

A Penny a Week to Learn Esperanto.

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR CLEAR THOUGHTS IN PLAIN LANGUAGE.

VOL. X. No. 3.

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1923.

WEEKLY.

LINES FROM
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.
(b. 1778, d. 1834.)

We have offended, oh, my countrymen!
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes

Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pesti-
lence,

Even so, my countrymen! Have we gone
forth

And born to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep
taint

With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All dignity and power

Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,
Associations and societies,

A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting
guild,

One benefit club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth.

... bartering freedom and the poor man's
life

For gold as at a market. . . .
Thankless too for peace

(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous
seas),

Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all

Its ghastlier workings (famine or blue
plague,

Battle or siege, or flight through wintry
snows),

We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
For which we pay as for a thing to talk of,
Spectators, and not combatants! No guess

Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation or contingency,

However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause; and forth
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in Heaven),

We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and
girls

And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!

—From "Fears in Solitude," written in
April 1798, during the alarm of an invasion.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

If you send us the name and address of a
probable reader, together with a penny stamp,
we will forward a specimen copy of the
"Workers' Dreadnought" to the address
given.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION.

A blue mark in this space
indicates that your subscrip-
tion is now due.

The high cost of production
of the paper necessitates prompt payment.

Hodge and the Farm Strike.

These fresh blowing mornings there's
Hodge ploughing straight furrows behind the
old horse who steps most cheerfully over the
clods. The old horse has had his rest and
his feed, and his sides are sleek from Hodge's
careful grooming, so he goes merrily and
content.

The budding boughs stir gaily, the trees
seem proud of their wealth of coming foliage,
their buds that swell and burst in this en-
thralling sunshine. The flowers are spring-
ing, the birds are chirping and trilling with
pleasure. Hodge alone goes sadly. Hodge
alone rises wearily and reluctant to meet re-
splendent day. Hodge is heavy with toil and
care. Hodge is hungry.

"I want to axe you a question," said
Phiddy to his master.

The farmer was sitting on the milk-churn.
"What is it, Phiddy?" says he.

"How would you like to go to work with
half a bellyful?" asks Phiddy.

The farmer answers: "I shouldn't like it
at all."

But Phiddy has to go to work with hunger
unsatisfied, and Phiddy has only two child-
ren; how do they fare who have four or five?

"I'm putting it plain," says Phiddy.

"They can't get enough of sop."

Sop, we must tell you, is dry bread soaked
in water.

Hodge was half-starved before the war.
His father was half-starved before him, and
his grandfather before that. Hodge cherished
no other hope than that he might not suffer
worse than semi-starvation, except in periods
of temporary misfortune, and that he might
get the old-age pension at the latter end of
his declining years.

Then came the war. Others might lay
their bones in France and Flanders, but, if
only he could escape conscription, Hodge saw
hope shining before him with altogether
unwonted brightness. Prices were rising,
labourers had suddenly grown scarce;
lusty young chaps were flocking into
the Army. Hodge began to realise that if he
would, if he were allowed to stay quietly at
home and work, he could in time secure
higher wages from his master than he had
ever dreamed of, and that he had only to
threaten to enlist to make his master grow
civil and obliging on every occasion.

There were a few strikes at first, but these
were quickly settled and the wages continued
rising. Prices were rising, too; though
certain necessities were rationed. Hodge,
nevertheless, fared better than before, and he
calculated that if these—to him, wonderful—
wages could only be maintained, he would be
well secured against hunger when prices
should fall to their old level after the war.

But how, indeed, could Hodge cherish
such a hope? How and why should he
anticipate anything so remarkable?

Hodge was unlifted by hope because of the
new Union. All the labourers on the farms
were joining it, and speakers came down from
London to assure the men that they would
be as well off as the most prosperous city
workers, if only they would combine as the
city workers had done.

Hodge had faith in the Union and in the
Wages Boards, which the Union assured him
had been secured by its efforts.

The war stopped at last. Soon, instead of
the further advantages he expected, Hodge
learnt that the Government had decided to
abolish the Wages Boards, and here and
there the wages began to fall. The Union
leaders made speeches of protest in Parlia-
ment, and declared that it was only with tre-
mendous difficulty they were able to prevent
the labourers taking strong and unpatriotic
action.

Meetings were held in the agricultural dis-
tricts. Hodge attended the meetings, and
heard his Union leaders denounce the
treachery of the Government. He heard
them saying, for the benefit of the reporters,
how angry Hodge was, and what a hard
struggle his leaders were having to prevent
him striking or taking to some even more
serious kind of direct action.

Hodge applauded his leaders. It was a
pleasure and a duty, he felt, to applaud such
eloquent and clever men, who were giving
their efforts to serve him, and who worked,
as they said, so hard to promote his interests.

He hoped the Government would be im-
pressed by the warnings of these clever men,
and he felt sure that the Government would
suffer if it did not.

The Government, however, completely
ignored the warnings of the Union leaders,
and quite quietly the Wages Board went out
of existence, and wages fell heavily in all dis-
tricts. In Norfolk the wage fell to 25/- for 50
hours' work. Labourers were now leaving the
Union as rapidly as they had joined it in
the early days of the war. The Union was
"no good," they said, and some qualified
that verdict with warmly expressive adjec-
tives.

Now, at last, the Union was forced to make
a stand. The farmers declared still further
reductions, and the men were not prepared
to accept them. In Norfolk the farmers de-
manded longer hours and lower wages, and
began locking out the labourers who refused.
The Union leaders agreed to negotiate at the
Bishop's Palace, but the farmers only offered
24/- for 50 hours, 25/- for 52 hours, or 26/-
for 54 hours. The men would not have it.
So many men had left the Union that the
officials were obliged, if they were to have a
chance of success, to grant strike pay to all
locked-out men who would re-join the Union.
The more advanced men in the Union were
not satisfied; they declared that the strike
ought to be a national one, and complained
that the negotiations and lurches at the
Bishop's Palace were doing more harm
than good.

The farmers declare that if the men do not
come to terms they will not grow root crops.
They will sow wheat with voluntary or black-
leg labour, and then close the farms till the
harvest, carrying on with their sons, and
daughters and students of farming, and allow-
ing the cattle to eat the hay and clover, and
sowing the land usually devoted to root crops

(Continued on p. 8.)

On Preparation.

Observe, fellow-worker, that the employers are now making another attack on hours and wages.

The agricultural labourers and the builders are bearing the brunt of it, and the railwaymen are about to have further trouble, and other workers need expect no quarter.

The farm labourers, who are already hungering on the present wage, are beginning to show fight.

The farmers, who will have the Government to back them in all they may do, of course, are making it plain that if any blows are to be struck, they intend to strike first and hardest.

Wages went up during the war, and now they have fallen below the pre-war standard. All the various sections of the working class are now bending their efforts to prevent their own branch of wages falling lower.

The working class is carrying on the old struggle for shorter hours and higher wages, which each section has been carrying on ever since it emerged from serfdom and became yoked to wage-slavery.

Whenever wages rise, the rise in prices will forestall them. The old see-saw struggle will continue, fellow-worker, until the workers determine to put an end to the wage system.

The Executive of the National Union of Railwaymen has notified its members that it is undesirable to suggest alternative proposals to the Labour Party's Capital Levy scheme. The workers, as a whole, are expected, by the Labour Party leaders, to wait quietly, whatever happens, till the Labour Party representatives become His Majesty's Government. Then the workers who have patiently waited and endured may perhaps get some of their grievances gradually redressed by the Labour Party Government with the assent of the King.

We do not believe in that programme, fellow-worker.

Our motto is: never put off till to-morrow what should be begun to-day.

Moreover, fellow-worker, we believe it is true that who would be free, themselves must strike the blow.

Therefore, we say the workers should organise in order to be able to take over production, distribution and transport, and manage them on Communist—that is to say, on Workers' Council—lines.

Then if some kind people will pass an Act of Parliament to regularise such a taking over, the workers will be ready to get to business at once.

In any case, it is best to be prepared for all emergencies, whether it be gunmen in Norfolk or Fascisti in Rome.

FROM "DAILY NEWS" FRONT PAGE.

The "Daily News" for March 31st, with copyright by the International News Service of America, publishes the following extract from the "Pravda."

This Moscow Communist paper, after having remarked that, concerning the sentence to death (now reduced to ten years' imprisonment) passed for treason on the Catholic Archbishop Cieplak, the Soviet Government had received protest wires from Catholic Spain, from a free-thinker like M. Herriot, from the Jewish Reformed Church, and from Messrs. Ben Turner and George Lansbury, adds:

"The British Labour Party did not spend one-tenth as much in telegrams of protest against the execution of South African strikers who were brutally done to death by Smuts, the idol of English Liberals.

"When priests are concerned the British Labour Party realises that the life of man is sacred, and demonstrates not only that the world of capital is upheld by bayonets and the trickery of priests, the bourgeois Press and bourgeois science, but that its last and, perhaps, strongest pillar is the servility and lackey-like soul of the reformist proletariat."

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Hodge and the Farm Strike.

with rape and mustard, to be eaten by sheep. Here and there the labourers are beginning to intimidate the blacklegs. Fights have occurred. The newspapers have described the situation as "ugly."

Hodge considers the situation. He is not on strike yet, and he is wondering whether to fight against worsened conditions, or to bear, with a dull hopelessness, whatever hardship the farmers and the Government may decide to impose upon him.

If he could see the chance of a straight fight, with a hope of winning through to some permanent improvement, Hodge thinks he would join in, cost what it might; but he is disappointed and disillusioned.

A few of the young men are saying: "Form rank and file farm committees"; but Hodge has not heard them yet.

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Speakers:

Sylvia Pankhurst, N. Smyth, and others.
All welcome.

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Refreshments from 6 p.m.

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of

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