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CORRESPONDENCE

WAGES, MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH.

A DISCUSSION INITIATED BY JAMES CONNOLLY, AND ANSWERED
BY THE EDITOR OF *THE PEOPLE*.¹

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.

Lately when reading the report of the meetings held by one of our organizers in the West, I discovered that in the course of a discussion with a spokesman of the Kangaroos, 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*, to prove the contrary, our

¹ [Subheading added to *Weekly People*, April 9, 1904.]

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.² 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. 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 propoganda in one place will nullify our propoganda in another.

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 civilization 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 Woman*, 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

² [See "Correspondence: The Kansas City Debates," *Daily People*, October 22, 1903, from which the following is an extract:

"Vaughan had made the point that some crafts, through organization, had succeeded in getting increases in wages, but that the capitalist class, by reason of the perfection of its organization, had the power to add the increased wage to the cost of production, resulting in an increase in the cost of living, and that this was borne by the whole working class, organized and unorganized; that thus the boss could grant the demands of crafts that held a strategic position, as, for instance, the bricklayers, without reducing his profits. This was made clear by concrete examples.

"Lattimer [the SP speaker] took up this point and tried to make out that Vaughan was not a Marxian in his economics; that he (Vaughan) claimed that the working class is robbed in consumption; that his position was populist. He then went into an exposition of how surplus values were produced, citing *Value, Price and Profit*, to the effect that commodities could not rise in price above their cost of production. He endeavored to make a great deal of capital out of this, trying to make it appear that Vaughan was not in harmony with his party; that he was ignorant of Marxian economics, etc.

"Comrade Vaughan, in his closing ten minutes, amplified this point, showing the increased cost of living in recent years in comparison with the few increases in money wages. He pointed out that when Marx wrote *Value, Price and Profit* that capitalism had not reached the trust stage of development; that prices of commodities were then kept down to the cost of production by reason of competition between different capitalists or different companies, whereas to-day such conditions did not obtain; that competition had been eliminated by concentration."

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 and 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 to-day, 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 says in his preface, which I have just seen, that Bebel's *Woman* raises up for the proletarian 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 for 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 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 realizing 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 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 workingmen and their families in order to “teach a lesson” to the amused capitalist government, is also well known. His general Kangarooism is recognized 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 disorganize Socialist forces by the corruption of Millerand and Jaures. 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 Jaures 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 stanch 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 utilize an anti-clerical Dreyfus agitation to corrupt our movement, we see to-day how a similar freethinking 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, or 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 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. organizer 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. organizer 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. organizer 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 Labor can secure higher wages without having to submit to higher prices, and this question he answers: "As with all other commodities, so with labor, 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 LABOR, WHICH RESOLVES INTO THE VALUE OF HIS LABORING 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 labor 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 labor organization may secure is nullified by a corresponding rise in price, then labor organizations 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 can not 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 organization. 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 Labor 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 thereby 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 Labor. 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 Labor'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. organizer 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 Labor 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. organizer 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 Labor 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 organizations 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 un-patriotic."—Was that theology?

A Chicago Jewish Rabbi sermonized 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 endeavor 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 a 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 civilization 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 ethnological 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 civilization 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 revolutionized 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 cannon-ball 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.

VANDERVELDE’S ARTICLE.

Finally, as to Vandervelde’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? Vandervelde 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 Vandervelde’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 program that demands the public ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work—good; they have been claiming that Labor alone produces all wealth, consequently Labor 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 organization 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*.

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