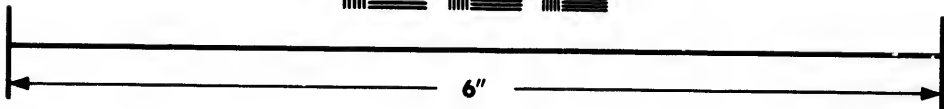
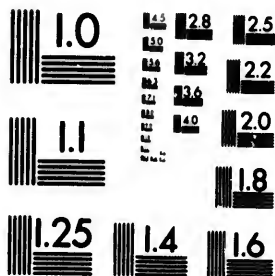


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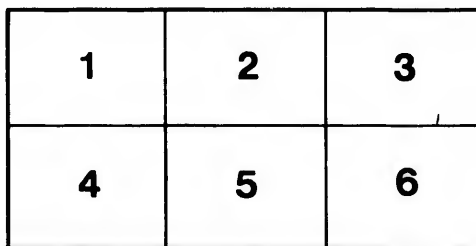
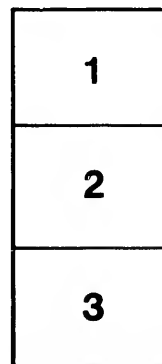
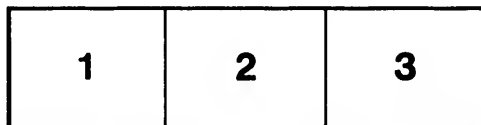
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THE SOCIALIST PLATFORM.—No. 5.



ORGANISED LABOUR.

THE DUTY OF THE TRADES' UNIONS
IN RELATION TO SOCIALISM.

BY

THOMAS BINNING

(LONDON SOCIETY OF COMPOSITORS).

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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25/5/89

LONDON:
SOCIALIST LEAGUE OFFICE,
13 FARRINGDON ROAD, HOLBORN VIADUCT, E.C.
1887.

SONG OF LABOUR.

—o—
Where'er the eye its glance may throw,
Where'er in earth's most pleasant places
The glories of the sunshine glow,
Rich gifts lie strewn in Labour's traces.
'Tis Labour sows the seed, and finds
The wealth of Autumn's golden treasure,
And shapes the whirling wheel that grinds
Our daily food's abundant measure.

Then high aloft be borne her banner,
Where through fierce foes she wins her way,
Where heaven's free breezes freely fan her,
'Tis Labour still that gains the day.

She delves the mine to forge her swords,
Though ne'er so deep the ore be lying ;
Builds palaces for living lords,
And shapes their coffins for the dying.
The iron rails that link the lands,
The ships that o'er the waves are driven,
Are wrought by Labour's mighty hands ;
To her be all the glory given.

Then high aloft be borne her banner,
Where through fierce foes she wins her way,
Where heaven's free breezes freely fan her,
'Tis Labour still that gains the day.

She works and weaves while others rest ;
Has nought for roof but heaven above her :
For others spins their silken nest,
With scarce a rag her limbs to cover :
Provides the robes that Pleasure wears,
With want and misery around her ;
And knowing not her strength, she bears
The chains in which her lords have bound her.

Yet see ! The dawn for day gives token :
The mists of night disperse and die ;
Her chains at length are burst and broken,
And Labour's triumph lasts for aye.

ANDREAS SCHEU

ORGANISED LABOUR.

THE DUTY OF THE TRADES' UNIONS IN RELATION TO SOCIALISM.

FELLOW-WORKERS,—

As a staunch Trades'-unionist for over twenty years I desire to call your serious attention to the present alarming condition of the unceasing struggle between Capital and Labour. It is useless to cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. The hard disagreeable reality forces itself upon us and cannot be evaded, that never has the conflict been fiercer and never has the outlook been more gloomy than now. In the dark days that we have passed through already, there has always been a rift in the clouds to cheer us with the promise of brighter hours, and amidst the din and strife of previous contests the hope of victory brought comfort and encouragement. But the conditions of the warfare are changed. No further successes are possible by the old methods and with the weapons we have hitherto used. Indeed, the utmost care and watchfulness are needed even to retain the positions we have won. For this reason I urge the immediate summoning of a Council of War to deliberate upon the situation and to consider the advisability, nay the imperative necessity of a complete change of tactics in order that the standard of Labour may yet be borne aloft and planted on heights heretofore deemed impossible of access.

Until now we have to a very large extent been struggling aimlessly to attain what is vaguely termed "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work," without the very faintest attempt to logically define what the

phrase really means. The consequence is a most unequal and disastrous contest, as far as the workers are concerned, between Capital on the one hand, seeking to obtain the greatest amount of work for the least possible payment of money, and Labour that struggles, or rather tries to struggle, to get the largest amount of pay for the smallest amount of work.

It is true, that other conditions being favourable, combinations amongst the workers to withhold their labour-power from the market have enabled them to secure somewhat higher prices than individual higgling would probably have done. The artificial scarcity thus occasioned would to a certain extent operate in the same way as in the case of corn, or cotton, or other product, held back for a rise, but with this important difference that human labour-power is a very perishable commodity. Owing to the unfortunate fact that a certain amount of food, clothing, etc., things monopolised by a class, is necessary to sustain the life of the worker, it is impossible that labour can be withheld from the market for any considerable length of time and in sufficient quantity to produce any considerable effect. Taking a broad and general survey of the question, it will be seen that the real advantage gained is of the most trifling character, a rise of wages at one period being only too frequently counterbalanced by a depression at another. Even in trades' unions where there has been no going back, and where the highest nominal rate of wages obtains, it will be found, as I shall endeavour to show further on, that this results in the benefit of a section only of the members, and is gained, in part at least, by the sacrifice of their weaker comrades. In fact, after all, the workers are simply obliged to sell themselves ("free contract" is the orthodox phrase) to the employers pretty much on the terms that a needy shop-keeper is forced to dispose of his goods, that is at cost-price or a little over it. In other words, wages though constantly oscillating, are to the producers of all created wealth the very smallest share of their productions which will enable them to live and perpetuate their class, while the manipulators of their destinies revel in an excess of riches accumulated as result of the undue proportion of the current wealth-creation which the hideously unjust social conditions allow them to appropriate. It must always be borne in mind, too, that any improvement which does occur in the **pay** and general condition of the workers is

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always vastly disproportionate to the actual increase in the "national" wealth and resources. Nowadays the average production of the average worker has been many times multiplied by newly-applied elementary forces made available by newly-invented and constantly-improved machinery.

How much longer are we going to stand stolidly and helplessly looking on, feebly protesting, or, worse still, accepting contentedly the scraps from the feast, as it were, that we have ourselves provided—watching the Capitalist seize upon every development of art and science for his own profit and advancement, regardless of our responsibility in shaping the destinies of ourselves, our families, and our class? It is time that we began seriously to consider for what we are banded together. What is our goal? Whither are we going? For what ought we to strive? The exigencies of the moment doubtless compel a large share of our attention, and moreover we are necessarily driven by our daily needs under the present conditions of society to act very largely on the defensive, to adopt, as it were, a "hand-to-mouth policy." But these petty cares must not be allowed to occupy all our time, or to prevent us from considering matters of greater importance. It is doubtless very advantageous to the enemy to keep us constantly engaged in scattered desultory fighting for the possession of some unimportant outlying positions. But remember that all the while we are doing this our forces are being gradually weakened, our exchequer is becoming exhausted in providing for the care of the wounded (*i. e.*, the sick and unemployed), and so is deferred and rendered more difficult the necessary concentration of attack upon the citadel of Capitalism.

Now, after all, as has been well said, "the end of war is peace." Then what are the terms of the peace which Labour can make with Capital? Is there anything short of absolute and unconditional surrender of the claim of the capitalistic classes to exploit the workers? I say emphatically, No. It is not a question of how much we shall be robbed, but whether we shall permit ourselves to be robbed at all. It may be very well to try and limit the amount of black-mail we are obliged to pay until we are able to resist the obligation altogether; but surely we can never concede as a *right* that which is really taken by *force*, however much it may be veiled under the form of *law*.

I cannot conceive of any sane man justifying the claim of a fellow-

man, be he idler or organiser, not only to compel him to work for both, but also to take possession of three-fourths of the product of his labour. Yet this is practically the position of the whole of the monopolists to-day in relation to the workers, and it will continue so long as the wage-system lasts, despite the utmost efforts of the trades' unions. This is no mere empty assertion, but is a strictly logical deduction from the facts and figures given in the Reports issued by the various unions; indeed, it is the inevitable outcome of the development of the competitive system of production. These Reports show, I think, conclusively that Trades'-unionism has reached its zenith. On its present basis it can do little in the way of ameliorating the lot of the toilers, whilst it is utterly incapable of solving the labour question. So far from there appearing the faintest prospect of any general advance in wages or any material improvement in the condition of the workers, the facts are that the most successful unions are only able to maintain their positions by enormous subsidies to their unemployed; and the stability of some of the strongest provident societies belonging to the people is threatened by the extreme pressure upon their funds due to the chronic distress arising from large numbers of their members being continually out of work. Some of the larger unions, including the Amalgamated Engineers, undoubtedly the most powerful labour organisation of the kind in the world, have been compelled to draw largely on their reserve funds. Thus everything points to the conclusion that the trades' unions, so far from becoming more formidable opponents of capitalism, are really losing ground as a fighting body, and are becoming relatively weaker every year. This may appear to some a startling statement; but if they look into the matter they will find: (1) That the actual number of adult male workers engaged in several of the chief industries is becoming less and less in proportion to the population; and (2) that the increase in the membership of the unions is accompanied by a vastly greater increase in the ratio of unemployed. In my own union (London Society of Compositors), taking three periods of twelve years each from 1848, I find that the amount paid under the head of "Unemployed Allowances" has increased nearly in the ratio of the arithmetical progression—1, 2, 3—rather over than under. That is to say, that nowadays the Society has to spend on an average £3 on merely defensive operations, as against £1 from 1848 to 1859 and £2 from

1860 to 1871. Or to put the matter in another and more striking light, I find that during the earlier years of the Society the amount paid for unemployed averaged only about one-eighth of the total income (in one year, 1854, it reached the extraordinarily low proportion of one-thirtieth), whereas during the last ten years it has never fallen below one-third; in 1879 it amounted to two-thirds of the total income, and during the three succeeding years to more than one-half.

The significance of these figures is vastly increased by the fact that they relate to a Society which has been exceptionally prosperous; which has so far suffered less than most trades from the long-continued and severe depression; and which is peculiarly free from the disturbing influence of machinery, that has worked such havoc amongst the workers in other occupations. If, then, we take the position of the most successful unions to-day, we shall find that we have arrived at the high-water mark of Trades'-unionism; and I ask my fellow-unionists to try and realise what that means, and then ask themselves if they are content to rest and be thankful, and to accept their present condition as the goal of their ambition.

I by no means wish to disparage the value of Trades'-unionism. On the contrary, I claim that the spirit of solidarity evolved, the administrative capacity developed, and the general educational effect produced by the association of the workers for a common object, is of itself an unmixed blessing. Neither am I concerned to deny that the unions have to some slight extent improved the material condition of the workers, and have been a power of good in regulating trade customs and conduct. But what I most strongly insist on is, that their whole course of action results simply in bolstering up a thoroughly vicious state of society—that they are merely attempting to modify some of the evils that it produces, whilst leaving the source of those evils—the wage-system itself—untouched. It must not be forgotten, too, as I have already observed, that the advantages gained, short as they fall of any rational satisfying of the needs of the labourer, are only shared by a fortunate few. In the earlier years of trade combinations, whilst the commercial system was reaching its highest development, and when it was the proud boast of patriotic Britons that England was the workshop of the world, any successes gained by the unions affected pretty well the whole of the members. But

as the years went on, with the constant increase and improvement of machinery, the mad competition in the production of cheap goods as the sole end and aim of civilisation spread to other lands, and thus produced the inevitable glut of the markets, with all the terrible consequences of the constantly recurring trade crises and enormous displacement of labour. Thus, notwithstanding the nine-hour movement and the passing of Factory Acts reducing the hours of labour, there is in every trade a large number constantly unemployed; and whilst of course it is true that the individuals who comprise this surplus-labour population are constantly changing, yet it will be found that there is in operation a law of selection which enables the employers to take their pick of the workers, and thus to a certain extent recoup themselves for the higher prices paid for labour. It is matter of common observation that men passed middle-age have increasing difficulty in getting employment; and the evidence of advancing age, such as the appearance of grey hairs or weakening of the sight, brings anxiety to many lest they may be called upon to make way for younger and more robust competitors. The slightly higher remuneration which a proportion of our number receive during their years of youth and vigour is therefore gained on condition of supporting the worn-out slaves of Capitalism, with the prospect before them of being displaced in their turn to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

Trades'-unionism affords absolutely no remedy for this. Even if every non-unionist were to join our ranks to-morrow, the result would simply be a further sifting of the workers, whereby the young, the strong, and the more competent would receive a shilling or two more per week, while the remainder would become chargeable on the "unemployed fund" of their respective societies. Now the lot of the worker, even under the most favourable circumstances of full employment at what are termed "high wages," is not a very enviable one; what, then, must it be to our unfortunate comrades who have to drag out a weary existence of precarious toil and anxious idleness?

An agitation for an Eight Hours' Working Day is mooted as a remedy. It is thought by this means that the unemployed will be absorbed, and that the increased demand for commodities will bring about good times and higher wages. But the reasoning is fallacious. In the first place, the amount of exploitation may be as great in eight hours as in nine. A large employer and commercial

philosopher, Mr. C. W. Allen, of the Allen Tobacco Company, Chicago, more astute than most of his class, has, from much observation and experience, reached the following conclusion: "The daily capacity of a man for work is an ascertained quantity. Hours worked in excess of eight are a mere waste of physical energy. Men working eight hours a-day gain in capacity for hourly production to such an extent over those whose hours are longer that their day's work becomes nearly an equivalent for the longer day of their fellow-workmen. For this reason we have adopted the eight-hour day without any diminution of pay; and after two months' trial, we are satisfied that we were right in our estimate."

Certain trades, especially those having little to fear from the competition of machinery, may be able to obtain a reduction of hours without a reduction of pay, but the practical result would be an intensification of labour, which might to a certain extent be beneficial to the employés by adding to their leisure, but otherwise would have little or no effect upon the general question. In the case of most trades, however, it would be found very difficult—in fact, under present conditions, absolutely impossible—to get the hours reduced without the pay being also reduced, which, of course, would be of no advantage to the workers as a whole, though it would benefit those who might be enabled to get work thereby. It is exceedingly doubtful whether, after all, the ranks of the unemployed would be materially thinned even if such lessening of the hours were general. It will not do to calculate, as some of the short-sighted over-sanguine advocates of the eight-hour movement are apt to do, that the demand for labour will increase in exact proportion to the number of hours reduced. There are very few industries where the employés are fully occupied during the present nominal working-hours; the effect of a reduction of one hour per day in the first place and in most cases would result therefore simply in concentrating and equalising the work of those already employed, whilst the temptation to work overtime which is so difficult to deal with at present, would certainly be increased. The probabilities are that those who expect such a clearance of the labour-market as would enable them to obtain a speedy rise of wages would find themselves mistaken. In any case they would have to fight for it, for the employers would certainly resist; there would be a difficult and costly struggle, and even if the workers succeeded, their victory would be brief and barren.

It is an established economic fact that an increase in the cost of production is the greatest stimulus to invention. Where labour is cheap, it is sometimes preferable to machinery, especially when the machinery is high-priced. The machine needs the investment of large capital. Human labour-power is not fixed nor is it constant capital, the first cost is nothing, which is important to the "poor" capitalist, who can thus pay a small sum for the proceeds, after the labour has been performed. The effect, therefore, of raising the cost of production is to drive out the small employer, to cause more machinery to be used, with as a necessary consequence a repetition of the same miserable weary round of feverish activity, reaction, discharge of workers, lowering of wages, strikes, etc.

It is obvious that the workers as a whole can only benefit by obtaining a larger absolute share of the total wealth produced. It is absurd to suppose, as the advocacy of a mere reduction of hours as a settlement of the labour question seems to imply, that the less there is produced the more there will be to divide. It is true that the fewer hours worked under the capitalist system the less surplus-value is created, and that the workers are thus enabled to retain a larger relative proportion of the products of their labour. But this very fact is surely convincing proof of the horribly unjust state of society. Is it not monstrous that the very industry of the people should prove their destruction? That the greater the amount of wealth created the more abject and hopeless should become the condition of vast numbers of our fellowmen? What a satire upon our boasted civilisation that plenty should bring misery to many, and that people should actually starve because of the very abundance? Yet to-day it would really advantage great numbers of the most useful members of the community if after working hard to produce various commodities, they should immediately destroy the product of their labour, in order that they might still continue to be employed in replacing the wealth so destroyed, and thereby avoid being cast out into the streets to become tramps and paupers.

A very little consideration will show that Trades'-unionism is utterly powerless to raise wages all round. Those unions who get a rise of wages benefit only so long as their position is exceptional. Directly there is a general advance of wages, there is a corresponding rise in the prices of the necessaries of life—food, clothing and shelter—which eventually reduces matters pretty much to the condition they were in

before the advance was gained. In fact, the inevitable tendency of all efforts to improve the condition of the workers on the ordinary trades'-union lines is simply to bring about an equalisation of wages—an averaging between the highest and lowest price paid for labour, not only in any one country, but over the whole of Europe and America, and in fact wherever the accursed rule of capital extends. Thus any advance which the workers gain in one country is immediately counteracted by the importation of cheap labour, or the transference of capital to places where the workers can be more easily plundered. Nothing less, therefore, than an international combination of the workers to bring about a simultaneous and universal strike, can accomplish even such a comparatively paltry palliative as the eight-hour working day.

But even supposing (for the sake of the argument) that it were possible for such terms to be made with the monopolists by the trades' unions as would entirely satisfy them. What then? They cannot if they would, and they ought not to, if they could, separate their interests from the rest of the workers. There are large classes of the community whose condition daily grows more and more intolerable. These will soon demand in no uncertain terms to have a voice in any settlement that is to be made. What of the thousands of small traders who are being daily crushed out by the large firms—the small employers vainly endeavouring to compete with the big capitalists? beside the hosts of workers of all kinds who are entirely outside the scope of trades-union effort? By every consideration of humanity, and even of expediency, trades'-unionists are bound to take the position of these classes into account. An organisation that does not work for all productive interests cannot expect them to look out for its interests; and if the unions are to look out for their own members only, without regard to the well-being of others outside their ranks, they are simply acting like the monopolist who believes that every one else was born for his use and convenience.

Beside, the classes to which I have referred as being outside the pale of Trades'-unionism are being continually largely recruited from the ranks of the artisans and mechanics; for it must be borne in mind that the demand for handicraftsmen, owing to the causes, already referred to—increase in the use of improved machinery, etc., etc.—does not keep pace with the population. Notwithstanding the fact, therefore, that the sons of trades'-unionists drive the fathers wholesale into

the ranks of the unemployed, the vacancies are still insufficient to supply all the youths in need of employment; and every parent at least knows that the difficulty of finding any occupation for them promising a decent livelihood becomes greater and greater every day.

Trades'-unionists, then, cannot be indifferent to these things. Their welfare is involved in the general well-being of the people; but even if it were possible for them by ignoring every other consideration but their own selfish interests, to gain any substantial benefit by assisting to maintain the present corrupt society, with its frightful social inequality and widespread misery and degradation, they would deserve the execration of Humanity if they consented to do so. Such a course of action, however, would be totally at variance with the spirit and traditions of the trades'-union movement, and I for one have no fear of such an unholy alliance. I have a profound conviction that the trades' unions are destined to play an important part in the Social Revolution, when once they perceive how incompatible is the present economic basis of society with the happiness of the people.

I therefore urge it upon the unions as their highest duty to humanity that they should without delay come to some understanding with the advocates of Socialism. As a Socialist myself it has always appeared to me that Socialism is but the expression of the ideal of Trades'-unionism. The Socialist aims at the emancipation of Labour, the equality and fraternity of the peoples, and the overthrow of class-domination. This being the very antithesis of the present condition of society, implies the destruction of the existing wage-slavery, by which a privileged class is enabled to live in luxury and idleness upon the labour of others.

The present society is social war. It is a system based on inequality of rights and duties, upheld and maintained by force, in order that a few men may be enabled to exploit their fellow-men,—in short, that the Classes may profit by the misery and degradation of the Masses. As a cure for the strife and wretchedness which increases and spreads wherever the baleful influence of capitalism extends, the Socialist advocates the establishment of Co-operative Commonwealths, or communes, which should own and control all the raw material, instruments of labour, and means of transit. The object of such communes would naturally be, not the wholesale production of shoddy goods and Brummagem ware, but the general diffusion of happiness and contentment.

Every member of such communities, in return for moderate and congenial labour performed under the most wholesome conditions and with the best appliances obtainable, would be insured the means for enjoying a rational life with due satisfaction of his or her needs, material, moral, and intellectual. Surely there is nothing in such proposals but what should command the assent and approval of every honest man and woman, to whatever class of society they belong; and least of all should those who live by the sale of their labour oppose them.

Whether this necessary and inevitable social change shall be brought about gradually and safely, and with comparative ease and tranquillity, or shall be delayed till a violent and irresistible wave of popular fury overwhelms the present accursed system, depends largely—I might almost say entirely—on the attitude of the trades' unions. Their action henceforth ought to be solely directed to preparing the way for the new social order; in organising and federating nationally and internationally, with the distinct intention of constituting themselves the nucleus of the Socialist Commonwealth. That this is their true function will be at once apparent if we analyse the present society and briefly examine the elements of which it is composed. We find that there is only a small minority of the population engaged in really useful and necessary work, by far the larger proportion being either idle or uselessly employed. For example, there are all those who minister to the laziness and luxury of the rich; the shopkeepers and assistants, the travellers, clerks, etc.; the hawkers, and itinerants of all kinds; the swarms of officials, lawyers, soldiers, priests, policemen, pawnbrokers, publicans, peers, princes, paupers, etc., etc.—not to mention prostitutes, pickpockets, and the criminal classes generally. All these classes are doomed to disappear with the corrupt society which makes their existence possible. But the unions contain within themselves all the elements essential for the constitution of a rational society; they are therefore pointed out as the natural pioneers of the New Era. By the discipline of their organisation and the solidarity which comes of association and collective action, trades'-unionists have been fitting themselves for the fraternal communal life which Socialists hope and believe is to follow the present fratricidal régime; while the administrative capacity developed by the conduct of the unions will be of enormous value in organising and assimilating the heterogeneous host of non-producers to which I have referred above.

I call upon the unions frankly to recognise their mission, and to make common cause with all those whose fundamental principle is that the brotherhood of labour should be the basis of society. The emancipation of labour is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem. Labour is of no country. The interests of the workers are everywhere identical. Whatever political party be in power, whether the form of government be republican, constitutional-monarchical, or absolutist,—everywhere the workers have to contend with the same evils. The cause of all social misery is the economical subjection of the labourer to the monopoliser of the means of labour, whereby the masses of the people are compelled to sell themselves by a kind of Dutch auction to the capitalist classes in order to obtain the wherewithal to maintain a bare existence. There is absolutely no hope for the workers but in the utter abolition of wage-slavery and the reconstruction of society on a labour basis. Everything that has been put forward as a panacea and for the purpose of keeping the people in a fools' paradise has been tried and failed, and left them in even a worse condition than they were before. Surely they must be blind indeed who do not perceive that neither free trade nor improvements of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no increased means of communication nor new colonies, emigration, opening of new markets, nor all these things put together, can do away with the miseries of the industrious classes; but that whilst society remains on its present false base, every fresh development of the productive powers of labour can only tend to deepen social contrasts and to embitter and accentuate the class-struggle.

It is useless for the trades'-unions to waste further time, trouble, and money in fighting the "bosses" for some petty concession, which is maintained with difficulty, at best benefits a very few, and is only hindering the cause of the People. The present cowardly attitude of the unions is fast bringing British Trades'-unionism into contempt amongst all earnest, honest champions of progress. The charge has been made, I am afraid with only too much truth, that we have allowed ourselves of late years "to be dominated by a pettifogging set of self-seekers—men with no grit—bowers and scrapers to the middle-class god, Respectability." I earnestly entreat my fellow-unionists to exert themselves to remove this reproach. Let us show that we are capable of better things, that we can look beyond the narrow range of our

everyday life and the mere selfish struggle for our own advantage. A mighty movement is in progress throughout the whole of the civilised world. Society is steadily, irresistibly dividing itself into two camps—the People on one side, the Privileged Classes on the other. All the ebullitions taking place in the various countries to-day, whatever may be their immediate origin or object, and by whatever name they may be described, have only one root-cause—the revolt of Labour against Monopoly—and are but the preliminary skirmishes before the great and decisive battle that remains yet to be fought ere the Curse of Capital be utterly overthrown and the cause of Labour won.

The paramount duty of the trades' unions seems to me to be clearly defined. It is to make plain to all men that they have no part nor lot with those who would maintain the existing unjust social arrangements, but that they recognise the absolute identity of their interests with those of the opponents of class privilege and domination. The trades' unions have hitherto kept commendably clear of party politics, but there appears some danger at present that they may be "got at" by the professional politicians, and may be induced to turn aside from their proper work to waste their efforts in Parliamentary pottering. The unions should steadily reject all alliances with any of the present political parties; they should refuse to take part in those disgusting farces termed royal commissions; and above all, they should guard against being cajoled by the blandishments which are being craftily bestowed upon some of the weak-kneed "representatives" of labour. The attention of trades' unionists ought to be solely directed to the social question. Nothing short of an Economic Revolution can emancipate labour, therefore no amount of legislative tinkering is of any use, so long as private property in the sources of life is permitted.

The existence of great organisations like the trades' unions with no definite programme is a strange anomaly in these times of active revolutionary propaganda, and with the social question agitating the minds of the workers throughout the whole of the civilised world. It is time that a joint committee was appointed to draw up a manifesto setting forth clearly and distinctly the aims and objects of organised labour. The monstrous doctrine of the bourgeois political economists, that human labour should be dealt with exactly like machinery or raw material, should be utterly repudiated. The workers should no longer contentedly allow their labour-power to be bought and sold like a com-

modity to make profit for the possessing classes, but should claim for themselves and for all men equal rights as free citizens to work together and to enjoy the fruits of their labour. The future action of the trades' unions, then, ought to be solely directed to the end of substituting production for use in the interest of the whole of the community, for the present system of production for profit in the interest of landlords, capitalists, usurers, etc.

To accomplish this desirable alteration the principle of solidarity must be much more widely accepted amongst all classes of workers than obtains at present; the spirit of fraternity must extend beyond the narrow bounds of nationality and bring about a common understanding with the peoples in other lands. Our brethren in America are considerably ahead of us in this matter. They have realised the inability of local unions among a comparatively small section of the workers to cope with the international conspiracy of the plundering classes, and are consolidating themselves into a vast organisation, which may be termed the New Society in embryo, which will undoubtedly at no very distant date develop into a Co-operative Commonwealth. Let us emulate their example and rally to the standard of labour all those who are willing to do their duty; all who suffer from the present condition of society and all who sympathise with the sufferers; in a word all those who acknowledge truth, justice and morality as the bases of their conduct towards all men, without regard to colour, creed, nationality, or occupation. Only by so doing will it be possible to close the era of social injustice and class war and to inaugurate a happier state of society for all, in which life shall be a thing to be enjoyed, instead of, as now, for far too many of us, a burden to be endured.

Comrades, I have sought to prove the inability of Trades'-unionism alone to liberate Labour from the grasp of Capital, and I have pointed to Socialism as the next stage in the evolution of society. I earnestly hope my words may lead you to inquire more fully into the subject; and I am sure if you do so, you will acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of the principles of Socialism, and will henceforth subscribe yourselves Socialists as well as Trades'-unionists.

THOMAS BINNING.

August 1886.

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