

The Worker: Statement of Aims, 1890

The political attention of the WORKER will be limited to those questions which closely affect the welfare of the wage-earning masses. It will advocate the measures and reforms agreed upon as desirable at the Labour congresses of Australia, and will comment radically upon any and every proposal tending in the same direction. Neither of the old political parties will have its praise or blame, excepting as they treat the demands of the workers for justice, and all efforts to secure direct representation for organised labor will have its loyal support. It is a journal of the workers, in touch with their thoughts, inspired by their needs. What they want it wants. The way they go it goes. It aims as all thinking workers aim, at the securing of a happier state of society, which, though not, perhaps, on the same lines, is imbued with just the same spirit as that which imbues society in Bellamy's 'Looking Backward'. It claims that the worker is entitled to the wealth he produces, that he should be paid fairly, and should be secured fair condition of labour either by the voluntary federation of his fellows or by the resistless power of the state. It claims the right to work and live for all and denies to any the right to take advantage of the need of another.

From several Australian papers, notably from the Boomerang and the Bulletin, the cause of Australian labour has received incalculable aid. Nevertheless, such bright exceptions only make more pronounced the fact that the press, as a body, is owned and controlled by those whose interests as mere profit-mongers are distinctly opposed to the interests of workers; and that, owing to the commercial nature of all business speculations, no newspaper conducted on ordinary lines is to be permanently relied upon. The only means for labour to insure itself a free voice and unswerving advocacy is for organised workers to maintain by cooperation a journal which shall be, as the WORKER is, absolutely independent of and indifferent to, all outside assistance and influence.

The State-aided village settlement agitation has not been much heard of lately except as floating under the surface of all the progressive waves. But it must be stirred up again. It provides, as no other proposal yet urged in Australia provides, for the settlement of the existing unemployed difficulty without interfering with industry as established, or involving the Government in burdensome and unproductive works. Griffith, who has since come out as a champion of the workers with an impossible profit-sharing scheme-for the courage involved and feeling shown in advocating which, let us give him all credit-refused three years ago even to receive a village settlement deputation. He received, as all Premiers receive, deputations on Sunday-lecture stopping, rain catching, ditch-making, and cattle-trucking, but for some inconceivable reason would not hear the case for giving the Queensland worker a show on the Queensland lands. This, and the persistent cold water thrown on the proposal in other influential quarters, shows the opposition to be encountered, and the uselessness of asking again until working men, willing to settle under State-aided conditions, have been enrolled. Then the question should be carried into politics, and the man who opposes it, be he Griffith or Morehead or McIlwraith, should be remorselessly downed. The workers only want work under fair conditions, and, Bruce Smith to the contrary, the State must find it for them sooner or later.

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