other contagious diseases which, through the medium of the garments, are spread throughout the entire community. Then, like all other 'home' work, it invariably leads to female and child labour – all the members of the family being pressed into the service. Thus a crop of evils of the most serious nature are fostered by this system of sweating against which our friends of the tailoring craft are now arrayed.

But what of the remedy? We might, were we so minded, placidly – and quite correctly – point out to our tailoring friends that the only remedy is Socialism, that nothing short of the public ownership and democratic control of the means of life will finally rid them of their industrial troubles; that sweating is but the natural child of Capitalism, and that to get rid of the one you must abolish the other. But this is not our attitude, nor is it the attitude of the scientific Socialist wherever he is found. Socialism is indeed the only permanent remedy, but Socialists seek for a mitigation of present evils even whilst pressing for the abolition of the source from whence they sprung. Indeed, Socialists are the most imperative of all in agitating for immediate reforms because we know that no measure of relief to the cause of Labour is to-day possible, which does not carry within it the germ of Socialist principles – is not in a greater or less degree an application to industrial life of the Socialist idea. Thus the only radical and effective remedy for the evils of sweating, viz the entire suppression of outworking, is perhaps too herculean a task for mere trade-union effort to accomplish, but lies well within the range of what the workers might accomplish by political action *as a class*. And as the regulation of industrial activity by the workers themselves, instead of by a dominant class, is the very essence of the Socialist conception so even that partial application of the principle which would be shown in the spectacle of working-class representatives in the House of Commons forcing this upon the employers, lies along those lines of progress we desire to travel. We would advise our friends to study that fact well, and then ask themselves why it is that our Home Rule representatives, so ready to serve the

class interests of the tenant farmers, are so utterly indifferent to the class interests of the town workers.

Meanwhile in every effort their union may make towards abolishing the evils of sweating, the tailoring trade can count upon our heartiest co-operation.

James Connolly

Resurgam!

(May 1899)

The Workers' Republic, May 1899.

The re-appearance on the journalistic horizon of our little paper [\[1\]](#) will, no doubt, cause somewhat of a flutter in the ranks of both friends and enemies.

Our previous effort in the same line, all too brief and meteoric as it was, if it sufficed to win for the cause we represent the bitterest hatred of the political tricksters whose treacheries it exposed, also served to win to our side the steadfast adhesion and ungrudging support of fresh hosts of friends. For both we return our thanks. We would wish for no better proof of the success of our efforts, no surer guarantee that our shots had gone home, than the fact that we had aroused hatred where we had only met with indifference, that furious opposition had replaced careless toleration. And in the adhesion to our principles, evidenced in the first place by our largely increased membership, and in the second place by the surprisingly large vote cast in the North Dock Ward of Dublin for our

comrade Stewart standing upon a defiantly uncompromising Socialist platform [2] – we have the verification of the doctrine we have held forth, in spite of the doubts of friends and the sneers of foes, since this party was first launched in the summer of '96, viz. that the only policy to pursue with the Irish Democracy, if it is ever to be won to Socialism, is to preach the revolutionary gospel in all its pristine purity, fresh and undiluted with economic heresy or political time-serving; and having so reared the banner aloft, to follow its fortunes in a like spirit until the good work be done.

In this spirit we have entered the field of public life in Ireland, in this spirit the first issues of the **Workers' Republic** were conceived, and in this spirit the present publication will also be conducted. We have now a paper of our own, a printing plant of our own, and a staff as capable of giving a reasoned exposition of the faith that is in them as any in Ireland. We are therefore free of that dependence on the goodwill of a capitalist printer which cramped our efforts in the past, and although we are likely to make many mistakes in the mere technical minutiae of our work, we feel now that we have turned the corner of adversity and need have no fear of the future.

Therefore, friends and comrades in the fight, the **Workers' Republic** salutes you with joyfulness as it salutes our oppressors with defiance, and "RESURGAM", "I will rise again" is its cry as it is the cry of the disinherited the world over. Robbed and despoiled as we are, exiles in our own land wherever that land may be, degraded to the lot of "human tools to build another's pride", we of the working class, toiling painfully up the ages from ignorance to knowledge, from superstition to science, from Bondage to Freedom, crushed into the earth as our fathers have been, we yet proudly take up their burden and, casting aside all thoughts of compromise with the forces of iniquity, we devote ourselves anew to the task of uprooting the last traces of slavery from this old earth of ours.

Let the great ones of the world note this cry, the cry of the revolutionary spirit, welling up from the hearts of their rebellious slaves:

RESURGAM: I will rise again.

Notes

1. **The Workers' Republic** had not appeared since 22 October 1898, due to the Irish Socialist Republican Party's lack of resources.

2. E.W. Stewart stood for the ISRP in the local elections in January, and received 448 votes (12 per cent of the total).

James Connolly

Home Thrusts

(May 1899)

Workers'

Republic,

May

1899.

Here we are again. [\[1\]](#)

And although the phrase – beloved of the children watching with gaping mouths the antics of a circus clown – may seem a trifle too suggestive for some of our sensitive readers, we venture to think it has in this instance an appositeness most peculiarly its own.

Here we are again; the cause of amusement to those whose conscience our pleasant satires leave untouched, and the cause of mental writhing to the herd of mummers on the stage of life who feel our shafts ripping open their disguises, or exposing their tricks to the ridicule of the world.

As it is the function of the jester to laugh others out of their follies by an assumption of folly on his own part, so it is the function of ‘Spailpín’ to reveal the shortcomings of the political hucksters, by assuming the role of a huckster himself.

A huckster? Yes! On this front page ‘Spailpín’ carries on the trade of buying and selling, and the veriest tyro in that art knows that the first requisite for driving a good bargain is to depreciate the value of your rivals’ goods, whilst extolling the merits of your own.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, countrymen and women, Romans, and lovers, lend me thine ears.

My own are not long enough; whereas –

Room for the **Daily Nation**. This broad-minded organ has declared against the Filipinos. [\[2\]](#) Hence we may now consider their cause as indeed hopeless. But worse than all: that newspaper now declares the insurgents to be “almost as degraded as the wretches who formed a provisional government for Paris during the Commune of 1871.”

Now just think of that. Those degraded wretches of the Commune held Paris for three months without the aid of policemen or detectives and yet, according to the testimony of many foreigners who then resided in that city, Paris was never so free from crime, life and property were never so safe.

They held the Bank of France in their power all that time, and yet left its treasures untouched; no one, not even their greatest enemy, has ever instanced a single case in which a member of the provisional Government of the Paris Commune enriched himself as a result of his political position.

Of what Irish political leaders of the present day can the same be said? Certainly not of the political chiefs of the **Daily Nation**.

The Commune, if it had been successful, would have inaugurated the reign of real freedom the world over – it would have meant the emancipation of the working class; therefore as it failed it serves as a mark for all the literary prostitutes who sell themselves into the service of capitalist journalism. Long live the Commune! If the Filippinos are akin to the members of the Commune may their shadows never grow less.

Yes, gentlemen, what we want is a Catholic University. [3] If we only had a Catholic University the poor ragged children who sit around the Catholic Boys' Home in Abbey Street, or beg to find the copper necessary to procure their admission to its shelter, would have all their woes removed.

And the crowd of forlorn men and women who every night press for admission to the night refuge in Bow Street; the hungry outcasts who wait around the gates of the Mendicity [4]; the evicted tenants patiently waiting for restoration to their homes; the broken-hearted labourers toiling their lives away for a starvation wage; the unemployed wearily tramping from insolent foremen to overbearing employers; the slum dwellers poisoned by the pestiferous air of our city tenements; the peasant mentally and physically starved on his barren mountain patch, all, all would be initiated into the delights of a happy existence –

If only we had a Catholic University.

Some of us would be satisfied with less – most of those I have mentioned would, I think, but then they are only base plebeians, common working class people who would never see the inside of a university, anyhow.

When we speak of a university for the Catholics we don't mean all the Catholics, but only a small portion of the whole body, viz. those who can afford to send their children to such places – shopkeepers, lawyers, gombeen men, rackrenting landlords, patriot publicans, slum proprietors, and other such bright jewels in the crown of the Church militant.

“Free Education up to the highest university grades” and, as a supplement to make it workable, “Free Maintenance for all children”, both planks in the Socialist Republican programme, might make the university question a popular one, but otherwise the agitation is simply bogus, a clerical-cum-capitalist dodge to divert our attention whilst a new bargain is being struck at our expense.

At least, so thinks

Spailpín.

Notes

1. After the 22 October 1898 issue, **The Workers' Republic** ceased publication due to the ISRP's lack of resources.
2. There was widespread popular resistance in the Philippines to the United States, who had taken the islands from Spain the previous year.
3. Nationalist politicians were demanding a Catholic university as an equivalent of Trinity College.
4. The Mendicity Institution provided the homeless with beds for the night.