

James Connolly
Daniel DeLeon

The Connolly-DeLeon Controversy

On Wages, Marriage and the Church
(1904)

A discussion initiated by James Connolly,
and answered by the editor of *The People*

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The Connolly-DeLeon Controversy

Cork Workers' Club

Introduction

(1976)

(To enable readers to understand the context and significance of the debate we have included this introduction, which was written on behalf of the Cork Workers' Club for their pamphlet edition of the dispute.)

Although the controversy between James Connolly and Daniel DeLeon occurred outside Ireland, its inclusion as a booklet in this series is justified because it gives us a clearer insight into the views of Connolly on the subjects discussed than has hitherto been available. The controversy, which took place shortly after Connolly's arrival in the United States, makes clear that his position on the questions involved was of long standing. In this sense it is of particular value to an understanding of some of the principles and policies which guided the Irish Socialist Republican Party under his leadership from 1896 to his departure for the U.S. in September 1903.

Shortly after Connolly arrived in the U.S. where he joined the Socialist Labour Party, he became involved in a dispute with the party leader Daniel DeLeon. On 9 April 1904, a discussion letter sent in by Connolly appeared in **The People**, organ of the S.L.P. Titled, *Wages, Marriage and the Church* it sought to resolve differences in interpretation of party policy and principles which Connolly considered existed between himself and some members of the party.

The first difference concerned Wages and came to his attention while lecturing to an S.L.P. audience in Schenectady, N.Y. At this meeting he presented what he always understood to be the Marxist theory of wages, only to be assailed by the party members present as to the usefulness of agitating for wage-increases. They considered wage-increases useless on the grounds that immediate and automatic price increases cancelled out their effect. Coupled with this experience was his reading of meetings where an S.L.P. organiser rejected Marx's views on wage-increases, saying that Marx wrote in advance and without anticipation of the present day combinations of capital.

In dealing with the Wages Question in his discussion letter, Connolly only presented the basic elements of the Marxist position. But as he also expressed a willingness to defend his position, it is evident he intended to elaborate in a further letter. In fact it is worth noting that of the three subjects he sought to have discussed, he was later to say in an unpublished statement, "I believe the question of Wages and Prices to be the only of the three which could even by the utmost straining of language be considered vital ..." Using stronger language in the same statement he said: "any principle which we would not feel it our duty as

Socialists to establish by force of arms if necessary is non-essential. Such principles are those theories of Marriage and Religion. On these, therefore, I claim the fullest and most absolute freedom of opinion. On the question of Wages and Prices my attitude is different.”

The second difference arose out of the exposure given by **The People** to the book **Woman** by August Bebel. The English translation with a preface by DeLeon, was serialised and advertised in **The People**. Connolly, who opposed Bebel's views on marriage, considered that close identification with the book would leave them open to the type of campaign conducted by Martha Moore Avery and her crew against the S.D.P. in Massachussetts.

His difference on religion came to a head with the publication in **The People** of an article by Emile Vandervelde under the heading, *Socialism or the Catholic Church*. Because of its increasing political influence on the side of reaction in Europe, Vandervelde viewed the Catholic Church as though it were shortly to become the main enemy of the working class. Connolly considered the article to be “not a reasoned appeal to the working class, but an appeal to free-thinkers to look to Socialists to fight their battles for them.” Disapproving of the publication of the article, he also expressed concern at what he detected to be a growing tendency within the party to attack theology when clergymen attacked Socialism, rather than deal with their usually absurd statements on economics. He favoured dealing with them from “a strongly entrenched position based on demonstrable facts,” rather than indulge in arguments “over a question of the next world—a question that were we to argue for another century could not be proven or disproved on one side or the other.” Connolly felt the S.L.P. showed a tendency to move away from their established policy on religion, a policy derived from the German Erfurt Programme of 1891. This policy which declared religion to be a private matter was also supported by the I.S.R.P. and was enunciated by Connolly in his pamphlet, **The New Evangel**, 1901. The following extract from this pamphlet will be of assistance to the reader in understanding Connolly's interpretation of this international Socialist stand on religion at that time:

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 ... 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 series of phenomena inexplicable by any process of mere human reasoning.

The Erfurt policy on Religion did not receive the support of the newly founded Bolshevik Party. Lenin, writing in **Novaya Zhizn**, 3 Dec. 1905, said:

We demand that religion be held a private affair so far as the state is concerned. But by no means can we consider religion a private affair so far as our Party is concerned. Religion must be of no concern to the state, and religious societies must have no connection with governmental authority. Everyone must be absolutely free to profess any religion he pleases, or no religion whatever, i.e. to be an atheist, which every socialist is, as a rule. Discrimination among citizens on account of their religious convictions is wholly intolerable. Even the bare mention of a citizen's religion in official documents should unquestionably be eliminated.

Having said this, Lenin proceeded to say that an explanation of the party's programme should necessarily include an explanation of the true historical and

economic roots of the religious fog. But like James Connolly, Lenin too had his priorities. He went on to advise:

But that does not mean in the least that the religious question ought to be advanced to first place, where it does not belong at all; nor does it mean that we should allow the forces of the really revolutionary economic and political struggle to split up on account of third-rate opinions or senseless ideas, rapidly losing all political importance, rapidly being swept out as rubbish by the very course of economic development.

In a reply to Connolly's letter – both the letter and the reply appeared in the same issue – Daniel DeLeon defended the S.L.P. organiser on the Wages Question, denied the tendency to attack theology and generally supported the content of both Bebel's **Woman** and the Vandervelde article. Taking up the points made by DeLeon, Connolly replied, only to be denied publication by DeLeon. Although Connolly was muzzled, DeLeon continued to publish letters from others relating to the issues. As many as twenty letters were published, mostly echoes of DeLeon's criticisms. Nor did DeLeon himself remain silent; he continually butted-in with editorial footnotes to readers letters. This undemocratic action of not allowing Connolly the right of reply was most unfortunate for him, more so since he had given only the briefest outline of his position on wages in his opening letter.

Denied access to **The People**, Connolly wrote to his comrade J. Carstairs Matheson, editor of the British S.L.P. organ, **The Socialist**, requesting that he publish an article of his answering DeLeon. Since he held the view that his position in the dispute was consistent with a correct interpretation of party policy and principles and since DeLeon, in his role as editor of **The People** gave voice to such policy and principles, he simply wrote the article answering DeLeon "out of his own mouth." This was done by introducing into the article several statements made by DeLeon in the columns of **The People** in the previous few years all of which supported Connolly's present position and contradicted DeLeon's. The article was "veiled ... so that none but the readers of **The People** will see that it is really an answer to DeLeon's charge." It appeared in the June issue under the heading *Wages and other things*.

Towards the end of May the tide of criticism had so turned against Connolly that his own Section in Tray, N.Y. decided to put him on trial to ascertain his position towards party policy and principles. In his defence he presented the Section with a lengthy statement, the contents of which won their support. They also decided to forward it to the National Executive with the request that it be published in **The People**. Like his earlier reply the statement was denied publication.

On 2 July, the National Convention met at the Grand Central Palace, where according to **The Weekly People**:—

DeLeon explained the origin and development of the discussion and presented all the documents in the matter, including those which had not been published, pointing out from their incorrect and misleading contents why those unpublished had been allowed to remain so up to now. (**W.P.** 9/7/04)

Writing to his comrade, J. Carstairs Matheson, Connolly commented:

Dan played a smart trick at the Conference. Of course I could not be present ; was not a delegate, and had my nose too close to grindstone of exploitation to attend, anyway. So, Dan read my correspondence, paragraph by paragraph *adding his own criticisms in between*, so that the delegates could not discern where I ended an *my quotations* began, and had lost sight of one sentence before he began to read the one that pointed its moral. As a result he had no difficulty in tearing me to pieces and thus succeeded by this trick — worthy of a shyster lawyer — in preventing publication of the letters, and in preventing the delegates and the party at large from having the opportunity of studying and calmly reviewing the evidence in cold print. It was a 'great victory'.

The National Convention upheld DeLeon's handling of the affair; nonetheless Connolly continued in membership still holding to his own views on Wages, Marriage and the Church. Three years later when an anti-Marxist wage theory was being discussed in the **Industrial Union Bulletin**, organ of the Industrial Workers of the World, Connolly wrote restating his position of 1904. Although the discussion on wages had been going on for months, Connolly's letter was the

one that angered DeLeon. Choosing not to confront Connolly in the columns of the **Industrial Union Bulletin**, he wrote instead to an S.L.P. member of the I.W.W. General Executive Board, Rudolph Katz, criticising the paper's editor for "his woeful ignorance on economics by publishing such stuff." However, he did indicate his willingness to answer Connolly on condition that Katz persuade the editor to request him to do so. It appears no such request was made, because no letter of DeLeon's appeared. In any event DeLeon had decided on another course of action. When the General Executive Board of the I.W.W. met in New York on 22 Dec., 1907, Connolly put forward a plan to bring in 12,000 New York longshoremen, then independent, into the I.W.W. The action was hampered by DeLeon who induced the Board to go into secret session to try Connolly on the charge that his articles on economics constituted heresy. After some discussion the Chairman of the session, ruled the charges to be out of place before a G.E.B. meeting. Not content to leave the affair rest, DeLeon, shortly afterwards published in **The People**, an account of the charges he had laid against Connolly.

In this booklet we publish, Connolly's discussion letter, DeLeon's reply, Connolly's article in **The Socialist**, his defence statement, and relevant extracts from his letters to J. Carstairs Matheson. We have also included the Vandervelde article, *Socialism or the Catholic Church*. The letter Connolly sent in reply to DeLeon's comments we could not trace. However, it is unlikely it contained anything that didn't later appear in Connolly's defence statement. We have confined the material in this booklet to that concerning the controversy of 1904; we see no point in including the reiteration of positions on wages that occurred in 1907/8.

James Connolly

Wages, Marriage and the Church

(1904)

There is a tale told of an inmate of a lunatic asylum who was asked by a visitor to the institution how he came to be there. "Well," he replied, "I thought the people outside were mad, and they thought I was mad. They were in the majority, and, here I am." This tale often occurs to my mind when I run up against things in our movement contrary to my own views of Socialism and the essentials of Socialist propaganda. I find myself in complete accord with the S.L.P. (of which I am proud to be a member) on all questions of policy and of discipline and of revolutionary procedure. When it comes down to holding our position as against an opponent, no matter how well equipped, I am not aware of any case in any country in which the comrades found fault with my defence or attack, or my exposition of our principles. And yet I have found in the party, speakers and writers, and comrades who professed to be neither, who held and gave expression to views on policy, and conceptions of Socialism with which I would not for a moment agree. And the thought occurs to me: Which of us is mad? To settle this question, I am here setting down some of the points on which I find myself in disagreement with numbers of the comrades, and hope to see in **The Weekly People** – the only one of our organs available for me – an earnest discussion thereon.

Wages

Lately when reading the report of the meetings held by one of our organisers in the West, I discovered that in the course of a discussion with a spokesman of the Kangaroos [\[1\]](#), this comrade held that the workers could not even temporarily

benefit by a rise in wages “as every rise in wages was offset by a rise in prices.” When the Kangaroo quoted from Marx’s **Value, Price and Profit** [2], to prove the contrary, our S.L.P. man airily disposed of Marx by saying that Marx wrote in advance of, and without anticipation of, the present day combinations of capital. I am afraid that that S.L.P. speaker knew little of Marx except his name, or he could not have made such a remark. The theory that a rise in prices always destroys the value of a rise in wages sound very revolutionary, of course, but it is not true. And, furthermore, it is no part of our doctrine. If it were it knocks the feet from under the S.T. & L.A. [3] and renders that body little else than a mere ward-heeling club for the S.L.P. I am prepared to defend this point if any one considers me wrong upon it. It was one of the points in dispute between my opponents at the Schenectady meeting and myself. Until the party is a unit upon such points our propaganda in one place will nullify our propaganda in another.

Marriage

Again, when touring this country in 1902, I met in Indianapolis an esteemed comrade who almost lost his temper with me because I expressed my belief in monogamic marriage, and because I said, as I still hold, that the tendency of civilisation is towards its perfection and completion, instead of towards its destruction. My comrade’s views, especially since the publication in **The People** of Bebel’s **Women** [4], are held by a very large number of members, but I hold, nevertheless, that they are wrong, and, furthermore, that such works and such publications are an excrescence upon the movement. The abolition of the capitalist system will, undoubtedly, solve the economic side of the Woman Question, but it will solve that alone. The question of marriage, of divorce, of paternity, of the equality of woman with man are physical and sexual questions, or questions of temperamental affiliation as in marriage, and were we living in a Socialist Republic would still be hotly contested as they are to-day. One great element of disagreement would be removed – the economic – but men and women would still be unfaithful to their vows, and questions of the intellectual equality of the sexes would still be as much in dispute as they are today, even although economic equality would be assured. To take a case in point: Suppose a

man and woman married. The man after a few years ceases to love the woman, his wife, and loves another. But his wife's love for him has only increased with the passage of years, and she has borne him children. He wishes to leave her and consort with his new love. Will the fact that her economic future is secured be any solace to the deserted mother or to her children? Decidedly not! It is, a human and sexual problem, not an economic problem at all. Unjust economic conditions aggravate the evil, but do not create it. Comrade De Leon [\[5\]](#) says in his preface, which I have just seen, that Bebel's **Woman** raises up for the proletaire, friends in the camp of the enemy. I consider that it is, on the contrary, an attempt to seduce the proletariat from the firm ground of political and economic science on to the questionable ground of physiology and sex. Instead of raising up friends in the camp of the enemy, it engenders the fatal habit of looking outside our own class for help to the members of a class – the "enemy" referred to – whose whole material interests are opposed to ours. In the days of battle will the claims of sex or the claims of their class weigh most with the ladies of the capitalist class? Bebel's **Woman** is popular because of its quasi-prurient revelations of the past and present degradation of womanhood, but I question if you can find in the whole world one woman who was led to Socialism by it, but you can find hundreds who were repelled from studying Socialism by judicious extracts from its pages. I believe it is destined to be in the future a potent weapon against us in this country. And it is a weapon put into the enemy's hands without obtaining any corresponding advantage for our side. The valuable propaganda material in the book is absolutely nullified by its identification with a debatable physiological question on which the party as a whole has never been consulted, and could not be.

The Church

The attitude of the party toward religion is another one on which I believe there is a tendency at present to stray from the correct path. Theoretically every S.L.P. man agrees that Socialism is a political and economic question and has nothing to do with religion. But how many adhere to that position? Very few, indeed. It is scarcely possible to take up a copy of **The Weekly People** of late without

realising from its contents that it and the party are becoming distinctly anti-religious. If a clergyman anywhere attacks Socialism the tendency is to hit back, not at his economic absurdities, but at his theology, with which we have nothing to do. In other words, we occupy a strongly entrenched position based upon demonstrable facts. When a clergyman attacks this position our wisest course is to remain in our entrenchments and to allow him to waste his energy and demonstrate his ignorance by futile attacks upon our position. Instead of which, our comrades descend from their entrenchments and engage the enemy in combat over a question of the next world – a question that were we to argue for another century could not be proven or disproved on one side or the other. That is to say, we attack the enemy where he is strongest, and instead of relying upon appeals to the class interests of the workers we tangle their minds up in questions which even the trained intellect of scientists cannot solve. All of which must be very satisfactory to our enemies. The prominence given to the absurd article of M. Vandervelde [6] illustrates this clearly. Mr. Vandervelde is a middle class doctrinaire, who, on every question of tactics, has proven himself unsafe as a guide. His performances as an upholder of Millerand ought to be well known to readers of **The People**, his botchy handling of the late Universal Strike in Belgium, when he and his party sacrificed the interests of hundreds of poor working men and their families in order to "teach a lesson" to the amused capitalist government, is also well known. His general Kangarooism is recognised by every thinking student of the European Socialist movement, but, lo! he speaks against the Catholic Church, and presto, he is become an oracle. But I refuse to worship at this Delphic shrine, and I laugh at the words of the oracle. Indeed, those words contain their own refutation. They are not a reasoned appeal to the working class, but an appeal to the free-thinkers to look to the Socialists to fight their battles for them. That is the tenor of the whole article. See how tenderly he speaks of the English Liberals. "Justice forbids, however, to reproach English Liberalism as a body with the reactionary complaisance of the right wing." We read how he approves of the sleek bourgeois governmental dodge to disorganise Socialist forces by the corruption of Millerand and Jaurès. For the extract in **The People** omits a word, which I will put in brackets, and which, whether in **The Independent** or not, obviously from the context ought to have been there: "The Republican middle class and the radical Democracy do (not) hesitate to accept

the help of the Social Democracy in the fight against the Catholic Church by enrolling Millerand in the Ministry and electing Jaurès Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies.” To this doctrinaire the great struggle of the working class for freedom is but a kind of side show, or, perhaps, an auxiliary, to the free-thinking movement. The betrayal of the workers by his kind in France is justifiable in the exigencies of the free-thought campaign. His statement that he does “not know and cannot conceive of a free-thinking workingman who is not at the same time a Socialist,” only goes to show how little he knows about the working class. I am sure few readers of **The People** could echo his words. His whole soul is perturbed with the fear that when Socialism crushes out the free-thinking middle class, there will be nobody left to fight the Church unless Socialism kindly consents to become a catspaw for the propagandists of free-thought. How the capitalist editor of the English **Freethinker**, or the staunch Republican soul of Bob Ingersoll would rejoice to see us linking the propaganda of our *knowledge* with that of their *speculations*. We have seen how the freethinking capitalist governments of France knew how to utilise the anti-clerical Dreyfus agitation to corrupt our movement, we see to-day how a similar free-thinking administration in the same country initiates against religious orders a campaign which the Parti Ouvrier has seen fit to denounce as a mere bourgeois dodge to divert public attention from the social question, and if we but pause to think we will see in the anti-religious tone of our papers and speakers how the ground here is being unwittingly prepared for the same confusion and emasculation. I shall certainly do my share toward repelling every such tendency as strongly as I would fight to prevent the movement being identified even by implication with the tenets of the Catholic Church, or the Protestant, of the Shinto, or the Jew.

The S.L.P. is a political and economic party, seeking the conquest of public power in order to clear the way for the Social Revolution. Let it keep to that. It is a big enough proposition.

But I have said enough to arouse discussion, and will reserve further criticism to another time. I hold that mine is the correct S.L.P. doctrine. Now, will some one please tread on the tail of my coat?

JAMES CONNOLLY.
Troy, N.Y., March 23.

The People, April 9, 1904.

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Notes

[1.](#) KANGAROO – S.L.P. nickname for members of the Socialist Party of America which was founded in 1901 by a fusion of the Social Democratic Party and a large breakaway from the S.L.P.

[2.](#) **Value, Price and Profit** – text of a report delivered by Karl Marx at the meetings of the General Council of the First International in June 1865. In this report Marx set forth for the first time in public the basis of his theory of surplus value. It was directed against those who maintained that higher wages cannot improve the condition of the workers and that trade unions' activity must be considered detrimental to their interests. First published as a pamphlet in London, 1898, by his daughter, Eleanor Marx Aveling, under the title **Value, Price and Profit**. Nowadays it is titled **Wages, Price and Profit**.

[3.](#) S.T. & L.A. – Socialist Trade and Labour Alliance, a trade union, established on industrial, not craft, lines and affiliated to the S.L.P.

[4.](#) **Bebel, August** (1840-1913) – a founder and prominent leader of the German Social-Democratic and international working class movement. Active opponent of revisionism and reformism in the German workers' movement in the 1890s and early 1900s.

[5.](#) **DeLeon, Daniel** (1852-1914) – leader of the American labour movement from the 1890s: leader and ideologist of the S.L.P.; editor of **The People** from 1892 until his death. One of the founders of the Industrial Workers of the World (1905).

[6.](#) **Vandervelde, Emile** (1866-1938) – leader of the Belgian Workers Party, chairman of the Second International Socialist Bureau. Entered the bourgeois government of

Belgium during the First World War. Was hostile to the October Socialist Revolution and actively helped the armed intervention against Soviet Russia.

Daniel DeLeon

DeLeon Replies ...

(1904)

The flippancy of the last sentence is to be regretted, especially in view of the importance that our critic seems to attach to his private opinions in the premises, an importance that, in a way, they deserve seeing that in the course of the Socialist Movement they have before now periodically recurred, and, although uniformly rejected, present a recurring mental phenomenon that should be well understood, that has to be reckoned with, and that must, be resisted if Socialism is to triumph. Comrade Connolly's coat-tails shall remain untouched. He will be met in front.

The three heads – Wages, Marriage and the Church – under which the above criticism is presented, obviously resolve themselves into just one head. Nevertheless, the three shall be taken up seriatim.

Wages and Prices

Under *Wages* an S.L.P. organiser on the stump is quoted as having said that rises in wages are offset by rises in prices; that a Kangaroo quoted against that a passage from Marx's **Value, Price and Profit**; that the S.L.P. organiser airily brushed aside the objection; that, consequently, he probably knows of Marx

nothing but the name, and that such a theory knocks the feet from under the S.T. & L.A. and renders it little else than a "ward-heeling club" for the S.L.P.

The S.L.P. organiser was right on the matter of wages and prices; the conclusions drawn against him and as to the effect of his position on the S.T. & L.A. are wrong; and it was just like that superficial Kangaroo, to have digested Marx so ill as to whip up an abstract theoretic sentence as from an ambush, against facts known and felt by all, and that no wise affect or are affected by the theory.

The story is told of a prisoner who sent for a lawyer and told him his case. The lawyer pulled out of his pocket his manual of the criminal code, hunted up a section, read it aloud to the prisoner, and said: "Stuff and nonsense, you can't be arrested!" "But here I am in a cell." The lawyer again quoted from the code, insisting that the man could not be arrested, and kept it up until the prisoner kicked the shyster out. The clause quoted by the shyster lawyer did stand in that code, but the code contained also another clause, and the two had to be interpreted synthetically, and not dislocatedly. And so on this matter of wages and prices. In that identical work on **Value, Price and Profit** in which the theory is correctly shown that a rise in wages does not necessarily imply a rise in prices, Marx says: "Having shown that a general rise of wages would ... not affect the average price of commodities or their value," the question comes whether Labour can secure higher wages without having to submit to higher prices, and this question he answers: "As with all other commodities, so with labour, its market price will, in the long run, adapt itself to its value; ... despite all the ups and downs, and do what he may, the workingman will, on the average, **ONLY RECEIVE THE VALUE OF HIS LABOUR, WHICH RESOLVES INTO THE VALUE OF HIS LABOURING POWER, WHICH IS DETERMINED BY THE VALUE OF THE NECESSARIES REQUIRED FOR ITS MAINTENANCE AND REPRODUCTION,**" – in other words, higher wages, in the long run, without at least proportional higher prices of necessaries, would mean a market price for labour out of keeping with its value, which is determined by the value of the necessaries required for its maintenance – an economic absurdity.

Marx does not consist of one sentence for Kangaroo agitators to star the country on, or for scribblers to set up such articles on Marxism as abound in the London **Justice**. Marx consists of a vast literature that is both practical and theoretic, and the distinctive feature of Marxism is the practical application of its theoretic part.

The economics on the question being as just stated, do they “knock the feet from under the S.T. & L.A.”? Not in the remotest. A notion prevails in some quarters that, if, indeed, all increase of wages which a labour organisation may secure is nullified by a corresponding rise in price, then labour organisations have no purpose. The notion is false, and the false reasoning is overthrown by Marx himself in scores of passages.

For one thing, a Trades Union’s incapacity to actually raise wages does not imply incapacity in all other important wage respects. While the actual raising of wages is an ideal, and that ideal, cannot be enjoyed in the long run, there is a ‘next best’ thing – the preventing of wages from dropping to the point that they inevitably would in the total absence of organisation. That the trades union, even the pure-and-simplest, does that is not open to discussion. Wages are declining on the whole, relatively and absolutely, but long ago would we have reached the coolie stage if the union did not act as a brake on the decline.

This fact, superficially considered, would only seem to be another knockout to the S.T. & L.A. It might be argued: “Very well, I drop the idea that, if prices keep step with higher wages, the theory of unionism is knocked out; I drop that, but then the feet of the S.T. & L.A. are anyhow knocked out from under it. If even the pure-and-simplest of unions perform the only beneficial function that unionism can accomplish, why start the S.T. & L.A.? Why not all join the pure and simple union?”

This argument is frequently heard on the part of men who call themselves Marxists, and every time it is made it betrays their incapacity for a synthetic comprehension of Marx. For the same reason that the beneficent though negative provisions contained in a truce between two armies on a field of battle, would result disastrously to that one of the two that may be so ill informed as to

construe the TRUCE for a TREATY, and deem victory won and the war ended – for that same reason do the compacts, periodically entered into by pure and simple unions with capitalists, and that have the beneficent effect of brakes on the decline of wages, exercise a steadily evil influence upon the working class. Pure and simple unionism condemns the Labour movement to the status of a routed and retreating army, with unionism as the rear guard, uninformed and visionary enough to imagine its periodical and temporary stands against the advancing cavalry of capitalism to be victories that end the war. All the good that there may be in such stands and truces are hereby lost, they become a bane. As the scourge that concentrated machinery is to-day upon the race is not a feature essential to the concentrated and otherwise beneficent machinery, but only the result of an incident, and an incident that can be and must be removed, to wit, its private ownership character, so is the steadily evil influence exercised by pure and simple unionism not a feature essential to unionism but only the result of an incident, to wit, its pure and simple character, which ignores the perpetual condition of war between Capital and Labour. This incident in unionism can and must be removed. Class-conscious unionism CAN profit by the truces that it concludes with Capitalism because it will not mistake them for treaties that end the war, consequently its retreats would never be retreats that inevitably are but the preliminaries for further and ever worse retreats, its retreats would be the preliminaries for final triumph. The S.T. & L.A. is there for the purpose of removing that incident that now blights unionism; that is the reason for its existence, and that is why, even though prices rise in tempo with the alleged rise, of wages, and even though pure and simple unionism checks the decline in Labour's earnings, the S.T. & L.A. form of unionism is a necessity.

Without mentioning other valuable features of bona fide unionism, apart from the wages feature, grossly unfit would that S.L.P. organiser be who, on the stump – not engaged at writing a book – but on the stump, and in the face of both the obvious rises in prices and the false pretences of the Labour fakirs concerning how they are raising wages, would indulge in the Kangaroo vanities of quoting theories, out of their context, befuddle his hearers, play into the hands of the fakirs, and thereby boost the pure and simple delusion. Whatever else may be

said of the S.L.P. organiser who would resist such vanities, not to him the charge will stick of knowing of Marx hardly more than his name.

In sociology as in biology formations shade into each other without destroying the typical feature of each. The Labour Movement or Socialism is political, and economic. The S.L.P. represents the type of the political, the S.T. & L.A. of the economic arm of the Movement in the continuous war between the Working Class and the Capitalist Class. For all these reasons both organisations stand on feet too firm to be knocked from under them, and, while each trains and is bound to train recruits for the other, unfit is any remark that even remotely hints at either as a present or potential 'ward-heeling club' for the other.

The rest and bulk of the criticism is pointedly at the alleged "anti-religious" tendency of the S.L.P. Our critic takes up the subject under three distinct heads: **The People's** treatment of clergymen who attack Socialism; Bebel's **Woman**, and Vandervelde's article –; all of which appeared in these columns.

Attacks on 'theology'

As to **The People's** treatment of clergymen who attack Socialism the charge is: "If a clergyman anywhere attacks Socialism the tendency is to hit back, not at his economic absurdities, but at his theology." In vain do we search in that passage, or in any of the others that precede or follow it, for even a remote hint of an allegation of fact or instance illustrating the charge that if a clergyman anywhere attacks Socialism he is hit back not at his absurd economics but at his theology. Being unaware of ever having tackled our clerical opponents on their theology, left in utter darkness for an illustration of such being done, we have ransacked our memory. A long procession of instances where we 'hit back' at clergymen started a cavalcade before our mind's eye, and as each instance crossed the reviewing line, we questioned it, Art thou a case in point? For instance:

The Roman Catholic Cardinal Gibbons, fresh back from the conclave at Rome, where he took the oath to defend the *temporal* power of the Pope, "*usque*

ad effusionem sanguinis” (up to the shedding of blood), declared Socialism unpatriotic and Socialists un-American. He was ‘hit back’ by asking him with what grace he, who had just been swearing such extreme allegiance to a *foreign temporal* power, could denounce the Socialists as ‘un-American and unpatriotic.’ – Was that theology?

A Chicago Jewish Rabbi sermonised on the baneful effects of Socialism inasmuch as it would destroy the incentive to work. He was ‘hit back’ with the figures and facts showing how the sweat-shopped Jewish workingmen fell by the wayside utterly despondent, seeing that the more they worked the quicker they knocked themselves out of work. – Was that theology?

Clergymen of all denominations have insulted the Socialists’ wives and children. They were ‘hit back’ by holding up to them the utterings of their own savants, pronouncing prostitution a necessity of capitalist society. – Was that theology?

Clergymen of all denominations have slandered Socialism as a destroyer of the family. They were ‘hit back’ with proofs that the capitalist system, which they uphold, tears the mother from the child, and throws her into the factory; reduces earnings and thereby prevents marriages; makes the worker dependent on the fickleness of the market and thereby sends him far away from his family in search of work; separates the sexes thereby building ‘he-towns’ and ‘she-towns’, and they were convicted of being the abettors of the ruination of the family. – Was that theology?

A Roman Catholic Archbishop denounced Socialism as an inciter to rebellion against the “word of God,” which commanded man to be satisfied with “the station in which it has pleased God to put him.” He was ‘hit back’ and silenced with the question whether he was not a hypocrite, seeing he was then an Archbishop, whereas “it had pleased God” to put him in another station by making him the son of a rum-seller. – Was that theology?

Another Roman Catholic prelate pronounced Socialists unutterable on the ground of their materialist conception of history. He was ‘hit back’ with two

arrows from his own quiver. One was the passage where Jesus, before preaching to the multitude, satisfied their physical wants, and considered that so important as even to perform a miracle, so as to first feed them on loaves and fishes; the other quotation was from a leading Catholic divine who maintained the necessity of the Papal temporal power, on the ground that, without the temporal (material) basis, the spiritual duties of the Church could not be performed. – Was that theology?

The whole Catholic hierarchy in chorus slandered the Socialists as murderers of rulers and disturbers of the State at the time of the Czolgosz affair. They were 'hit back' by citing a long list of murderers of rulers down to present days, including Czolgosz himself, all of whom were Catholics, and by showing that their theory of society, terrestrial society, by exaggerating the value of the individual and by claiming that governmental power comes from above instead of from below, was, under given conditions, a natural breeder of assassins of rulers, as the long list showed. – Was that theology?

We call a halt to the procession. If such instances are instances of attacking theology, then the subjects must be considered theologic. There should be no confusion regarding such definitions. The S.L.P. does not consider them theologic. If any there be who does, he should state so categorically. We should all know it.

Theology or religion is a delicate and occult thing. No man of sense and surely none of feeling will, 'hit back' at that tender vein. He will respect that private feeling with others, as he will expect others to respect it with him. But that is one thing, and another is to allow clergymen to extend the jurisdiction of 'theology' over terrestrial and civic matters, as they endeavour to do. To allow them to, and not 'hit back,' and hard, too, at such clerical usurpations over a domain that is purely civic, would be to allow them to walk into our encampment, take possession, and non-suit the cause of Socialism – and that indeed would "be satisfactory to the enemy." With Daniel O'Connell, the S.L.P. says: "All the religion you like from Rome, but no politics."

Bebel's *Woman*

As to Bebel's **Woman**, our critic is certainly right when he says that "judicious extracts," that is, garblings, from the work will repel. So, decidedly so, would "judicious extracts" from the Bible or Shakespeare. The visitation of being 'judiciously' garbled is one that no work, not the purest and soundest, is free from. There is nothing in that charge. Moreover, what sort of intellect is that that will place its judgment in the hands of garblers, and allow it to turn from a work by garblings? Surely, not upon such material could Socialism build – nor did any great movement ever build on such intellectual quicksands. Nor are we inclined to dispute the view that some of the revelations in the book may tickle the prurient who may see in them only pruriency. We all know that there are men of the Comstock make-up who can see in the shape of the Venus of Milo only prurient nudity. That, however, the popularity of the book is due to such pruriency, is an unfelicitous statement, which, in its preposterous sweepingness, cannot but shake confidence in the coolness of our critic's judgment. Finally, and first to dispose of minor objections, our critic's "case in point" – where, after economic independence has been secured to man and woman, the instance is supposed of a man ceasing to love his wife and mother of his children, then loving some other woman, and leaving the former, and closing with the question whether economic freedom would be solace to the deserted mother and children – is in strange contradiction with the observation that the paragraph opens with, and in which our critic asserts that he always has been and is now of the opinion that "the tendency of civilisation is toward the perfection and completion, instead of toward the destruction of monogamic marriage." This "case in point" recalls the "cases in point" that single-taxers are wont to adduce against Socialism – they all proceed from the mental bias acquired under present conditions, and from the error of forgetting that the altered and superior conditions will remove the results that are the essence of most of these "cases in point." How can anyone expect to see monogamic marriage perfected, and yet conceive such a "case in point," despite the material conditions have been removed that to-day render "elective affinity" or "natural selection" a lie on the lips of the praise-singers of capitalist society; that to-day lash man and woman into false acts, before, during and after marriage; and that so cruelly bruises monogamic marriage? How can such a

monstrosity as the one cited in the “case in point” be imagined – not as an exception whose shockingness only would tend to promote monogamic marriage – but as a "case in point" that society must reckon with? How can such a "case in point" be conceived but by a mind that carries into future society the sights of the present, and the material impressions from which they proceed? We hold that, using the term ‘monogamic marriage’ in its ethnologic and only sense in which it may properly be used, both the facts gathered by Bebel and the further facts and argumentation presented by the translator’s preface, leave room for no conclusion other than that monogamic marriage only awaits the economic freedom of the race to blossom like the rose.

The “case in point” directly leads to the fundamental error from which the objection to Bebel’s **Woman** proceeds.

The opinion that “the abolition of the capitalist system will, undoubtedly solve the economic side of the Woman Question, but will solve that alone” is utopian in that it denies the controlling influence of material conditions upon any and all social institutions. What that influence is no Marxist should question. For its influence on ‘marriage,’ etc., there is the monumental work of Lewis H. Morgan – an undisputed authority in ethnic science. Here are some of his conclusions, gathered at random after a mass Of demonstrative facts:

It is impossible to overestimate the influence of property in the civilisation of mankind.

After the experience of several thousand years it (property) caused the abolition of slavery upon the discovery that a freeman was a better property – making machine.

The monogamian family owes its origin to property ... The growth of the idea of property in the human mind ... is intimately connected with the establishment of this form of the family.

The whole work abounds with illustrations that revolutionised ethnology and furnished Marxian sociology with its irrefutable ethnic basis, going to show that

the tenderest affections and sentiments – physical, sexual and mental – have developed along the line of and in the measure that material conditions made them possible. This thirty-third edition of Bebel's **Woman**, planted squarely on Morgan, supplementing Morgan with Marx, and weaving in the historic connection of marital relations, has an educational propagandistic value which no amount of actual or imaginary thorns that may attach to the stalk of that rose can nullify. No wonder the S.L.P. never went through the superfluous trouble of consulting or voting upon the essential merits of this cannonball fired through the web of lies that the spokesmen and candle-holders of the usurping class have woven and seek to stuff the human intellect with.

Vanderveelde's article

Finally, as to Vanderveelde's article, which, barring a few obvious typographical errors, was published in these columns in full, and not in extracts, as it appeared in **The Independent**. Here our critic is, if possible, still more infelicitous than under the previous heads.

Is a man wrong in what he is right because he is wrong in what he is wrong?

What sort of argument is that which leaves allegations of fact – that may be true and may be false – untouched, and would seek by indirection to discredit them with the utterer's wrong doings in other respects? Vanderveelde expresses private opinions and he also adduces allegations of fact. As to the former, for instance, his opinion touching the numbers of free-thinking workingmen who are Socialists, such opinions are not statistics of facts but of fancy, like our critic's statistics about "hundreds of women who were repelled from studying Socialism" by judicious extracts from Bebel's **Woman**; or the statistics of the man he once ran across somewhere who told him "De Leon had driven hundreds of thousands of men out of the S.L.P." Why spend so much time on these unimportant matters, and not a word on Vanderveelde's allegation of what M. Woeste, one of the heads of the Belgian Catholic party, said? Or his other allegation quoting the Catholic writer, Donoso Cortes? Or on his allegations that go to show the Catholic Church in Belgium to have openly converted itself into a political machine? Our critic

says truly that “on every question of tactics he (Vandervelde) has proven himself unsafe,” but what about the questions of FACT that he alleges? Our critic pronounces the article “absurd”, does the sentence of “absurd” extend over the allegations of fact regarding the Catholic political party in Belgium, and the quotations from Catholic writers? If the allegations of fact are “absurd” why not expose them with counter allegations so that the readers may verify the allegations of both sides, and find out on what leg the “absurd” boot lies? Or must we conclude that seeing it is clergymen who run that political machine, and seeing they give their party a religious name, the matter, therefore, becomes ‘theology’ – and the Belgian Socialists should not ‘hit back’ at that.

Without abandoning the judicial temper and moderation necessary in the handling of such grave issues – grave in view of the role they have played in former movements – we must emphatically say that – after enumerating a long list of Kangarooic and heels-over-head acts of Vandervelde, for all of which he has been severely taken to task in these columns, and on account of which **The People** has uniformly expressed a poor opinion of the man as a tactician – our critic is unhandsome in his climax: “but, lo, he (Vandervelde) speaks against the Catholic Church, and presto, he is become an oracle!” There is no warrant for the reasoning, least of all for the conclusion of “oracle.” With greater justice could one argue:

The Belgian Socialists have been fighting for the suffrage – good; they have been opposing the system of plural voting, that artificially raises their exploiters from a minority to a controlling majority – good; they have been struggling to gain political power under a programme that demands the public ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work – good; they have been claiming that Labour alone produces all wealth, consequently Labour being in poverty, is plundered, consequently, the idle capitalist, being in affluence, is in possession of stolen goods – good; they have been demanding liberal education and leisure to profit by it, and proving their plunderers to be in a conspiracy to breed and perpetuate ignorance – good; but, lo, the Catholic Church takes the political field in Belgium against all that, and presto, all that is become theology and should not be bothered with!

Aye, Socialism is a political and economic movement, and the S.L.P. is seeking to clear the way for the Social Revolution. It will keep to that! It will neither degenerate into Kangarooic vain splittings of hair on economics, nor will it allow any one clergyman or organisation of clergymen, to rule it one inch off its legitimate, terrestrial field of action. It will firmly keep hold of the whole of its big enough and noble proposition.

*Editor "The People",
April 9, 1904.*

James Connolly

**Wages and other
things**

(1904)

In response to the request of the editor for a letter from America I have here set down some of the reasons why I consider the S.L.P. of the United States the clearest and most revolutionary of the Socialist parties in the world to-day, and why, as soon as I landed in this country, I hastened to put myself in touch with that body.

In the first place, I have long been of opinion that the Socialist movement elsewhere was to a great extent hampered by the presence in its ranks of faddists and cranks, who were in the movement, not for the cause of Socialism, but because they thought they saw in it a means of ventilating their theories on such questions as sex, religion, vaccination, vegetarianism, etc., and I believed that such ideas had or ought to have no place in our programme or in our party. I held

that, if under the Socialist Republic individuals desired to have a Freethinker's propagandist, a Jewish Rabbi, a mesmerist, a Catholic priest, a Salvation captain, a professional clown, or a Protestant divine, they would be perfectly free to maintain them for any of these purposes provided that society was reimbursed for the loss of their labour. In other words, that Socialism was compatible with the greatest intellectual freedom, or even freakishness. And that, therefore, we were as a body concerned only with the question of political and economic freedom for our class. We could not claim to have a mission to emancipate the human mind from *all errors*, for the simple reason that we were not and are not the repositories of *all truth*. These simple propositions, as they appear to me, I saw to be neglected by the tendency on the part of the European Socialists as a whole to make their press and platform the stumping ground for every idea that had the distinction of being unconventional or in any manner a protest against established ideas. But in the press and platform of the Socialist Labour Party of the United States I found that this tendency was very faint indeed, and that they, in their own felicitous phrase, borrowed from the days of backwoods tree-felling, 'hewed close to the line' of the class struggle, and would not allow themselves to be seduced into any more speculative theories,

Our editor, comrade Daniel DeLeon, is a case in point of this fidelity to the singleness of purpose required for our work. I give a few short extracts from his writings illustrative of his stand on these matters most frequently a snare to others. We all know how insidiously writers like Bebel, Bax and others have striven to link Socialism with hostility to the monogamic marriage system, and how sedulously the idea has been spread that Socialists are bound in principle to have a solution for the Mormon question.

When a London member of that moribund organisation, the S.D.F., Edith Lanchester, 'took up' with a comrade without the formality of marriage, I remember how all the English so-called Socialist papers flew to her defence, as if her act was a Socialist act. And in America, when a Mr. Herron abandoned one wife to take comfort in another, the same class of papers held the same attitude, viz., that we as Socialists held special views on the marriage question. The work of Bebel on *Woman* treats this matter in the same way. Now, how does Comrade

DeLeon treat the matter? In **The Weekly People**, June 22, 1901, we find in the *Letter Box* this brusque and correct answer to an enquirer: 'F.H.' Troy, N.Y.

... is it not queering Socialism to take ... the position that justifies the notion that the sexual or matrimonial question is a cardinal Socialist question, when, in fact, *Socialism has nothing to do with it.*

The italics are mine, but the words as quoted are Comrade DeLeon's own. In them he exactly voices my sentiments.

On the religious question also he is on record in the most emphatic manner. During the excitement after the assassination of President McKinley, attempts were made by several unscrupulous agencies to make capital against the Catholic Church, by claiming that Czolgosz was a Catholic, and that other anarchist assassins also had been Catholics. Of course, as a matter of fact, these men had been Freethinkers during the greater part of their lifetime, and no sort of logic could hold a Church or any other organisation responsible for the acts of men who had rejected its teaching during the greater part of their lifetime. But some people are not logical, and some such person had apparently written to DeLeon, for we find the following scathing rebuke in the *Letter Box* of **The Weekly People** of October 5, 1901:

True enough Czolgosz was born and brought up a Roman Catholic. You might go further. The last of your political assassinations in Europe – that of the Austrian Empress by Lucini, that of President Carnot of France by Santos, that of King Humbert by Brisci, and that of the Spanish Prime Minister Canovas del Castilio ... all were committed by Roman Catholics. *But not for that is there any reason to impute assassination, by reason of them, to the Roman Catholic creed.* Let not the immorality of false reasoning in which Archbishop Corrigan has set the pace to so many Catholic priests, inducing them to commit the immoral act of imputing Czolgosz to Socialism, take you off your base.

A healthy sentiment, and one every cool Socialist must endorse.

On the trade union question our comrade has also carefully preserved his equilibrium, neither falling down to worship, not yet denying all usefulness to the economic organisation. As you are well aware, there are quite a few superficial readers of Marx who strive to make point against trade unionism by alleging that every rise in the wages is necessarily followed by a rise in prices, neutralising the value of the rise to the workers. The shallow thinkers who fasten upon this theory do not stay to reflect that in the United States, for example, the workers only receive fifteen per cent of the total product of their labour, and that therefore the price of the other 85 per cent is a matter of indifference to them. But our gifted comrade DeLeon punctures this superficiality immediately, and refuses to be led astray by any such false reasoning. I will quote, in conclusion, from **The Weekly People** of January 18, 1902, a lengthy footnote by Comrade de Leon to a letter in which a party member, W. McCormick, of Fairhaven, Wash., had also demolished the fallacy.

Quotation from Daniel DeLeon.

“The theory that increased wages means increased prices,” and that therefore an increase of wages through unionism is a barren victory, inasmuch as the men would have to pay for what they buy as much more as they get, is one frequently advanced by *half baked Marxists*. The theory never was wholly correct; it is now *substantially false*. Even at a time when capitalism was not the developed thing it is to-day, there were big holes in that theory. In what way could the theory have possibly applied, for instance, in the case of raising of wages in the jewellery trade. Say that such a rise in wages had produced a corresponding rise in the price of diamond-studded ladies’ garters, would the wage slaves in that industry have had to pay so much more for such garters? They never before could buy any, and were no worse after the rise in price. This illustration is not whimsical. It brings out the point of practical importance to-day. At a time, possibly a rise in wages in certain everyday necessities of life might have had for its effect a rise in the price of such necessities; to-day, however, exceptional localities or critical conditions excepted – the effect of a rise in wages would not be a corresponding rise in prices; the effect would be the wiping out of the capitalist concerns whose

capitalist facilities are not large enough to produce changes. The leading effect of a rise in wages is accordingly to promote capitalist concentration.

Editor, The People.

I might also add, in addition to our comrade's testimony, that a rise in prices more frequently *precedes* a rise in wages than *follows* it. Is it not our experience that almost every demand for high wages is based upon the fact that profits and prices have already gone up?

But these are but a few of the reasons that impel me to join and cleave to the fighting S.L.P. as the clearest-cut and most scientific body of Socialists in existence.

Yours,
JAMES CONNOLLY

Troy,
447 10th Street.

N.Y.,

The Socialist (Edinburgh), June, 1904.

James Connolly

Connolly's Defence

(1904)

As I understand the motives animating the members of this Section in setting on foot this investigation, they are based upon the desire to ascertain my position towards the party principles and policy, and have been prompted by certain

statements by the editor of our national organ, **The People**, and echoed by other writers. These statements were: –

First: That I had directed a criticism against the position of **The People**, on “Vital questions of policy, and even of principle”, a statement made in an editorial footnote to a letter of Comrade Holmes on April 16th.

Second: That “Connolly had brought charges against the party”, a statement made in a *Letter Box* answer to ‘S.B.S.’, Troy, in **The People** of Sunday, May 15th.

I may say, that as the opinion of the S.L.P. is the only public opinion I care about I feel deeply the humiliation involved in being subjected to such an investigation as this, implying as it does that I am under suspicion, but at the same time I recognise the justice of the argument that if these charges preferred against me are true, then I ought to be expelled from the S.L.P.; but I hope you will also recognise as valid the allied argument, that if they are not true, and cannot be substantiated, then they ought to be withdrawn, as publicly as they were made.

Having initiated this investigation this Section has the right to hear my defence, in which particular, it is more privileged than the other Sections of the party, or readers of **The People**, since my exclusion from the columns of **The People**, by the editor, denies the party members the right of hearing both sides of the argument. As the trial hinges upon my article on *Wages, Marriage and the Church*, I will first state to what category I conceive each of those subjects belong. I believe the question of Wages and Prices to be the only of the three which could even by the utmost straining of language be considered as vital, and then only in relation to our policy. The question of Marriage, as treated by me, is in its last analysis, the question of the wisdom of publishing Bebel’s book, and as DeLeon disagrees with some of Bebel’s conclusions I guess I have a right to disagree in turn, either with Bebel or DeLeon himself. The question of the treatment of the Church is one which cannot ever be anything more than a question of individual interpretation of what constitutes a correct attitude. It is not vital in any sense, whichever side is proven right.

Now to take and discuss my position on the questions in the order named. First, Wages: I quoted a statement by an S.L.P. organiser to the effect that a rise in wages would not benefit the working class, as such a rise would be followed by a rise in prices, which would neutralise the value to the workers of the rise in wages. I said this was wrong. Comrade DeLeon said the organiser was right, and that Marx held and taught the same position. Now, let me state the reason on which my position is based. We will consider Marx afterwards.

The reasoning of DeLeon and the correspondents who take up the same attitude would be more plausible if we were dealing with the production of the necessaries of life only, and of these necessaries only that portion of them of which the working class were consumers. But we are not dealing with any such partial problem; we are dealing with a problem affecting all the commodities on the market. Now, as the worker receives only 15% of the produce of his labour, it follows that he is only a consumer to the extent of 15% of all the commodities produced. He cannot purchase more than he receives. Therefore, the rise or fall in prices of the other 85% of the annual produce of this country does not and cannot effect him at all. A rise in wages therefore cannot be recovered from the worker by a rise in prices; it must be, and it is, recovered by other means. There lies upon Comrade DeLeon and his adherents, the onus of showing how the workers can lose the benefit of the rise in wages by an increase in the price of commodities they do not, and cannot purchase or consume. But that is not all. We are living now in an era of mammoth machinery and great productivity of labour. The tendency is for the worker to be more and more eliminated, and for all factories to show an overwhelming preponderance of machinery as against men. It is only when this is not the case, e.g., in the production of such necessaries of life as for instance, coal and bread, where the cost of labour bears an inordinately large proportion of the total cost of production – it is only then that there is even plausibility in the theory that wages govern prices – and that state of production recedes further and further from us with every development of machinery. In other words, wages are not the only factor in the cost of production, and an increase in wages can be and generally is compensated for at the expense of the other items in the capitalist's account. He either cheapens the raw material, speeds up and makes more productive the machinery, or introduces new labour

saving devices. This brings me to what I consider the most astonishing mistake of all in the reasoning of my critics. It is the assumption underlying their argument that the worker is exploited as a consumer. It is one merit of Marx to have effectually demonstrated that exploitation takes place in the workshop and affects the workman as a producer, not as a consumer. If the argument of DeLeon and my other critics is right, then the cheapening of commodities is a boon to the working class, and we were all wrong when we preached, as we have done for years, that low prices would mean low wages. Furthermore, observe the tangle into which such a position leads our usually logical editor.

He declares that a rise in wages leads to a rise in prices; in other words that wages determine prices. Then he quotes Marx who said, that the value of labour is governed by the cost of its maintenance, and he agrees with that too. He does not seem to realise that they are two antagonistic propositions, each excluding the other. The first is, *that wages determine prices*. The second is that *prices determine wages*. DeLeon agrees with both. That is to say he holds that a thing can be both cause and effect of the one phenomenon. In this case it means that high wages give birth to high prices, and high prices give birth to high wages. The parent gives birth to the child, and the child gives birth to its own parent. How instructive. Thus, by this mysterious process each is the cause of its own existence! The scientists may now cease their weary search for a case of spontaneous generation; here it is ready to their hand, revealed by the luminous logic of our editor. What a pity that Huxley and Haeckel, so sadly disappointed in the *Bathybius Haeckelii*, were not privileged to meet our brilliant comrade and hear him explain how a thing can give birth to its own parent, and thus become its own grandfather, and yet have no beginning outside of itself. A fearful and wonderful product of logic and economics. What then is the real answer which our S.L.P. organiser ought to have given to his Kangaroo opponent? He should have said: Yes, we know that a rise in wages is a benefit to the worker, but we know also that other circumstances will not allow him to *retain* that rise, or to reap for long that benefit. We know that his employer will speed up his machinery, or intensify his labour so that he will have to produce more for his higher wages, and that as the result while he will receive absolutely more yet relative to the total product of his toil he will receive less than before his rise. We

know also that his increased wages will hasten the introduction of labour saving machinery, and throw him on the street, or others to compete with him. We know that the greater productivity of labour itself will glut the market with commodities, produce an industrial crisis, throw hundreds of thousands out of work and bring down wages again with a slump. We know in short that all the tendencies of capitalist society are against the workers *maintaining* a high rate of wages. I notice one correspondent accusing me of declaring that the workers can get more than the full value of their labour. This only shows that the comrade in question was more anxious to denounce me than to read what he was denouncing.

But to revert to DeLeon. I have said he takes up a contradictory attitude; I say more. He attempts to father a contradiction upon Karl Marx also. I will quote the passage DeLeon quotes Marx correctly as saying "Having shown that a general rise of wages would ... not affect the average price of commodities or their value," and as proceeding to say "As with all other commodities so with labour, its market price will, in the long run, adapt itself to its value; ... despite all the ups and downs, and do what he may, the workingman will, on the average only receive the value of his labour, which resolves into the value of his labouring power, which is determined by the value of the necessaries required for its maintenance and reproduction." And DeLeon adds this luminous note: "In other words, higher wages, in the long run, without at least proportional higher prices of necessaries would mean a market price of labour out of keeping with its value." You will observe, comrades that the conclusion arrived at is that of Marx, but the reason adduced for the conclusion is that of DeLeon, and I challenge this meeting, I challenge DeLeon, or any of his supporters to show anything in the context, anything in the page, anything in the chapter, anything in the book, anything in Marx from A to Z to justify the attributing of such reasoning to Marx. Our comrade has so cleverly intertwined his own reasoning with Marx's conclusion that it is difficult to tell where one begins and the other ends. In fact it cannot be done, unless you have the book in hand while doing it or know your Marx well enough to recognise him at sight. DeLeon's action in this respect reminds me of some of these 'smart alecks' we have all known at school, who, too lazy themselves to work out correctly a problem in arithmetic, would work it out

in any old way, but carefully copy the correct answer from some scholar more studious and industrious than themselves, hoping that the correctness of the answer would cause the teacher to overlook the slips in the calculation. But, stripped of all the verbiage and sophistry which our comrade strives to cloak this heresy, here are the two conclusions he attempts to foist upon Marx:

Conclusion 1.
A rise in wages *does not mean* a rise in prices.

Conclusion 2.
The worker cannot get more than the value of his labour, because a rise in wages *does mean* a rise in prices.

I say to you in all candour that although I have been fifteen years in the socialist movement, I have seldom if ever met a more slip shod examination of a grave economic problem than that which our editor has treated us to in this case. No, comrades, when Marx said the worker could not get more than the value of his labour he did not base his statement, upon the increase of prices he has just denied he did not base it upon the truth of a statement he had just proven to be an error nor, upon the occurrence of a phenomenon he has just demonstrated did not occur. The reason why the worker cannot get more than the value of his labour I have just explained to you, and to allow you to judge which explanation is that of Marx, I will quote to you the resolutions which Marx gave at the end of his lecture as the summing up of his arguments.

Firstly. A general rise in the rate of wages would result in a fall of the general rate of profit, but, broadly speaking, not affect the prices of commodities.

Secondly. The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages.

Now to my mind, these words are so plain' so unequivocal that nothing short of carelessness or perversity can explain such a misconstruing of them as my critics have treated us to.

I stated that such theories destroy the fighting power of the S.T. & L.A. as a bona fide trade union; or to quote my words literally, made it a mere ward healing club for the S.L.P. This has been interpreted as an attack upon the S.T. & L.A. On the contrary it was an attempt to free that body from the incubus of a false doctrine, and to enable it to take a real live part in the struggles of the workers. Comrade DeLeon spins some fine theories upon the mission of the S.T. & L.A. to resist the lowering of the standard of the worker's living, but the most effectual temporary way to resist a lowering of the standard of comfort is to encourage the workers to strike for higher wages. And you cannot do that and at the same time preach that a rise in wages is no good. DeLeon's theory would keep the S.T. & L.A. as far as its economic work is concerned perpetually on the defensive and never assuming the aggressive. Imagine a trade union which would fight against a reduction of wages, but prevented from fighting for a rise, because taught by its organisers that a rise was no good. What a picnic the employers would have! Every reduction they could enforce would be a permanent one, as our principles would forbid us demanding a rise, it being no benefit. Now a final word on that point. The statement that high prices *follow* high wages is to my mind the very reverse of the truth. The truth is that high prices *precede* high wages. Prices go up with lightning like rapidity and wages slowly and painfully climb after them. This truth Marx expressed by the much quoted and little understood saying that the value of labour (wages) is determined by the cost of the articles required for its maintenance and reproduction (prices). And I add, the greater the trustification of capital, the more potent its power to control prices, the truer does this become.

Now as to marriage: I stated that I believed in monogamic marriage and disagreed with Bebel who taught otherwise; also that I thought his book was too prurient to do good as a propagandist work, although there was valuable propagandist material in it. I repeat all that. Bebel not only unnecessarily introduces long drawn out tales of sexual excesses but often explicitly approves of them. It has been said that his work is based upon that of Morgan but the most delicate minded could read Morgan without a blush and the same cannot be said of Bebel. Thus on page 65 after telling of the brutal lusts and sexual outrages of the kings and knights of the Middle Ages he speaks of them approvingly as "a

healthy sensualism, that sprung from a rugged and happy native disposition among the people." A fine summing up of a period of unbridled lust and outrage! Healthy sensualism indeed; brutal animalism would be a better characterisation. On page 323, he says "The satisfaction of the sexual instinct is as much a private concern as the satisfaction of any other natural instinct." This from the man whose book is supposed to be based upon that of Morgan, although Morgan expressly teaches that the satisfaction of the sexual instinct is a social act intimately related to and acting upon the economic conditions of society at large. On page 19, (Bebel) says: "If with monogamy paternity is often doubtful, it is impossible of proof with polygamy." What does that mean? I do not know. I have read it backwards and forwards and up and down and diagonally. I have studied it when the sun was high in the heavens at noonday and have wrestled with it through the weary watches of the night and it seems to me that if it is not absolute indecency then it must be blithering idocy. Why should polygamy make proof of paternity impossible? Or perhaps we will be told, that like the omission of an important negative from Vandervelde's letter, this also is a typographical error. On page 37, Bebel says: "It is the custom in the Netherlands when the host has a dear guest that he lets his wife sleep with him on faith." This is introduced out of all bearing to its intent, clarifies no obscure point and is told apropos of nothing in particular. It was probably some more "healthy sensualism." I have used the word "pruriency," let me make it stronger and say indecency, and explain what I mean by indecency in this respect. I consider that whosoever tells of the sexual act needlessly or in any other manner, but as a scientist would speak of his investigations or a surgeon of his operations, is acting indecently. Rebel declares openly and avowedly that under Socialism the modern monogamic marriage will collapse, and yet his work we are told is based upon that of Morgan, and Morgan declares as unreservedly his belief in the beauty and permanency of modern marriage. Let me quote Bebel, page 346, "Bourgeois marriage is the result of bourgeois property relations." In future society there is nothing to bequeath. The modern form of marriage is thus devoid of foundation *and collapses*. He might as well say: "The concentrated tool of production is the result of bourgeois property relations; in future society these relations will have disappeared, therefore the concentrated tool of production will collapse." Comrade DeLeon also believes that the monogamic marriage will remain, yet he

declares that the book he disagrees with is the best aimed shot at the existing social system. Either DeLeon has not much faith in his own marksmanship or else he believes the best aimed shot is that which proceeds from correct premises to wrong conclusions.

Comrade DeLeon says it was superfluous for the S.L.P. to vote upon the merits of this book, one of whose most important conclusions he himself rejects. But surely we all have a right to reject as well as DeLeon. If it is permissible for DeLeon to reject one conclusion drawn by Bebel, surely every other member of the party has the same right, and has even the right to *accept* the conclusions DeLeon rejects. I personally reject every attempt, no matter by whom made, to identify Socialism with any theory of marriage or sexual relations. I believe that no matter what may have been the force which gave birth to any institution, its permanency will and must be tested not by its origin but by its adaptability to the institutions – the economic institutions, of the future.

Coming next to the question of religion. I must first correct a totally wrong impression which has been sedulously fostered by **The People** and by some correspondents. This is the impression that I have stated that the S.L.P. attacked theology or religion. One correspondent puts it bluntly that the question to discuss is not whether we should attack theology or not, but, he says, whether we do; Connolly, he adds says we do. This I most emphatically deny. I never made any such statement and would be the first to contradict such a statement if made by others. What I did say and what I repeat, is that there is a *tendency* in the party to attack religion when Socialism is criticised by clerics. The mere fact that some correspondents have written to **The People** saying that we should attack theology proves my point as to the tendency.

Comrade Janke of Indianapolis, and Comrade Twomey of New York City say we should. Comrade DeLeon says it is never done, and Comrade Janke says it is and should be done Comrade Twomey says I am wrong and then quotes a number of instances in which he says it was done, and finds fault with DeLeon for taking up a different attitude now. Both these comrades deny my case, and then proceed to prove it by their arguments. A little more reflection on the value of a word would save our comrades a lot of blunders. If I had said in 1898 that there

was a *tendency* in the S.L.P. to play fast and loose with Socialist principles, our comrades would probably have said I was attacking the party and was telling a falsehood. Yet there was such a tendency, and it came to a head in the Kangaroo attempt to capture the party. To say that there is a tendency in the party to attack theology, as theology, is not declaring that the party does so, but that some of its members do, and the truth of that statement is by at least Comrades Janke, and Twomey volunteering themselves as 'horrible examples' so to speak. As the three principal witnesses on my behalf I present Janke, Twomey and DeLeon. In my second letter to **The People** I mean the one Comrade DeLeon thought the members could not be trusted to read – I quoted where some priest had fired off the usual foolishness about Socialism, and our comrade answered him by telling about Catholic belief in miracles. In the same letter I answered his question as to whether his attitude or the religion of Czolgosz and other anarchists was an attack upon theology by saying it certainly was, and faulty logic into the bargain, if not absolute misstatement. But as our comrade promises to lay all correspondence before the National Convention, I will not go more fully into it at this stage, except to say that the statement that I left all the questions unanswered was worthy of the spirit that inspired it.

I now propose to wind up my defence by quoting a few of the opinions expressed by DeLeon in the past, and in the present. I propose to show you that he has completely changed front, and that the head and front of my offending is that I would not change with him. In other words, to use a classic expression which he would understand, I propose to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober.

Let us take the Vandervelde article, but for which I may say my first article in this controversy would never have been written. In that article Vandervelde quotes a string of utterances against Socialism by leading Catholic writers, and in his reply to my article, DeLeon asks me triumphantly: "What about the allegations of *fact*?" "If the allegations of *fact* are 'absurd' why not expose them by counter allegations so that the reader may verify the allegations on both sides, and see on what leg the 'absurd' boot lies". Of course the thoughtful readers of **The People** were not taken in by such clap-trap as this; they realised that my

allegations of 'absurd' was applied not to the 'fact', but to the inference Vandervelde drew from the fact. The supporters of Capitalism and Socialism have both the same set of facts to go upon, but how opposing are the inferences drawn therefrom! The inference Vandervelde drew, and I characterised as absurd, was that the Catholic Church was a barrier to Socialism and should be fought *as a church*. DeLeon champions that in his reply. But listen to him in **The People**, Saturday, April 26, 1902.

There is quite extensively a notion that the organised Catholic Church is a barrier to Socialism. The language of many a dignitary of the Catholic Church justifies, and the language of the Depews "The Catholic Church is the best police" tends to strengthen the notion. *Probably the attitude of the Catholic or clerical party in Belgium may be quoted as further confirmation.* We hold otherwise. What is going on in Belgium is proof that the Catholic Church, much as it would like to, cannot for all times control the masses to their injury. The masses in Belgium now out on a general strike, and the many more in sympathy with them, have been brought up as Catholics, at least most of them. A time was when these clericals controlled all these people. Do they to-day? Obviously no priestly or other influence can for all times dominate the masses. The 'police' upon which the Depews lean to scuttle Socialism will at the right moment be found by them a hollow reed to lean upon.

Thus you see that in 1902 our comrade ridiculed this very inference which he finds fault with me for styling absurd in 1904. That inference being that it is necessary to fight the Catholic Church as a church – the central idea of Vandervelde's letter. Now, take up the article written in reply to mine and see how our comrade describes theology.

Theology or religion is a delicate and occult thing. No man of sense and surely no man of feeling will hit back at that tender vein.

Now see how the editor of **The People**, July 11, 1902 treats that "tender vein." He speaks of Judaism as "The idea of being a preselected and sole supporter of gods and their pursuivants," and of Christianity he says, "Such a monstrous, preposterous conception as Gentile theology breeds semitism as inevitably as

cheese breeds maggots.”; In other words for the purpose of scoring a point against your humble servant he describes as “delicate,” “occult” and “tender” that which he had previously branded as “monstrous” and “preposterous.” But listen further:

The whole Catholic hierarchy in chorus slandered the socialist as murderers of rulers, and disturbers of the State at the time of the Czolgosz affair. They never ‘hit back’ by citing a long list of murderers of rulers down to the present days, including Czolgosz himself, all of whom were Catholics, and by showing that their theory of society, terrestrial society ... was, under given conditions, a natural breeder of assassins of rulers as the long list showed.

This is definite enough. Here he states that the Catholic theory, that is to say the theory taught by the Catholic creed, of terrestrial society, breeds assassins. Now, take up **The People** of October 5, 1901 and in the *Letter Box* answer to ‘H.R.H.’, Providence, R.I., we read as follows:

True enough Czolgosz was born and brought up a Catholic. You might go further. The last four political assassinations in Europe; that of the Austrian Empress by Lucini, that of President Carnot of France by Santos, that of King Humbert by Brescia, and that of the Spanish Prime Minister Canovas Del Castilio, by a fellow whose name now escapes us – all were committed by Roman Catholics. But *not for that is there any reason to impute assassination by reason of them to the Roman Catholic Creed.* Let not the immorality of false reasoning in which Archbishop Corrigan has set the pace to so many Catholic priests, by inducing them to commit the immoral act of imputing Czolgosz to Socialism, take you off your base.

So that in October 5, 1901 our comrade declares a man would be “off his base” if he attributed the acts of the assassins mentioned to their religion and in his lectures on Anarchism and Socialism he apparently goes off his base on that very point, and again on April 9, 1904. First, he said there was no reason to attribute these assassinations to Roman Catholic teaching, then he deliberately attributes them to such teaching. I think such a change of mind as that justifies the charge of a ‘tendency’ to attack theology.

Now try and reconcile these two opinions on Marriage. In the translation preface to **Woman** DeLeon declares as already quoted : “Bebel’s work **Woman** is the best aimed shot at the existing social system, both strategically and tactically considered. The Woman Question is the weakest link in the capitalist mail.” Now listen to the “best shot”. “In future society there is nothing to bequeath, therefore the modern form of marriage is thus devoid of foundation *and collapses,*” page 346. In **The Weekly People** of June 22, 1901, I find this *Letter Box* answer to ‘F.H.’, Troy, N.Y.,

Is it not queering Socialism to take the position that justifies the notion that the sexual or matrimonial question is a cardinal Socialist question, when in fact Socialism has nothing to do with it.

Here we find that a work which declares that under Socialism the modern form of marriage will collapse, is styled in 1904, “the best aimed shot at the existing social system”, and this is written by the same man as he who in 1901 declared that Socialism has nothing to do with the sexual or marriage question.

And the most glaring contradiction of all, listen to this on Wages and Prices. The editor of **The People** on April 9, 1904 answering me, says,

Under *Wages* an S.L.P. organiser on the stump is quoted as having said that rises in wages are offset by rises in prices. The S.L.P. organiser was right in the matter of wages and prices ... Higher wages in the long run without at least proportional higher prices of necessaries would mean a market price for labour out of keeping with its value – an economic absurdity.

Now pay attention to the editor of **The People** on January 18, 1902. In an editorial footnote to an excellent letter by Comrade McCormick of Fairhaven, Wash., in which our Comrade McConnick took up the same attitude on Wages and Prices as I am now championing, DeLeon delivered himself as follows:

The theory that ‘increased wages means increased prices’ and that therefore an increase of wages through unionism is a barren victory, inasmuch as the men would have to pay for what they buy as much more as they get, is one frequently

advanced by *half baked Marxists*. The theory never was wholly correct; it is now *substantially false* ... At a time, possibly a rise in wages in certain everyday necessities of life might have had for its effect a rise in the price of such necessities; to-day, however, exceptional localities and critical conditions excepted – the effect of a rise in wages would not be a corresponding rise in prices; the effect would be the wiping out of the capitalist concerns whose capitalist facilities are not large enough to produce so much cheaper. The leading effect of a rise in wages is to promote capitalist concentration. That is the economic effect of higher wages.

It is said, comrades, that consistency is a jewel; from the above extracts I gather that Comrade DeLeon is not fond of jewellery.

In my opinion the heat imported into this discussion has its one and only origin in a lack of self control on the part of Comrade DeLeon. One comrade, indeed, Metzler of Rochester, declares that my first article was obviously a personal attack upon DeLeon. Well, if ever DeLeon is spoiled for this movement, it will be by just such men as Metzler of Rochester – men who cannot see the difference between a personal attack and a strenuous criticism, and who write to our editor, naturally hasty and choleric enough, urging him to regard as a personal enemy everyone who cannot see eye to eye with him, and is man enough to say so. Such men are the mischief makers of the party household. My attitude towards DeLeon is neither that of a personal dislike nor personal idolatry, but I hold him to be so valuable to our cause that I cannot afford to see him make mistakes. But, if as would appear from his attitude, he desires my scalp as the price of his services to the party, then for the party's sake, I will let him have it. But I cannot yield to things I do not believe in. I wrote my first article in a spirit of good-natured criticism, quietly and calmly stating the points I wished discussed. But DeLeon replied, to my astonishment, with a torrent of plarid English, passionate rhetoric, inapt quotations – with buds and trees, and flowers and blossoms scattered all about as if we were discussing a question of landscape gardening instead of sociology. I told, as an introduction, an anecdote illustrative of the theory that the difference between sanity and insanity is only a difference of opinion. DeLeon and Metzler see in this anecdote an insidious attack upon the

party. The owl-like gravity with which this is asserted would make it irresistibly comic were it not for the seriousness of the charge. But it warns me to take precautions. In future should I ever be privileged to send an anecdote to **The People**, I will follow the example of Artemus Ward and label it "This is a joke."

I thought the discussion would take the lines proper to a debate according to parliamentary rules. A speaker rises to ask the privilege of the house to bring up a certain subject for discussion. He tells his reasons for thinking it worthy of discussion. If leave is granted he is allowed to state in full his position. The speech in which he asked leave to introduce his subject is never considered his quota of the debate, especially if, as was my case in the Wages Question he gave no argument at all, but simply stated what position he would take. Then after all have finished he has the right to close, and may if he can and chooses, bring up any point he may have withheld and wishes to use in order to clinch his arguments. This is my conception of a debate. But I submit that the idea of a person taking part in a debate as a principal speaker on one side and still occupying the chair and claiming the right to 'rule out' his opponents answer, as DeLeon did, is a thing unheard of, in violation of every rule of parliamentary decorum, and reduces debate to a farce. DeLeon wishes to act as referee while he is boxing in the ring. He delivers his blow, and then immediately disqualifies his opponent lest he strikes back. Obviously, the Marquis of Queensbury's rules are very much of a back number when DeLeon begins to fight. Then for a man acting as Chairman, or indeed taking part in a debate at all, to chime in with a fresh opinion and fresh attack upon his opponent at the close of almost every other speaker's address, as DeLeon did in the editorial footnote to the letter of Comrade Holmes, to the letter of Comrade Janke and in the *Letter Box* answers to Comrade T. Adams of Columbus, Ohio, and S.P.S., Troy; for a man so acting to talk unctuously about conducting a written debate as in sitting session is quite too big a draft upon our credulity. No self-respecting body in the world in sitting session would tolerate it for one moment. The attitude of this Section and of the party members, I can well understand. Confronted with a difference of opinion between a comrade who like DeLeon, has led and taught them faithfully and well in many a strenuous battle, and a comparatively untried comrade like myself, it was natural that the members should cling to their tried comrade and turn down

the greenhorn. But that did not absolve them from the duty of studying the arguments. The attitude of DeLeon I have striven to understand, and I have only two plausible explanations to offer myself.

The first is that our comrade is hasty and choleric, and is apt to believe that he is defending the S.L.P. when he is only defending his own wounded pride and vanity. He is able to imbue many others with that belief, but for my part in this case our comrade's heroic attitudinising as the inspired defender of the S.L.P. affects my equanimity as little as it affects the points at issue. The second is the one I lean to as more quotable and is not necessarily a contradiction of the first: it is this, every tendency in the S.L.P. which afterward developed into treason has taken its rise in the apparently harmless criticism on some point of tactics or minor principle. The Kangaroo outbreak nominally began over a question of taxation, the Kanglet flared up in a seemingly harmless criticism of party administration. Both developed into full blown treasons. Now it was perhaps natural, that as my criticism to some extent bore the same earmarks it should arouse suspicion in the watch dogs at **The People** office.

The old story of the boy who cried "wolf" has a double application. It not only tells that continual false alarms breed carelessness in the face of the real enemy, it also teaches that continued attacks from a real enemy breed suspicion of, and often death to, a comrade or a friend in an unexpected guise. Every war has its tale of such mistakes. Perhaps I am the victim of some such important coincidence, perhaps not.

Finally here are my last words. I claim that the demand of the S.L.P. for absolute unity in all things essential can only be maintained when linked with absolute freedom of opinion on all things nonessential. And if I am asked how are we to know a non-essential principle, I reply that any principle which we would not feel it to be our duty as Socialists to establish by force of arms if necessary is nonessential. Such principles are those of theories of Marriage and Religion. On these, therefore, I claim the fullest and most absolute freedom of opinion. On the question of Wages and Prices my attitude is different. I wish to say that as a humble member of the S.L.P., as one who has absolute confidence in the revolutionary principle and sterling honesty of its rank and file: as one who

believes implicitly in the political integrity and the incorruptibility of its officers, from its unpaid organisers down to its paid editor, as one who believes that the S.L.P. is where I belong, I am yet willing to stake my membership in the party on the absolute soundness and correctness of my position on Wages and Prices, and the equally absolute unsoundness and incorrectness of Comrade DeLeon's present position.

Comrades, I have done.

James Connolly

Appendix I

Extracts from Letters

(1904)

Relevant extracts from letters sent by
James Connolly to John Carstairs Matheson,
Editor of *The Socialist*,
The organ of the S.L.P. of Great Britain.

May 6, 1904.

As a favour I ask you to print the accompanying article as it stands. I have veiled it so that none but the readers of **The People** will see that it is really an answer to DeLeon's charge upon me. I simply answer him out of his own mouth. All the quotations are verbatim and complete.

I would not ask you to do this only I fear that unless I can get my side heard by some such means he will intrigue me out of the party. God knows why. I don't ... It is well to remember also that you will probably have to combat the wages heresy also if it is allowed to go with his imprimatur.

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May 26, 1904.

Your welcome letter came alright to hand, altho' its first words nearly took my breath away. I am glad *you* have not lost faith in me. By the time this letter reaches you I will have been tried by the Troy Section, and if they decide against me I will be expelled. If they refuse to decide, then I will escape until the Convention when, Dan says, the whole matter will be laid before the National Delegation.

Apropos of your criticism I dare say you are right, and I am convinced already that the game is not worth the candle. The candle being Dan's friendship. But I am not saying that publicly. Publicly I am going to put up a stiff fight, and I promise you all the wounds won't be on one side. I think Dan is up against a tougher proposition than he is aware of, to use an Americanism. Of course when I wrote first I thought he would take it good humouredly, as I have often discussed with him privately and he did not seem to take it amiss. But he is pretty unscrupulous. One writer Janke of Indianapolis, having complained of my exclusion from **The People** after being asked a lot of questions by Dan, he, DeLeon, answered that I would have been allowed insertion had I answered his questions but that I left them *all* unanswered. Now that is simply a damned lie.

As to the question you ask me about the previous crowdings out of the party, I am inclined to think that some few men *may* have been irritated at Dan's dogmatism and rather unscrupulous handling of their case, that they struck out too wildly and without justification committed something like treason. But they

ought not have allowed themselves to be irritated into such actions, and their self-love must have been rather pronounced to make them so act. Personally I am resolved to fight the best I know how, but to fight so that when passion against me cools down no reasoning man can point to any act of mine to help the enemy. Your suggestion that my criticism of Bebel's book might be used by the enemy is belated by the reason that Martha Moore Avery and her crew campaigned in Massachusetts against the S.D.P. on that book and Bax's writing before my article appeared. So that the writing of such an article was designed to save the S.L.P. from such a campaign or a similar one, by giving our comrades an opportunity to declare it to be unofficial, and only the private views of a member. I will send on to you a copy of my defence before the Troy Section. I hope you will favour me by giving our branches in Scotland a loan of the manuscript in order that they may read it and judge me accordingly. The opinion of my comrades in Scotland are very dear to me, and I hope they will be cool enough to hear before condemning an old comrade.

Of course it must not be published. It could do *you* no good. I would give a few cents to hear my comrade Jimmie Armstrong and his comments on Dan's attitude on the wages question. I know they suit Jimmie alright ... The present scrap and the superficial criticism of my letter, on wages at least, should prove to you the truth of the statement I often made after my first trip here, viz., that the average S.D.F.er knew more economics than the average S.L.P.er, but the latter shows in his knowledge of how to apply Socialist principles to politics.

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June 22, 1904.

... Troy has been converted and sent my defence to the N.E.C. with the request that it be published in **The People**. I enclose you a copy of the defence. If you get it typed send me back a clean copy please. I did not mean to exclude the English

branches but mentioned Scottish as they are and have been especially my intimate comrades.

The prevailing opinion in Troy is that the defence will *not* be published. Did you see the article by Ballhaus of Boston? Will you believe that in **The People** of June 21, that comrade actually believes that he is supporting DeLeon and opposing me? Just read his article with that fact – for it is a fact – in view, and you will understand that even the delicate outline of **The Socialist** article will fail in some places. But I notice that since **The Socialist** arrived in this country there has been a sudden stop to all the correspondence in the **Daily** at least a week ahead of their appearance in the **Weekly**! Possibly Dan sees the point, even if his devotees don't.

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No date, post mark July 22, 1904.

... I see by the N.E.C. report in this week's **Weekly People**, the Executive Committee of the S.L.P. of Great Britain have apologised for the insertion in **The Socialist** of a letter bearing upon the controversy in **The People**, and has also (as it was expressed to me) promised to be good and behave better in future. This is very interesting, and recalls to my mind your statement that when Dan asked your opinion on the questions at issue you did not venture to give him any, even on the wages and prices issue, on which I know you hold *very decided opinions*. But do not let that distress you. You are not the only person who differs from Dan, and is afraid to say so. Dan played a smart trick at the Conference. Of course I could not be present; was not a delegate, and had my nose too close to the grindstone of exploitation to attend anyway. So, Dan read my correspondence, paragraph by paragraph, *adding his own criticism in between*, so that delegates could not discern where I ended and *my quotations* began, and had lost sight of one sentence before he began to read the one that pointed its moral. As a result

he had no difficulty in tearing me to pieces – and thus succeeded by this trick – worthy of a shyster lawyer – in preventing the publication of the letters, and in preventing the delegates and the party at large from having the opportunity of studying and calmly reviewing the evidence in cold print. It was a ‘great victory.’ The result is that throughout the S.L.P. I am looked upon as an incipient traitor. He has thus got the S.L.P. attuned to his music. And as he has also, it would appear, got you in Great Britain also dutifully in line. I must just patiently await the axe.

How very revolutionary we all are? Of course there is not hero-worship amongst *us*. We believe that the emancipation of the working class must be the achievement of the working class, but neither in Great Britain nor America can a working class Socialist expect common fairness from his comrades if he enters into controversy with a trusted leader from a class above them. The howl that greets every such attempt whether directed against a Hyndman or a DeLeon in America (excuse the comparison) sounds to my mere proletarian ear wonderfully alike, and everywhere is but the accents of an army, not of revolutionary fighters, but of half-emancipated slaves ... I can assure you your sympathy has been very welcome to me in this very unscrupulous controversy. Amid a sea of doubts and surrounded by a host of unscrupulous calumniators it was very sweet to have, even so far away, some whose faith in me never faltered.

Greetings to all my comrades.

Yours Fraternally,

JAMES CONNOLLY.

Appendix II

Emil Vandervelde

Socialism or the Catholic Church

(1904)

By Emil Vandervelde in *The People*, March 19, 1904.

In the United States, where religion is a private matter, an affair of conscience, where no religious sect dominates, or pretends to dominate others, it must be difficult indeed to realise the bitterness of the contest that rages in most of the countries of Western Europe between the Roman Catholic Church and its opponents. It is not alone in France that this contest grows in intensity.

During the last few years throughout Western Europe there has been a marked reaction toward clericalism. The Catholics have organised themselves into powerful and well-disciplined parties. The covert authority of the convents which had been abolished by the Revolution, has been developed under new forms, and religious associations have attained a greater control over education, while the political influence of the Church since the beginning of the pontificate of Leo XIII has made itself felt on all sides.

In our little Belgium the Conservative party, made up in large part of the supporters of the Church, has been a power for the last nineteen years, In the Netherlands the majority in the States-General (the two legislative houses) belong to a truly extraordinary coalition of Catholics and Protestants – of disciples of Loyola and of Calvin. In Germany the Centre (the Catholic section of the Reichstag), though its declines in influence among the working class, appears more and more the hub of the Government majority, Protestant Conservatives pay their court to it; while the Lutheran Emperor betakes himself to Rome to bow before the Pope. In England, where frequent conversions to Catholicism are loudly advertised and where the Established Church reveals a growing

disposition to imitate the Roman Church, Mr. Balfour's Ministry grants equal appropriations to all the religious sects in the Education bill and makes important concessions to Rome in order to conciliate the Irish Catholics.

In short, all the countries of Western Europe, in Germanic or Anglo-Saxon as well as in the Latin countries, clericalism gains, or at least seems to gain, ground. When in the minority its opposition becomes more aggressive; when in the majority, or holding the balance of power, its domination waxes heavier.

But, by a natural reaction, anti-clericalism, which had been relegated to the background on account of the pressure of socio-industrial issues, has again appeared, and is spreading in every direction. In France, in Italy, and even in Catholic Spain, the old cry of "A bas la calotte!" resounds on all sides. The veterans of former battles return to the ranks. The youth are divided again into Catholics and anti-Catholics.

But it would be an illusion to believe that nothing is changed, and that the reviving struggle between the clericals and the anti-clericals has the same meaning as had that of the epoch of Pius IX and his syllabus. First of all, it is clear that since the rise of Socialism the efforts of the Catholic Church are not directed against the same enemies as of old. From having defended the nobles and the kings of 'l'Ancien Regime' against the liberal, republican, revolutionary middle class, it turns to-day to defend the middle class, which has become conservative, and even reactionary, against the assaults of the Socialist proletariat.

Fifty years ago Catholics denounced Liberalism as 'a pest and a frenzy!' To-day clericals chant the *Marseillaise*, since it has become, through strange vicissitudes of things, the national hymn. Clericalism calls itself liberal when, as in France, it is the minority. It disdains, or, at most, uses the Liberals when, as in Belgium and Holland, it is in the majority. But always and everywhere it attacks Socialism, and by cunningly encouraging the fears which Socialism inspires in the classes which have property to lose, it succeeds in holding its old positions, and even advancing to further ones.

It would be a great mistake – and far-seeing Catholics have no illusions on this subject – to suppose that the present revival of clericalism means an awakening of religious faith, even among Catholics. Doubtless, a certain number of persons of conservative religious instincts, fearing the logical consequences of rationalism, return to the Church, and by interpreting symbolically the old articles of faith, construct a new creed, which contents them. But these are only superficial drifts; they are but eddies of the great tide that bears the people of Europe in a diametrically opposite direction.

One of the heads of the Belgian Catholic party, M. Woeste, acknowledged this in an article published some time ago. “The Roman Church in Europe may gain voters,” he says, “but it continues to lose souls”. Even in Belgium where the Church reigns through intermediaries; where the Government, in its complete subservience, chooses magistrates and functionaries, imposes a religious teaching in the schools and grants appropriations as authority and wealth command, there, is no doubt that the masses reveal a growing disaffection to the ecclesiastical power.

It is an indubitable fact that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, Europe is decatholicizing herself. One might even go further with safety and say that she is dechristianizing herself. Slowly but surely, with the irresistible movement of a geological subsidence, faith is waning among the industrial workers, and even among the peasants. One can safely assert that about twenty years ago nearly every one held to some religious creed. Free-thinkers were few and to be found only in the middle class. Societies for promoting secular marriages and burials existed only in the larger cities. To-day we see them spreading and multiplying throughout the industrial centres, and wherever mining and manufacturing are carried on. In Belgium, in France, in Germany, the workmen who follow no particular creed number hundreds of thousands – yes, millions – and as their hopes of a heavenly kingdom dissolve other hopes assert themselves with a growing intensity. Wherever free-thought penetrates, Socialism enters also. We know, it is true, many workmen who become Socialists without relinquishing, or without totally abandoning, their religious convictions; but aside from –yellows’ and –blacklegs,’ act solely from mercenary motives, we

neither know nor can conceive of any freethinking workman who is not at the same time a Socialist.

What wonder, then, that this conservative middle class, instinctively antagonistic to Socialism, should become more and more antagonistic to free thought! Just as the coming of spring in the mountains dissolves the glaciers and sends down floods of icy water, which cools the atmosphere of the lowlands, so under the sunshine of free thought the breaking up of the religious creeds of the proletariat chills the rationalistic tendencies of the middle class. Frightened by the socio-industrial consequences of free thought, an increasing section of the rich class leans toward the Church, and especially toward the Catholic Church, which is regarded by all as the strongest bulwark of the capitalists' interest. The terror of revolutionary ideas drives this section to at least the pretence of believing; and sometimes, thanks to the efforts of the Jesuits, it succeeds in inculcating belief in its children.

It is thus that the apparent clerical reaction is explained. Far from its corresponding to general awakening of religious faith, it is, in fact, a corollary of the decline of faith among the masses. But it is, nevertheless, true that the alliance of priest and capitalist, the coalition of spiritual and temporal power, against Socialism and free thought, furnishes the conservative and reactionary parties with formidable means of action and constitutes the most redoubtable threat against the immediate future of European civilisation. Progressists have not only clericalism to fight, but also, under different forms and labels, militarism, protectionist imperialism, and, in most countries, a marked tendency on the part of the sovereigns to enlarge their personal power to the detriment of the sovereignty of the people.

What else than proletarian power can we oppose to this reactionary power? Can we depend upon the middle class as a class, or on Liberalism as a party? Facts answer. In Belgium, in Holland, in Germany, the Liberals are terribly weakened; the fear of Socialism demoralises them. It is only too often that the reactionary majority in the election is due to their votes. In England the division and melting away of the Liberal opposition made possible the South African war,

and rendered possible, if not probable, the success of Mr. Chamberlain's fiscal plans.

Justice forbids, however, to reproach English Liberalism as a body with the reactionary complaisance of the right wing. In France, too, there is a distinction to be made. The Republican middle class and the radical democracy do hesitate to accept the help of the Social Democracy in the fight against the Catholic Church by enrolling Miller and in the Ministry and electing Jaures Vice-President of the Chambers of Deputies.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that France is, above all, a country of bourgeoisie and small landholders. The industrial centres are far apart, except in the territory bordering on the Belgian and German frontiers. The organisation of the working class is, therefore, comparatively weak. Socialism itself is often in France, but the idealistic expression of an advanced radicalism. It thus seems natural enough that the middle class parties should not show it, but should be anticlerical rather than anti-Socialistic. But let industry develop on a large scale, let the antagonism of the classes accentuate itself, let the French proletariat strengthen and extend its organisation, and we shall see in France, as in the rest of Western Europe, the middle class facing about and asking pardon of the Church for the ills it has suffered through her.

Thus it is, in the Old World, that two gigantic coalitions are formed by the elimination of intermediaries – the Black International and the Red International. On the one hand are all those who hold that authority should descend from above and who find in the Catholic Church the most perfect expression of their ideal, the most inflexible guardian of their class privileges; on the other hand are those who insist that authority shall come from the people, and who, by the logic of circumstances, can found their hopes on nothing but Social Democracy.

Between these two extremes Protestantism hesitates and Liberalism shifts from place to place. One may see clearly the truth of the prediction that was made fifty years ago by the Catholic writer, Donose Cortes:

The Liberal school honours equally darkness and light. It has undertaken – extravagant and impossible undertakings – to govern without the people and without God. Its days are numbered. One sees already on the two opposite points of the horizon, the rising sun that proclaims God and the ominous cloud that announces the mad rage of the people. In the terrible day of battle, when the whole arena shall be filled with the Catholic and Socialist phalanxes, no one will know where to find the forces of liberalism.

One may welcome or deplore, the fact of this coming concentration of forces about the Catholic Church on the one side, the Social Democracy on the other. But none can deny that this concentration is inevitable, and that the future struggles will have to be fought out between these two armies. To those, therefore, who are interested in the social movement of Europe, we say: Observe, above all else, if you wish to consider only the essential factors, the political activities of the Roman Catholic Church and those of International Socialism.

Brussels, Belgium.