

(Abstract)

The recommendation of the Expert Committee to lift the chapter 'The School for Sympathy' from the Text book prescribed for the IVth Semester UG Common Course 4A06ENG - 'Readings on Philosophy of Knowledge' from the academic year 2023-2024 and to add the chapter 'How I Became a Socialist' by Helen Keller from the academic year 2023-2024 onwards- Approved - Orders issued.

ACADEMIC C SECTION

Acad.C3/13219/2019

Dated: 15.09.2023

- Read:-1. U.O No. Acad.C3/13219/2019 Dated 23.11.2020
2. Minutes of the 25th meeting of the Academic Council held on 14/12/2022.
3. U.O No. Acad.C3/13219/2019 Dated: 21.01.2023.
4. Report of the Expert Committee.
5. Minutes of the 26th meeting of the Academic Council held on 14/07/2023.

ORDER

1.The Syllabus and Model Question papers of the IVth Semester, English Common Course for the B.A./B.Sc/Afzal-UI-Ulama Degree programmes under Choice Based Credit and Semester System (in OBE-Outcome Based Education System) in Affiliated Colleges under the University with effect from 2019 Admission was implemented vide the paper read (1) above.

2. The 25th meeting of the Academic Council held on 14/12/2022, considered the concerns regarding the Chapter 'The School for Sympathy' in the Text prescribed for the IV Semester UG English Common Course 4A06ENG - 'Readings on Philosophy of Knowledge' which provided an unreal nature of the blindness/visually challenged people vide paper read (2) above and resolved to constitute an Expert Committee comprising of Sri. N C Biju, Asst Professor, Dept of English, NAS College, Kanhangad (Convenor), Dr Habeeb C, Asst Professor, Dept of English, Farook College, Feroke and Dr Rohith P, Associate Professor, School of Letters, MG University as Members to study issues regarding the Chapter and to submit report with recommendations on additional readings. Accordingly, Expert Committee was constituted vide the paper read (3) above.

3. The Convenor of the Expert Committee submitted the report with remarks that the chapter 'The School for Sympathy' which is part of the textbook, The Readings on Philosophy of Knowledge, prescribed to fourth semester UG students as part of their common course in English is found politically incorrect to the contemporary society. This chapter seems to be dehumanizing the disabled community especially blind people. The committee agreed that the chapter does not depict the real nature of the blindness, provides a weak philosophy built on the ignorance of privileged able bodies and recommended to lift the chapter 'The School for Sympathy' from the text book, and to add the chapter 'How I Became a Socialist' by Helen Keller from the academic year 2023-2024 onwards as per the paper read (4) above.

4. The 26th meeting of the Academic Council held on 14/07/2023, considered the aforesaid recommendation of the Expert Committee and resolved to approve the same, vide paper read (5) above..

5. The minutes of the meeting of the Academic Council has been approved by the Vice chancellor and **accorded sanction to implement the recommendation of the Expert Committee "to lift**

the chapter 'The School for Sympathy'" from the Text book prescribed for the IVth Semester UG Common Course 4A06ENG - 'Readings on Philosophy of Knowledge' from the academic year 2023-2024 and to add the chapter 'How I Became a Socialist' by Helen Keller from the academic year 2023-2024 onwards.

6. The paper read as (1) above modified to this extent.
7. The text 'How I Became a Socialist' by Helen Keller is attached here with.
8. Orders are issued accordingly.

Sd/-

Narayanadas K
DEPUTY REGISTRAR (ACAD)
For REGISTRAR

To: The Principals of all Affiliated Colleges offering UG Programmes

- Copy To:
1. The Examination Branch (through PA to CE)
 2. The Convenor, Expert Committee
 3. PS to VC/PA to PVC/PA to Registrar
 4. DR/AR-I (Academic)
 5. The Computer Programmer & web Manger (for uploading on the website)
 6. SF/DF/FC

Forwarded / By Order


SECTION OFFICER





Helen Keller Reference Archive

How I Became a Socialist

First Published: the New York Call , November 3, 1912

Source: Helen Keller: Her Socialist Years (International Publishers, 1967)

Transcription/Markup: Anonymous/Brian Baggins

Online Version: Helen Keller Reference Archive (marxists.org) 2000

For several months my name and socialism have appeared often together in the newspapers. A friend tells me that I have shared the front pages with baseball, Mr. Roosevelt and the New York police scandal. The association does not make me altogether happy but, on the whole, I am glad that many people are interested in me and in the educational achievements of my teacher, Mrs. Macy (Anne Sullivan). Even notoriety may be turned to beneficent uses, and I rejoice if the disposition of the newspapers to record my activities results in bringing more often into their columns the word Socialism. In the future I hope to write about socialism, and to justify in some measure the great amount of publicity which has been accorded to me and my opinions. So far I have written little and said little about the subject. I have written a few letters, notably one to Comrade Fred Warren which was printed in the Appeal to Reason. I have talked to some reporters, one of whom, Mr. Ireland of the New York World, made a very flattering report and gave fully and fairly what I said. I have never been in Schenectady. I have never met Mayor Lunn. I have never had a letter from him, but he has sent kind messages to me through Mr. Macy. Owing to Mrs. Macy's illness, whatever plans I had to join the workers in Schenectady have been abandoned.

On such negative and relatively insignificant matters have been written many editorials in the capitalist press and in the Socialist press. The clippings fill a drawer. I have not read a quarter of them, and I doubt if I shall ever read them all. If on such a small quantity of fact so much comment has followed, what will the newspapers do if I ever set to work in earnest to write and talk in behalf of socialism? For the present I should like to make a statement of my position and correct some false reports and answer some criticisms which seem to me unjust.

First — How did I become a Socialist? By reading. The first book I read was Wells' New World for Old. I read it on Mrs. Macy's recommendation. She was attracted by its imaginative quality, and hoped that its electric style might stimulate and interest me. When she gave me the book, she was not a Socialist and she is not a Socialist now. Perhaps she will be one before Mr. Macy and I are done arguing with her.

My reading has been limited and slow. I take German bimonthly Socialist periodicals printed in braille for the blind. (Our German comrades are ahead of us in many respects.) I have also in German braille Kautsky's discussion of the Erfurt Program. The other socialist literature that I

have read has been spelled into my hand by a friend who comes three times a week to read to me whatever I choose to have read. The periodical which I have most often requested her lively fingers to communicate to my eager ones is the National Socialist. She gives the titles of the articles and I tell her when to read on and when to omit. I have also had her read to me from the International Socialist Review articles the titles of which sounded promising. Manual spelling takes time. It is no easy and rapid thing to absorb through one's fingers a book of 50,000 words on economics. But it is a pleasure, and one which I shall enjoy repeatedly until I have made myself acquainted with all the classic socialist authors.

In the light of the foregoing I wish to comment on a piece about me which was printed in the Common Cause and reprinted in the Live Issue, two antisocialist publications. Here is a quotation from that piece:

"For twenty-five years Miss Keller's teacher and constant companion has been Mrs. John Macy, formerly of Wrentham, Mass. Both Mr. and Mrs. Macy are enthusiastic Marxist propagandists, and it is scarcely surprising that Miss Keller, depending upon this lifelong friend for her most intimate knowledge of life, should have imbibed such opinions."

Mr. Macy may be an enthusiastic Marxist propagandist, though I am sorry to say he has not shown much enthusiasm in propagating his Marxism through my fingers. Mrs. Macy is not a Marxist, nor a socialist. Therefore what the Common Cause says about her is not true. The editor must have invented that, made it out of whole cloth, and if that is the way his mind works, it is no wonder that he is opposed to socialism. He has not sufficient sense of fact to be a socialist or anything else intellectually worthwhile.

Consider another quotation from the same article. The headline reads:

"SCHENECTADY REDS ARE ADVERTISING; USING HELEN KELLER, THE BLIND GIRL, TO RECEIVE PUBLICITY."

Then the article begins:

"It would be difficult to imagine anything more pathetic than the present exploitation of poor Helen Keller by the Socialists of Schenectady. For weeks the party's press agencies have heralded the fact that she is a Socialist, and is about to become a member of Schenectady's new Board of Public Welfare."

There's a chance for satirical comment on the phrase, "the exploitation of poor Helen Keller." But I will refrain, simply saying that I do not like the hypocritical sympathy of such a paper as the Common Cause, but I am glad if it knows what the word "exploitation" means.

Let us come to the facts. When Mayor Lunn heard that I might go to Schenectady he proposed to the Board of Public Welfare that a place be kept on it for me. Nothing was printed about this in The Citizen, Mayor Lunn's paper. Indeed, it was the intention of the board to say nothing about the matter until after I had moved to Schenectady. But the reporters of the capitalist press got wind of the plan, and one day, during Mayor Lunn's absence from Schenectady, the Knickerbocker Press of Albany made the announcement. It was telegraphed all over the country, and then began the real newspaper exploitation. By the Socialist press? No, by the capitalist press. The Socialist papers printed the news, and some of them wrote editorials of

welcome. But The Citizen, Mayor Lunn's paper, preserved silence and did not mention my name during all the weeks when the reporters were telephoning and telegraphing and asking for interviews. It was the capitalist press that did the exploiting. Why? Because ordinary newspapers care anything about socialism? No, of course not; they hate it. But because I, alas, am a subject for newspaper gossip. We got so tired of denying that I was in Schenectady that I began to dislike the reporter who first published the "news."

The Socialist papers, it is true, did make a good deal of me after the capitalist papers had "hearsed the fact that I am a Socialist." But all the reporters who came to see me were from ordinary commercial newspapers. No Socialist paper, neither The Call nor the National Socialist, ever asked me for an article. The editor of The Citizen hinted to Mr. Macy that he would like one, but he was too fine and considerate to ask for it point-blank.

The New York Times did ask me for one. The editor of the Times wrote assuring me that his paper was a valuable medium for reaching the public and he wanted an article from me. He also telegraphed asking me to send him an account of my plans and to outline my ideas of my duties as a member of the Board of Public Welfare of Schenectady. I am glad I did not comply with this request, for some days later the Times made me a social outcast beyond the range of its righteous sympathies. On September 21 there appeared in the Times an editorial called "The Comtemptible Red Flag." I quote two passages from it:

"The flag is free. But it is none the less detestable. It is the symbol of lawlessness and anarchy the world over, and as such is held in contempt by all right-minded persons."

"The bearer of a red flag may not be molested by the police until he commits some act which the red flag justifies. He deserves, however, always to be regarded with suspicion. By carrying the symbol of lawlessness he forfeits all right to respect and sympathy."

I am no worshiper of cloth of any color, but I love the red flag and what it symbolizes to me and other Socialists. I have a red flag hanging in my study, and if I could I should gladly march with it past the office of the Times and let all the reporters and photographers make the most of the spectacle. According to the inclusive condemnation of the Times I have forfeited all right to respect and sympathy, and I am to be regarded with suspicion. Yet the editor of the Times wants me to write him an article! How can he trust me to write for him if I am a suspicious character? I hope you will enjoy as much as I do the bad ethics, bad logic, bad manners that a capitalist editor falls into when he tries to condemn the movement which is aimed at this plutocratic interests. We are not entitled to sympathy, yet some of us can write articles that will help his paper to make money. Probably our opinions have the same sort of value to him that he would find in the confession of a famous murderer. We are not nice, but we are interesting.

I like newspapermen. I have known many, and two or three editors have been among my most intimate friends. Moreover, the newspapers have been of great assistance in the work which we have been trying to do for the blind. It costs them nothing to give their aid to work for the blind and to other superficial charities. But socialism — ah, that is a different matter! That goes to the root of all poverty and all charity. The money power behind the newspapers is

against socialism, and the editors, obedient to the hand that feeds them, will go to any length to put down socialism and undermine the influence of socialists.

When my letter to Comrade Fred Warren was published in the Appeal to Reason, a friend of mine who writes a special department for the Boston Transcript made an article about it and the editor-in-chief cut it out.

The Brooklyn Eagle says, apropos of me, and socialism, that Helen Keller's "mistakes spring out of the manifest limitations of her development." Some years ago I met a gentleman who was introduced to me as Mr. McKelway, editor of the Brooklyn Eagle. It was after a meeting that we had in New York in behalf of the blind. At that time the compliments he paid me were so generous that I blush to remember them. But now that I have come out for socialism he reminds me and the public that I am blind and deaf and especially liable to error. I must have shrunk in intelligence during the years since I met him. Surely it is his turn to blush. It may be that deafness and blindness incline one toward socialism. Marx was probably stone deaf and William Morris was blind. Morris painted his pictures by the sense of touch and designed wall paper by the sense of smell.

Oh, ridiculous Brooklyn Eagle! What an ungallant bird it is! Socially blind and deaf, it defends an intolerable system, a system that is the cause of much of the physical blindness and deafness which we are trying to prevent. The Eagle is willing to help us prevent misery provided, always provided, that we do not attack the industrial tyranny which supports it and stops its ears and clouds its vision. The Eagle and I are at war. I hate the system which it represents, apologizes for and upholds. When it fights back, let it fight fair. Let it attack my ideas and oppose the aims and arguments of Socialism. It is not fair fighting or good argument to remind me and others that i cannot see or hear. I can read. I can read all the socialist books I have time for in English, German and French. If the editor of the Brooklyn Eagle should read some of them, he might be a wiser man and make a better newspaper. If I ever contribute to the Socialist movement the book that I sometimes dream of, I know what I shall name it: Industrial Blindness and Social Deafness.

Helen Keller Internet Archive