A HISTORY OF LABOUR REPRESENTATION

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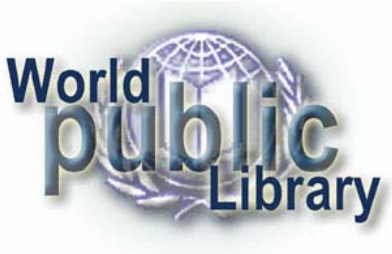

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A History of Labour Representation

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BY
A. W. HUMPHREY

LONDON
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1912

TO
THE UNEMPLOYED
THEIR WIVES AND LITTLE CHILDREN
WHO CONSTITUTE A LIVING AND SORROWFUL
DENIAL OF OUR RIGHT
TO CALL THIS
COUNTRY
GREAT

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

AS it is the object of this book to present a record of the movement for Labour Representation in the United Kingdom, the author has endeavoured to keep it free from unnecessary comment of his own, and to present the case for all sides equally and accurately in all the controversies—often heated to the point of bitterness—which have characterised the agitation. Here, however, it will not be improper for him to state what he considers to be the outstanding fact in connection with the movement for Labour Representation. It is this: That only in so far as the working-class have been resolute in their intention to obtain what they wanted, and have ignored the attitude of other classes, have they ever made any headway in this struggle. The idea of working-men in Parliament at all was greeted, at first, as a monstrous heresy. Lord Derby and Mr. Bright had not a great deal in common, but they were agreed that working-men in Parliament, placed there to see that their interests were not overlooked by men of the upper and middle classes, would mean the introduction of class representation into a House innocent of any such thing. But the working-men held their ground, and what Mill foretold, in his letter to Odger, actually happened. Mill argued: let the Tories in, and when the Whig majority is threatened the Whigs will be glad to admit the working-man. So it was; though, per-

haps, not as soon as it might have been had the Labour men taken Mill's advice more literally. Still, they insisted on coming forward, and there grew up Liberal-Labourism, which showed its teeth in 1874. Working-men politicians deserted the Liberal party at that election and the Tories won. Henceforward, Liberal-Labour men were regarded with a more friendly eye by the official Liberals, and when, with the Home Rule split, the lame dog of Liberalism needed helping over the stile it was glad to have the Liberal Trade Union leaders as an annexe to its party. Liberal-Labourism had come to stay. Then there arose the Independent Labour movement. It met with the same opposition as was meted out to Liberal-Labourism, which itself joined in opposing the new movement. But Independent Labour held its ground, and to-day we find that the Liberal party is not above making overtures to the Labour party. The Labour party has grown strong enough to be dangerous. Mr. Hyndman, however, for Social Democracy, fights Burnley four times in the face of strenuous Liberal opposition and there is no attempt to compromise with Socialist candidates as distinct from the Socialist-Labour men.

The next phase of the Labour Representation movement, in the author's opinion, will be in the direction of Independent Socialist representation. It is early yet to prophesy—and always dangerous—but especially in view of the foundation of the British Socialist party and the recent unrest of a section of the Independent Labour party, it is not improbable that, in the not very distant future, the Socialist element will withdraw from the Labour party; either formally, or by the process of dying a natural death. That party then becomes Radical, and Social Reform and Socialistic Reform not being

always convertible terms, there will be another fight for the separate representation of a new element in the Commons, and it will be for the Socialist party to win its way to power. In the political, as in the religious and social worlds, the heretics of to-day are the orthodox of to-morrow; and all the while the new ideas from below are forcing out the older ones above. Such is political evolution and the march of nations. But, let the heretics falter, let them give way before the advice as to how *not* to proceed, from those in a position only attained by adopting precisely similar tactics, when they themselves were the heretics, then there is stagnation.

The author must not be understood as maintaining that the Labour Representation movement is the product of working-men alone, or that working-men should reject all advice from men of other classes. As a matter of fact, a number of middle-class Radicals rendered the movement service in the early days. To name a few: there were John Stuart Mill—at whose instigation the first working-man candidate was put forward—Frederic Harrison, Mr. (the late Sir) Charles Dilke, Professor Beesley, Joseph Cowen, Edmund Beales, P. A. Taylor, and A. H. Layard. Indeed it was utterances of two Radical M.P.'s—A. H. Layard and T. B. Potter—which inspired Robert Hartwell to inaugurate the movement for Labour Representation, in the London Working-Men's Association, in 1866. The action of individuals who take a course apart from that of their class as a whole and the action of those who are the leaders of a class movement are, however, two very different things. The inner ring of the Liberal and Tory parties never desired either a Labour group or a Labour party. The Liberals,

seeing that Labour would win in the long run, made the best of what, for them, was a bad job; better Labour men as possible friends than as sworn foes. To-day, the Tory party is seeking to retrieve its fallen fortunes by the aid of that very crude form of Labour Representation the working-man Tariff Reformer. Now Tariff Reform has split the Tory party, there is a tendency to cultivate a closer acquaintance with the working-man, just as he was sought out by the Liberals after 1885; although it must, of course, be remembered that the Liberals gave their benediction to the Liberal-Labour Representation movement as it then was, while the Tories, to-day, are endeavouring to engineer a movement apart from the regular forces of Labour. Still, prima facie, a genuine working-man on the Tory benches is as much a Labour representative as one on the Liberal benches.

The extent to which, even to-day, the Liberal party will oppose a Labour candidature is well illustrated by the recent by-election at Oldham. There is no constituency in the kingdom which would be more fittingly represented by a Labour member than Oldham, and the Labour candidate, who would have voted for Home Rule, and the Insurance Bill, and who was a Free Trader, would have won the seat in a straight fight with the Tory. When the Tory won, the Labour party was accused of "splitting the progressive vote," but the accusation holds equally good against the Liberal party; unless it be assumed, as the Liberal party appears to so often assume, that the Labour party should go, cap in hand, to the Liberals and ask their permission to run a candidate. True, the Oldham seat was formerly Liberal, but no party has the right to claim a monopoly of a particular seat. The Liberal party is, of course, as

much within its rights in opposing a Labour candidate as in opposing a Tory candidate; but if it does so, under circumstances such as those at Oldham, it must not be surprised when people question its belief in democracy, or doubt its sincerity when it professes a desire to deal justly with the working-class.

The thanks of the writer are due to Dr. Gilbert Slater and Mr. Henry Allsopp, the Principal and Vice-Principal of Ruskin College, Oxford, and the author's former tutors at that place, for advice and encouragement; to the Directors of the London School of Economics for granting permission for the use of the Library of the School, and particularly to the Librarian for his courtesy and assistance; to the Rt. Hon. John Burns, M.P., for the use of some of his valuable literature; to Mr. E. R. Pease, the Secretary of the Fabian Society, for his helpful criticism of the chapters dealing with the Labour Representation Committee and the Labour party; to those newspaper proprietors who placed their files at the writer's disposal, and to other friends who have, in any way, given assistance. For any error the writer admits responsibility.

This book may claim, perhaps, to have served a useful purpose if, at some future time, it should be of some help to some one in writing a fuller and worthier record of that most important phase in the life of this, or any other, nation—the struggle of the proletariat for political power.

A. W. HUMPHREY.

HUDDERSFIELD,
November 26th, 1911.

INTRODUCTION

AT the present moment a history of the movement for Labour Representation in the United Kingdom needs little introduction, and no apology. The existence of a strong and independent Labour Party marked off the Parliament which assembled in 1906 from all its precursors. The appeal of Labour to the Legislature became a dominant note in Parliamentary proceedings. Measure after measure was passed tending to transform relations between Central Government on the one hand, and the lives, homes, and industrial organisation of the workers on the other hand. For the first time the feelings, at any rate of the organised and more highly skilled workers, were effectively voiced in the National Councils. Scarcely had the country become accustomed to this new feature in its political life when the Osborne decision struck a heavy blow at the financial basis of Labour Representation, and at the present time the revision of the law necessitated by that decision is one of the most important constitutional problems now waiting for practical solution.

What probably will strike the reader most in Mr. Humphrey's story is the fact that Labour Representation has been an end which has been more and more vigorously contended for during more than half a century. The position which has now been reached is the result of no sudden effort, but of a

slowly gathering movement of opinion and of the toil of many forgotten pioneers. This is a fact which must be taken into consideration both by those who fancy the movement can easily be thwarted, and by those who think that it will lightly change its character.

But certainly a radical change in the character of the movement for Labour Representation is possible, and Mr. Humphrey appears to regard it as probable. There has already taken place one transformation. The movement began in the demand that the Liberal Party should permit the formation of a distinct Labour Group distinguished from the main mass of the party, in political opinion, only by the more uncompromising character of its radicalism, but able to directly express the needs and aspirations of the manual workers. Subsequently the movement for a Labour Group, having attained a certain measure of success and having accomplished no inconsiderable service, became superseded by the movement for a Labour Party.

Mr. Humphrey thinks that the next development will be that the movement already existing on a small scale for a distinct Socialist Party will come into the forefront and supersede the Labour Party in political importance. This would approximate the character of the democratic political movement in Britain to that on the Continent. It would substitute a basis of political opinion for a distinctly class basis for the third party in the State.

It is pretty clear that nothing would so greatly stimulate this second transformation as the refusal of the Legislature to restore to the Trade Unions the political liberties taken away by the Osborne decision. At the same time it may be doubted whether the British Trade Unionist is ready for the change.

He is emphatically of opinion that it is a mistake to allow employers and landowners and the professional class who are socially associated with owners of property to dominate the House of Commons. He is determined to win a progressively rising standard of life, and he realises that, while he has for this purpose to rely in the first place upon his own efforts both individually and collectively, yet it is necessary that both the Legislature and the Administration of the State should co-operate with, instead of oppose, his efforts. But, on the other hand, he is in general still little disposed to base his political action upon general theory. Socialism to attain the position among English working-men that it holds in Germany, France, and Belgium needs the closer relationship that exists in those countries between the workers and the "intellectuals," and a Socialist Press comparable with that of those countries. It is quite possible that the political movement of manual workers in Great Britain will continue to run its course on lines dissimilar from those followed by the continental Socialist movement.

Meanwhile Mr. Humphrey has earned the gratitude of students by the striking and straightforward narrative which he has put together, with such commendable care and industry, of the history of British efforts for Labour Representation from its first beginning in 1857 to the present year, 1911.

GILBERT SLATER,

Principal, Ruskin College, Oxford.

It was constantly said that the working-class had no reasonable measure to propose which the middle-class would not pass. This was not, and is not, true; for the master-class no more feels as the workmen feel than the old aristocratical class before 1830 felt, or as the middle proved they did, when they afterwards came into power. And if it were true that the middle-class could now do all the workmen want, it is better that the working-men should do it for themselves.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

A HISTORY OF LABOUR REPRESENTATION

CHAPTER I

THE PIONEER

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied world;
Fresh and strong the world we seize,
World of labour and the march;
Pioneers! O Pioneers!—WALT WHITMAN.

IT is impossible to discover the true origin of a political or social movement. Ideas precede actions, and who shall venture to point to a certain person as the originator of an idea? An individual may launch an idea upon the world, and the world may think it is his own; while, all the time, it is a direct development of the thought of others. A certain set of circumstances may give rise to particular ideas, in certain minds; but can those circumstances be described as the true cause of those ideas, since they themselves grew up out of others? Human civilised society is something altogether too complex, something with its component parts too closely interrelated and with too much action and reaction to allow of our saying that such and such a movement began, at such and such a time, at such and such a

place, and that, with its advent, something entirely new took a place in the body politic.

But, if we cannot trace the true origin of a movement, in the sense that we cannot find from what source came the theory which ultimately was put into practice, we can, with a large degree of confidence, point to particular events and mark them as the first of their kind.

To say that John Stuart Mill was the originator of the idea that, in order to obtain justice for their class, working-men must be sent to Parliament, would be to make a statement which had not a great deal of foundation in knowledge. Other men may have favoured the idea, thought about it, talked about it, and spread it to a certain extent. What we do know, however, is this: that it was at the suggestion of Mill that the idea was first acted upon; that it was Mill who suggested, and encouraged, the first Parliamentary candidature of a British working-man: the candidature of George Jacob Holyoake.[1]

It was in 1857 that this historic event occurred; and the constituency was the Tower Hamlets. Holyoake himself describes the candidature as "the first claim ever made to represent labour in Parliament."[2] He also tells us that it was the first time Mill had encouraged such a proposal; so the great economist was, apparently, a somewhat recent con-

[1] It is interesting, and not inappropriate, to note the following elections at Nottingham. 1847: John Walter, jun. (Conservative), 1,683; Feargus O'Connor (Chartist), 1,257; T. Gisborne (Liberal), 199; Sir J. C. Hobhouse (Liberal), 93. 1857: Charles Paget (Liberal), 2,393; John Walter (Liberal-Conservative), 1,836; Ernest Jones (Chartist), 614. 1859: Charles Paget (Liberal), 2,456; John Mellor (Liberal), 2,181; Thomas Bromley (Conservative), 1,836; Ernest Jones (Chartist), 151.

[2] *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life.* George Jacob Holyoake. (London, 1893.)

vert to the idea. That he rapidly developed in this particular direction later events amply show. His sympathy with Holyoake took a practical form, for he subscribed £10 to the election fund. In view of Holyoake's theological opinions, and the fact that Mill himself had battles to fight in the political world, the act was a peculiarly generous one, and Holyoake would not allow it to be made public for fear of the harm publicity might mean to the donor. Holyoake's fears proved afterwards to be well founded. Mill was one of the subscribers to one of Mr. Bradlaugh's election funds, and this fact was made public during his second campaign at Westminster, with the result that only the broader-minded Christians would vote for him, although, at his first election, Dean Stanley had urged the Christian electors to cast their vote for Mill.[1]

Sir William Clay, in 1857, had been one of the representatives of Tower Hamlets for twenty years, and was a Liberal of the harmless, necessary sort—"stationary," Holyoake called him—and it was in opposition to him that Holyoake was put forward. Bradlaugh was on the committee, and the committee-room was at 4 West Street, Cambridge Heath, N.E.

Holyoake, in his address—which began, "Gentlemen"—pointed out that he was the last man to be prosecuted in England for the independent expression of theological opinions; and also that he was the person to whom the Queen's Exchequer Writ was issued for the last time for taking part in securing the repeal of the Newspaper Stamp Duty. "But," he said, "for the risks thus incurred, the public might still be struggling with that question."

"I have," the address went on, "constantly

[1] *Life and Letters of Holyoake.* Joseph McCabe.

helped public movements, not the less when those who have accepted my services have thought it well not to acknowledge them—the rule of modern political life being to ignore those who do the work lest you should discourage those who never do anything. In all this, I have acquiesced, because it is the first duty of a publicist to help, without permitting any personal considerations to hamper the public cause."

The first item in his programme was Residential Suffrage and the Ballot—"which would make it honest"—and there followed Triennial Parliaments—"which would make it pure"—and Equal Electoral Districts—"which would make it just."

The address proceeded, "A public opinion which can only make itself heard in the streets, and cannot reach the Cabinet, is impotent. In the late war, the only character that stood the test was the character of the people. When aristocratic administration failed, the people were efficient. Therefore, if English honour was safe in the hands of the common soldier in the bloody defiles of Inkerman, it may equally be trusted to the common people at the polling booth."

After advocating the right of married women to property and earnings, the foundation of Home Colonies on the waste lands of the Crown—"which would eventually extinguish pauperism"—Holyoake's address went on to the subject of freedom of conscience for which he was so strenuous a fighter.

"In this country," he wrote, "there is a decided element of active and progressive opinion systematically denied recognition; and which is misjudged because never legitimately represented. This is nowhere more evident than in Tower Hamlets."

"These want more than the abolition of Church Rates. All religious endowments are but a tax imposed by the strong on the conscience of the weaker party.

"Then why should a Christian State accept the credit of the Rothschild House and refuse Parliamentary position to the members of the family; where is religious equality in a State which admits the Catholic and excludes the Jew? Religious liberty is not in one half the danger from the chief Rabbi that it is from the Pope."

"Public justice requires that the oath, like marriage, should be a civil and religious rite, at the option of those concerned. Without a law of affirmation, in favour of those who conscientiously object to the oath, as now administered, the Magistrate is made the judge of religious opinion and awards to unscrupulous consciences advantages denied to veracity."

Sunday recreation was described, in the address, as a "necessity and a mercy; and where it can be accompanied by instruction it is also a moral improvement." Holyoake was in favour of the opening of the Crystal Palace, the National Gallery and the British Museum on Sunday afternoons. "Since nonconformity of creed is permitted among us, uniformity of conduct should not be enforced by Act of Parliament. The poor man, who is a slave to-day and a pauper to-morrow, should not be dictated to as to how he shall spend the only day which is his. . . . To deny him this humble freedom is, surely, the worst of the insolences of opinion."

The address—which was dated March 23rd, 1857, and issued from 147 Fleet Street,—concluded, "All progress is a growth, not an invasion. Legislation can do little more than enable the poor people to help

themselves. But, this help, given with personal knowledge of their wants, and in a spirit free from the temerity which would precipitate society on an unknown future, and free from the cowardice which is afraid to advance at all, may do much."[1]

Holyoake was not to be allowed a good chance. Acton Smee Ayrton, who was more of a Radical than Sir William Clay, was put in the field as a fourth candidate and, on March 27th, Mr. Baxter Langley wrote to Holyoake and urged him to retire from the contest. This he did—as he felt he could not win—and he threw his influence on the side of Mr. Ayrton, who had done good work in the agitation for the abolition of the Newspaper Stamp Duty.

Mr. Ayrton thanked Holyoake for his retirement; was received with loud cheers on the hustings, and announced that he stood there "as the nominee of no party and under no influence whatever";[2] won the seat and then, we are told, turned his back upon the workers' representative. Holyoake was on Mr. Ayrton's platform when the result of the contest was announced, and the crowd shouted loudly for a speech. The Returning Officer requested the victorious candidate to call for silence for Holyoake; but Ayrton refused to do so.[3]

In *Sixty Years*, Holyoake has written of Ayrton—who subsequently became Commissioner of Works—that "civility was contrary to his nature," and that that later cost him his seat. "Mr. Ayrton was an honest Minister and he encountered hostility enough, on this ground, without augmenting it by

[1] *Sixty Years.* [2] *Weekly Dispatch.*

[3] *Life and Letters.* The polling was: A. S. Ayrton, 7,813; C. S. Butler, 7,297; Sir William Clay, 6,654. The three candidates described themselves as Liberals. The constituency returned two members. In 1852, W. Newton (Chartist) polled 1,095 against four Liberals.

ill taste. It was to his credit that he opposed every system of centralisation and procured the extinction of editorial sureties. He had the credit, when in the House, of being the only member who read every Bill brought in. He knew all that was attempted, and if he sometimes made mischief, he stopped much."

Thus ended the first attempt to obtain, for the working-class, a share in the making of the laws they were expected to obey. It was an attempt which was part of no national movement or national feeling: a premature attempt, the attempt of a prophet of what was to follow in after years; an effort of one who was, in so many spheres, a pioneer pointing the way through the darkness.

The working-class went on building up their industrial and friendly organisations and, ten years afterwards, when these, being a power in the land, were assailed by the classes which had resisted them step by step, we find the first signs of the national movement which was heralded, at Tower Hamlets, by George Jacob Holyoake.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL ORGANISATION: THE FIRST ATTEMPT AND THE 1868 ELECTION

There is no qualification for government but virtue and wisdom, actual or presumptive. Wherever they are actually found, they have, in whatever state, condition, profession, or trade, the passport of Heaven to human place and honour.—EDMUND BURKE.

THE break-up of the Chartist movement, in 1848, was not followed by any other political movement which aimed at organising the working-class on a national scale. Politics was dropped, and the wage-earning population turned its attention to trade unions, co-operative societies, building societies, and other organisations of a provident character. The Chartist leaders, in a quiet way, went on with their educational work, and Ernest Jones lived to see accomplished the main thing for which he fought and suffered; but the strike, as a weapon of defence and emancipation, was regarded with greater favour than the vote. The demand of the greater part of the Trade Union world was almost entirely for efficient unionism and, above all, for the right to strike. Even when the introduction of politics into the Trade Union movement was not actively resented, it aroused no enthusiasm.

The working-class organisations grew steadily and, about the middle of the century, there was a beginning of the great amalgamations. Strikes were

common: the employers were active in employing the counter-weapon of the lock-out, and the workers formed the United Kingdom Alliance of Organised Trades as a means of more efficient defence. There was a tendency to co-operation and amalgamation all round and, in many towns, the Strike Committees were formed into permanent Trades Councils.

An important change, which had been gradually coming over the Trade Union movement, was the passing of its control and protection from the middle-class sympathisers, who had nursed it in its infancy, to a body of capable and upright working-men. At the critical period when efforts, both in the political and industrial fields, were being made to exterminate Trade Unionism, which had become strong enough to be troublesome, the movement was fortunate in having a body of exceptionally good leaders. To mention the best known: there were William Allen, the General Secretary of the Engineers; Robert Applegarth, the General Secretary of the Amalgamation of Carpenters; Daniel Guile, the Secretary of the Iron Founders; George Odger, the Secretary of the London Trades Council; and Edwin Coulson, the General Secretary of the "London Order" of Bricklayers. It was in these men that the "traducers of trade unionism found themselves confronted with a combination of high personal character, exceptional business ability, and a large share of that official decorum which the English middle-class find so impressive."[1]

Many of the leaders of the sixties were in opposition to the old school, which held that the less working-men had to do with the law the better, and

[1] *History of Trade Unionism.* Sidney and Beatrice Webb. (London, 1907.)

which even resisted Parliamentary agitation by trade unions. Applegarth tried hard to arouse an interest in politics among the engineers and to cause them to take larger views and have higher ideals of the future; and Odger was a popular hero among the Radical working-men of London.

A centre of political interest was created in London, in 1864, by the foundation of the "International," which had its head-quarters in that city. Karl Marx gave an address at the opening meeting, sure enough evidence of the militant and political spirit of the organisation; yet Robert Applegarth, the Trade Union leader, was one of its most prominent members. Odger was using all his influence, on the London Trades Council, to awaken the political interests of the workers, and succeeded so far as to organise a people's welcome to Garibaldi, to hold a great meeting in St. James's Hall, which rang with sentiments encouraging the Northern States in their struggle against negro slavery and to give the agitation for the Reform Bill the benefit of the Council's support. Away in the North, Alexander Macdonald was organising the Scottish miners for political purposes, and Alexander Campbell was stimulating the Glasgow Trades Council to political activity.

The agitation for the Reform Bill grew with the advance of time, and on February 16th, 1866, in addition to the already established Reform League, another organisation was founded to help the cause of an enfranchised working-class. This organisation was the London Working-Men's Association.[1] It

[1] In their *History of Trade Unionism*, Mr. and Mrs. Webb have the following concerning the London Working-Men's Association, and George Potter, its chairman: "An expert in the arts of agitation and advertisement, Potter occasionally cut a remarkable figure,

was Daniel Guile who moved the resolution forming the meeting into an association "for the purpose of promoting the interests of the industrial classes: with the introduction of a lodger clause in the Reform Bill as its immediate object," and Siddell, the Secretary of the Moulders, seconded it.

The terms of the resolution were very broad, and would have included the representation of Labour in Parliament. Although, however, the London Working-Men's Association was the organisation through which the first attempt was made to organise a national movement for Labour representation, such representation does not appear to have been contemplated at its foundation. Nor does it appear to have been contemplated in other and representative

so that the unwary reader, not of the *Beehive* only, but also of the *Times*, might easily believe him to have been a most influential leader of the working-class movement. As a matter of fact, he at no time represented any genuine trade organisation, the Working-Men's Association, of which he was President, being a body of nondescript persons of no importance" (page 238, ch. 5). Mr. and Mrs. Webb were writing the history of Trade Unionism, and Potter was, quite possibly—it is not the present writer's business to discuss the question—not a good influence, nor, perhaps, an influence at all, in the Trade Union world. But the Working-Men's Association was—so far as the present writer has been able to ascertain—the first organisation to attempt a national movement for Labour Representation, and, in view of this, Mr. and Mrs. Webb's description of the Association appears to be unduly contemptuous. Moreover, Henry Broadhurst and Joseph Leicester were signatories to the manifesto of the Association urging the working-class to place Labour candidates in the field; both were rising men in the movement, and should hardly be described as "nondescript persons." That the influence of Potter is not to be judged by the space his doings occupy in the *Beehive* is, of course, quite true. Potter was the leading spirit of the paper, and was its editor; and editors are quite human. Perhaps, had Potter represented a "genuine trade organisation," he would not have been so much associated with the movement for working-class representation in Parliament. Trade Union work and political work, in that direction, frequently existed in inverse ratio.

quarters.[1] Labour representation was not, according to the constitution of the Working-Men's Association, one of the "means" whereby the "objects"[2] were to be accomplished. Still, its first annual report tells us that it was "an essentially political body," and the same report proudly boasts that the Association has succeeded in "bringing out," for the first time, the majority of the trades in London in favour of Reform.

Evidence was soon furnished to show that, to favour Labour representation was, in the early days of the London Working-Men's Association, the exception and not the rule. At a meeting, held on April 10th, two months after the formation of the Association, the Secretary, Robert Hartwell, introduced the subject of the representation of Labour in Parliament.

Hartwell had a record of thirty years' work in the Trade Union movement; a compositor by trade, he had given up that occupation to join the literary staff of the *Beehive*. He drew the attention of the meeting to some speeches, recently made by T. B. Potter, M.P., and A. H. Layard, M.P., from which he read extracts in which it was held that the only means of getting the claims of the working-class fairly represented

[1] A leading article, published, a year later, in the *Beehive*, the leading Labour paper of the day, recounts a great many things that will happen when once the working-class has the vote, but the advent of working-men in Parliament is not included among them. This journal was founded in 1861, and continued for about ten years, when it became the *Industrial Review*. It was a very successful and well-conducted Labour newspaper. It was well supplied with Labour and general news, and had "live" editorial columns. Working-men leaders and many middle-class sympathisers contributed, Mr. Frederic Harrison being among the latter.

[2] The objects were to "procure the political enfranchisement of the workers and promote the social and general interests of the industrial classes."

was for the working-class to send some of their own order to Parliament: a view, as the Secretary pointed out, held by Thomas Hughes and other Radicals. Cheers greeted Hartwell's pronouncement that he considered the question one of great importance, and one which should be taken up at once by the Association. He laid before the meeting certain resolutions dealing with the matter, and they were referred to the Executive Committee to consider and report upon.

At the next meeting the Executive were not ready to report; nor at the next; they thought the matter was one which would need grave consideration. There was, apparently, no demand for a report upon the resolutions, and eighteen months elapsed before the subject was brought up again.

Soon after the introduction of the subject in April, 1866, the Association turned its attention to organising a great demonstration in favour of the Reform Bill. Three hundred circulars were sent to organisations inviting them to send delegates to a conference to consider a programme by which to obtain the franchise and "to better enable working-men to send to Parliament men thoroughly acquainted and sympathising with industrial rights." The way in which direct reference to working-men representatives is excluded and the way in which the invitation went on to explain how, by sending a delegate, an organisation would not be committing itself to any course of political action, is typical of the time. The demonstration was held on December 3rd, 1866, in the Ashburnham Grounds, Chelsea. The numbers of those in the procession was estimated at 35,000, and marching, at times, six or eight abreast, the men gave an impression of sober, solid strength.

The subject of Labour representation was brought again before the London Working-Men's Association at a meeting at the Bell Inn, Old Bailey, in October, 1867, and this time action was taken. There is no doubt that this was largely due to the recent judicial blow at the trade unions. By a clause in the Friendly Societies Act, societies which were not illegal were allowed to deposit their rules with the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and so gain the privilege of having disputes among members dealt with by the magistrates. It was understood that this clause applied to trade unions and they had taken advantage of it. The fact that, under the Act establishing the Post Office Savings Banks, trade unions were allowed to use the banks lent colour to the belief.[1] A blow from the Bench shattered what unionists fondly imagined was their protection. The Boilermakers proceeded against their treasurer for wrongfully withholding the sum of £24, and the magistrates held that the union could not proceed under the Friendly Societies Act because it was outside the scope of that measure. This decision was upheld by the Court of Queen's Bench, their Lordships holding that while, since the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1824 and 1825, the trade union was not actually a criminal organisation, it was so far in restraint of trade as to be illegal.

Bitterly resenting the judgment as they did, it is not surprising that, when Hartwell introduced, for a second time, the subject of returning working-men to Parliament, the Association took some practical steps and, from that time until the General Election of the following year, strove to bring into line the trade organisations up and down the country, and

[1] *History of Trade Unionism.*

to get some working-class candidates to the poll. While admitting, however, the influence of the judicial decision, it must not be forgotten that, in 1867, the vote for the working-class was an accomplished fact and not something which could be safely anticipated.

Hartwell had three resolutions. He first moved, "That, as legislative action on the subject of Trade Unions, and upon questions affecting labour and capital generally, will, in all probability, be undertaken by the first Reformed Parliament, elected under the Reform Act of last session, this Association strongly recommends to their fellow workingmen, throughout the country, the desirability of a united effort being made to procure a direct representation of labour interests by the return of workingmen to Parliament." He also moved that a fund should be raised, by public subscription, called the "Working-Men's Parliamentary Election Fund," to be solely devoted to the payment, "where required, of the legitimate and legal expenses attending upon the election of approved working-class candidates." The fund was to be invested in London, in the names of trustees, and be under the management of trustees and a committee, one half of each body to be working-men. The Association was to select the committee and trustees and draw up rules and then submit the whole matter to a public meeting of "Reformers."

Under the third resolution, co-operative societies, trades councils, and other working-class organisations—trade unions received no special mention—were to be invited to co-operate in securing the return of working-men to Parliament. They were invited to find in what constituencies working-class

candidates had the best chance, and to secure any professional assistance necessary.

The resolutions were passed, and it was resolved that, should the replies from the organisations be favourable, a Convention of Delegates should be held to draw up a programme.

Such proposals, coming from an Association, of some influence, in the metropolis, together with the widespread circularising of organisations on the subject, immediately attracted the attention of the Press and politicians of the Liberal and Tory parties. Of many criticisms, the main one was, that, for working-men to enter Parliament, would be to introduce class representation, which would be followed by class legislation, and so bring about a revolution in the representative system of the country and in the composition of Parliament.

At a banquet in Manchester, the same month as the resolutions were passed, Lord Derby warned his hearers against dangers which might arise as a result of the recent enfranchisement of the working-class. He said "apprehensions were entertained that working-men were not satisfied with enjoying that political influence to which they are entitled," but would lend themselves "as dupes to designing persons, who will endeavour to cajole them with the idea of returning representatives to Parliament to promote legislation intended to conduce to their welfare." He warned working-men that no Parliament would pass measures for their "immediate and especial benefit."

Mr. A. H. Layard, M.P., wrote to the Association suggesting that the movement should not have the appearance of a class movement. To send working-men to Parliament would mean, wrote Mr. G. J. Goschen, M.P., that, for the first time, men appeared in Parliament as the representatives of a special

class; and that would be contrary to Liberalism. He argued that, when the anti-Reformers had cried out that the enfranchisement of the working-class would mean that the working-class would swamp the rest of the country, the Reformers had replied that the Constitution knew nothing of class, and that the statements of the anti-Reformers rested on "new and dangerous theories." It would, he said, be an evil day for England when men were returned because they were members of a particular class and not because of their political creed: the strife of classes would take the place of the strife of political parties. Bright took a similar view.

The leaders of the movement for representation took different views of these criticisms. Some thought they arose from misunderstanding; others, including Mr. Broadhurst, that the critics were well aware what was meant—"the return of a few working-men to Parliament"—but that they did not want the scheme carried out, and so threw cold water upon it. All, however, were anxious to explain that a working-man would be more than the representative of his class; that he was capable of taking an interest in all questions and that he would do so; that redress of grievances and greater justice was all that was asked for; and that the aim of the representation of Labour was to harmonise the interests of working-men with those of the rest of the community—as it was usually put. Indeed, until the rise of the New Unionism, and the growth of Socialism, created a more militant and independent spirit, the great aim of those favouring Labour representation was to show the breadth of the workman's outlook and the identity of his interests with those of the community at large.

To combat the false impressions as to its aims,

the Working-Men's Association decided to issue a manifesto explaining its position. The address was headed :—

THE LONDON WORKING-MEN'S ASSOCIATION
TO THE
PEOPLE OF ENGLAND
ON THE
DIRECT REPRESENTATION OF LABOUR
IN PARLIAMENT.

To the Liberal journals, which had asked whether the advanced men of the middle-class would not do to represent the interests of Labour, the manifesto gave "a decided 'No.'" The grounds of this were, that the knowledge of the middle-class was theoretical, and that "a clear, practical statement, however homely the language, made by an intelligent working-man, on the Labour Question," would carry more weight in the House of Commons. There was, the manifesto proceeded, no desire to obtain "exceptional laws" for the benefit of Labour, to expect which, it said, would be to show themselves to be "foolish and irrational visionaries ; although, did we ask for exceptional legislation we should be asking nothing more than all interests, now represented in Parliament, are always asking and often obtaining." What was demanded was that special legislation on behalf of the landed and moneyed interests should cease, and the belief was expressed that Labour representation would further its cessation.

"Providing," stated the address, "a careful selection of working-class candidates be made, there is no reason why they should stand isolated as a class in Parliament any more than the special representa-

tives of other interests now sitting there"—conscious or unconscious sarcasm. "We believe that, after the first novelty of their appearance in the House has worn off, they will, insensibly and imperceptibly, blend with the other members in the performance of the usual duties expected from members of the Legislature. . . . We presume that the working-class candidate, in addressing a constituency, would do as all other candidates do—appeal to the electors generally and not to those of a particular interest." It would be useless, it was pointed out, for working-class candidates to appeal to a constituency composed of middle-class men; the only chance of success would be in constituencies where working-men greatly predominated.

The address went on to deal with the objection that the Association sought to perpetuate the system of class representation which it professed to oppose. It stated that it was aware that, in theory, the Constitution did not recognise classes, but there was "daily and painful experience that, in practice, it did so, members having been elected avowedly to support class interests who would have never obtained a seat on their merits."

In regard to payment of the working-men returned, it was held that a constituency which returned a workman would not hesitate to support him. It was said by opponents that that would cause him to lose his independence; but the manifesto held that the independence of other members who received cash or other consideration was not questioned, although they looked after different interests; neither was the independence or motives of those members of the House who held situations under Government.

The manifesto concluded: "The working-men selected as candidates for the representation of in-

dustrial interests should hold enlarged views on all public questions. They should also be men who have been hard workers in the cause of industrial progress—not mere word-spinners—who have for years past made sacrifices, personal and pecuniary, for the cause they advocated. . . . They should be men whose general abilities, character, and demeanour should be such that no one of their colleagues, however aristocratic, should be ashamed to associate with them in Westminster Hall. There are hundreds of such working-men to be found. . . . The return of such men to Parliament would do much to disarm the hostility of the Tories to the further extension of the franchise and allay the fears of those timid Liberals who are afraid they have already gone too far, and would redound to the credit and honour of their constituencies."

The objects of the Association were then set out as follows under the heading "Our Platform." *Political:* The extension of the franchise until it rests upon the basis of residential and registered manhood suffrage; protection of the ballot for the voter; a just and equitable redistribution of seats; a direct representation of industrial interests by the return of working-men to Parliament; abolition of Church rates; an improvement of the relation between landlord and tenant; the removal of those evils which have grown up and flourished under the influence of class legislation. *Social:* A national unsectarian system of education; legal protection for the funds of trade unions; a reduction of the hours of labour to the lowest minimum without injury to the power of production; the promotion of the co-operative system and co-partnership of industry; the adoption of measures to facilitate the improvement of the dwellings and workshops of

the labouring classes; the promotion of emigration to the colonies.[1]

The working-class did not readily take to the new idea, and the proposed Convention of Delegates never met; and if there was any meeting as a result of a decision to call a conference of "members of Parliament and leading middle-class reformers" favourable to the direct representation of Labour, there was no practical result.

The machinery was weak, and appeals to the local organisations to help themselves took the place of any definite scheme organised from a central body. The election fund had to rely on the charity of the public, and the constituencies, if they returned a working-man, had to find him maintenance. It was suggested[2] that an auxiliary fund should be established in the trade and other societies, in each district, to supplement the pecuniary efforts of the constituencies; but there was a feeling that the trade unions should not go too far. "It would not be wise to turn unions into political organisations, but they might use their influence to obtain Labour representation and do that without embarking on the sea of general politics.[3]

But time slipped by; the dissolution was approach-

[1] The manifesto was dated November 12th, 1867, and was signed by the General Committee, consisting of G. H. Adams (painter), H. Broadhurst (mason), J. Bryen (joiner), G. F. Davis (painter), J. Gilmore (mason), C. Howe (french polisher), H. Judd (tinplate worker), E. H. Jenkins (organ builder), J. Leicester (glass maker), J. Mitchell (joiner), D. Mackay (joiner), R. L. Packer (wood turner), S. Pope (joiner), J. Squire (painter), W. Scott (painter), G. Smith (bootmaker), J. Thomas (joiner), C. Upshall (joiner), J. Weston (painter), D. Wire (deal cabinetmaker), R. Wolf (farrier), George Potter (President), George Troup (Treasurer), Robert Hartwell (Hon. Secretary).

Offices: 10 Bolt Street, Fleet Street.

[2] *Beehive*, October 12th, 1867. [3] *Ibid.*

ing, and very few working-men had been selected as candidates. There were loud complaints of this, in the *Beehive*, in August, 1868, which then began to point to the funds of the trade unions. It estimated that there were in the country, from 800,000 to 1,000,000 unionists and suggested a quarterly levy. The same month the Working-Men's Association met and decided to circularise trade organisations with a view to calling immediately, a "Labour Parliament" to select twelve working-class candidates; a Parliament which appears never to have sat.[1]

The eve of the General Election found only half a

[1] It is interesting to observe the attitude of the Law, as represented by the *Law Times*, towards Labour representation. Although it encouraged the movement, its motive for doing so appears very mixed, and it is easy, reading between the lines, to observe the traditional opposition of Land and Law to Manufacture. In its issue of November 23rd, 1867, the *Law Times* said there could be "nothing more desirable" than Labour Representation. "The true meaning," of the outcry against it, was, "that it is not convenient for the present members of London and the great towns to yield up their seats to working-men elected by the working-classes. . . . To all legislation affecting their class they (the working-men) would contribute invaluable aid" and, however they might express themselves, they would command a "respectful hearing from the aristocrats of the House, however the cottonocracy might despise them. With all deference to Mr. Bright's judgment, we would rather hear the cause of working-men from their own lips than from their friends in the middle-class." The journal held that working-men could be returned in all the London boroughs, in Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, and two or three more towns, where they would "displace their professed friends and practise what those friends had been preaching. The change would be no loss to the country, and every true constitutionalist will wish them every success."

On March 14th, 1868, the same paper said, "Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill will be a mockery indeed if, in the great towns, . . . the representation continues to be monopolised, as at present it is, by demagogues of another class who profess principles they do not believe in, merely to win votes, and who cannot possibly know anything of the real requirements of the class they affect to represent."—The *Beehive*, quoting the *Law Times*.

dozen Labour candidates in the field. They were all Radicals and intended running as such, for Labour representation, at that time, meant working-men members of Parliament and nothing more. A Conservative working-man who was "sound" on the questions of the hour immediately affecting Labour would have been regarded as quite eligible for a Labour candidature. The working-men badly needed funds; and lack of money caused the retirement of two of them before the election took place. Alexander Macdonald's committee made a public appeal for funds at Kilmarnock Burghs, but failed to obtain the necessary amount.

At Chelsea, the candidate was George Odger.[1] There were two seats, and the Chelsea Working-Men's Electoral Association nominated Mr. C. W. Dilke (afterwards Sir Charles), Mr. Odger and Sir Henry Hoare by 88, 66 and 16 votes respectively. Sir Henry was asked to retire, in order that the Liberal interest might not be divided. He refused to do so, and in a letter to the Association, said that body was to blame for bringing in a third man at the eleventh hour; that the Association did not fully represent the opinions of the working-men of the district; and that, even supposing it did do so, there were "other most numerous and influential grades of electors to whom must be conceded, at least, equal voice in the selection of candidates."[2] With Mr. Odger, however, he submitted to arbitration.

[1] Odger was the son of a Cornish miner, and was born at Roborough in Devonshire in 1813. He was a member of the union of the makers of ladies' shoes; Secretary of the London Trades Council, 1862–72; a foremost member of the Reform League and one of the originators of the "International." He mediated in strikes at Liverpool and Kendal, and in 1848 pointed out the folly of opposing machinery. He died on Sunday, March 4th, 1877, aged 63.

[2] September 4th, 1868.

Messrs. Thomas Hughes, M.P., P. A. Taylor, M.P., and James Stansfeld, M.P., were the umpires, and their report was that, "having regard to all the circumstances of the case," they thought it "desirable for the Liberal cause that Mr. Odger should retire from his candidature in favour of Sir Henry Hoare." Mr. Odger retired, to the intense disappointment of his supporters. Many invitations to stand in other constituencies were refused. Enemies of Odger and his cause circulated a report that he received £1,500 to stand aside; but this was publicly denied by Mr. Hughes and Mr. Beal—the latter being one of the representatives of Sir Henry in the arbitration—and Mr. Beal added that Odger had declined to allow him to see Sir Henry in regard to reimbursing him for the expense he had incurred.

The workmen of Stoke-on-Trent suffered a disappointment equally bitter. Their candidate was Robert Hartwell, who received in his support a manifesto signed by the officers of two hundred London and provincial trades. Prior to going to Stoke-on-Trent, he had been the working-men's candidate at Lambeth. He had intended withdrawing in favour of Mr. Hughes, the other Radical candidate, but Mr. Hughes himself withdrew on receiving an invitation to stand for Frome. Hartwell then also withdrew, and the field was left to the two Liberals—for whom Mr. Hughes asked support—and their Conservative opponents. Hartwell counted on from 3,000 to 4,000 votes, a total which, he claimed, would be increased by another thousand but for the closing of the poll at four o'clock.

At Stoke-on-Trent, Hartwell had for his opponents Colonel Roden and George Melly and two Tories. The contest was particularly bitter between the official Liberals and the Labour man, who was

vehemently attacked in the Liberal Press. Hartwell challenged the Colonel to show that he had not victimised men in twenty cases, during the iron-workers' strike in 1865; and the enthusiasm for his candidature ran high. A committee—presumably connected with the Working-Men's Association—was formed in London, and "respectfully" solicited subscriptions from "trade unions, working-men, and other friends of industrial interests to defray the Hustings and legitimate expenses of the election, thrown upon the candidate by the refusal of the House of Commons to adopt Professor Fawcett's amendment placing those expenses on the Borough rates." But he had no good organisation at his back and his committee, by a strange resolution—due, Hartwell alleged, to "treachery"—decided not to collect money during the contest. On the eve of the momentous day £100 was needed to meet the official expenses and Hartwell was obliged to withdraw.

Melly and Roden were the victors. Hartwell retired under rather peculiar circumstances. In a public statement, issued by himself, in reply to slanderous statements that he "sold out" to the enemy, he states that, finding he could not go to the poll, he closed with the offer made by the opposing Liberal candidates to retire on receiving £280 to meet his election liabilities for which he was personally responsible. These turned out to amount to £360. His private debts were only £30, but Hartwell was financially ruined; a pathetic termination to a useful career.

The three Labour men who went to the poll were W. R. Cremer, George Howell, and E. O. Greening. Mr. (the late Sir Randall) Cremer was born of parents in humble circumstances, at Fareham, Hampshire, in 1838, his father being a heraldic painter. Educated at

the National school, he was afterwards apprenticed to a carpenter and worked at the bench for twenty years. For the last thirteen of that period, he was the secretary of the Workmen's Peace Association, and later he edited the *Arbitrator*. In 1859, he led the Nine Hours Movement and he founded the Amalgamated Union of Carpenters and Joiners.

In 1868, at Warwick, he was the candidate of the Warwick Working-Men's Liberal Association. The town had the reputation of being one of the most corrupt in the kingdom.[1] It was a double-seated constituency and was represented by a Liberal and a Tory. Prior to the election, the inner rings of their parties decided that the two sitting members should have a walk-over. It was as a protest against this disfranchising of the constituency that Cremer was put forward as a Radical. Mill, Henry Fawcett, P. A. Taylor, and Charles Gilpin were among those Radicals who wrote encouraging his candidature. Mr. Cremer's love of peace—a love of which his life afterwards proved to be so noble and so useful an example—was marked by the following passage in his election address: "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men has, for eighteen hundred years, been preached to the people; I shall be glad to work for its practical realisation, and to that end should support the establishment of International Boards of Arbitration to settle disputes among nations, so as to lead to a general disarmament of standing forces and the establishment of an era of peace."[2] Cremer polled 260 votes against 873 for Peel, the Liberal, and 863 for Greaves, the Tory. His election was run on economical lines, for the Radicals spent only

[1] *Sir Randal Cremer: His Life and Work.* Howard Evans (London, 1909), chap. V.

[2] *Ibid.*

£135 against £463 expended by the Tory and £312 by the Liberal.

George Howell was a native of Wrighton, in Somerset, and was born in 1833. At eighteen years of age he went to London and worked as a bricklayer. Subsequently, he became the first secretary of the London Trades Council, and the first secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress, an office which he held until 1875. He was on the Executive of the National Education League, of the Reform Association, and the Land Tenure Reform Association. At one time also he was chairman of Plimsoll's Committee; nor are these all of his spheres of activity. He was adopted by the working-men of Aylesbury as their candidate, and had a provisional committee supporting him in London. John Stuart Mill wrote wishing him success; but, like Mr. Cremer, he had to face the opposition of official Liberalism—the candidate of which refused to co-operate with him—as well as that of Toryism. He ran as a Radical, and was at the bottom of the poll with 950 votes, against 1,772 for N. M. de Rothschild, the Liberal, and 1,468 for S. G. Smith, the Conservative.

Greening ran at Halifax, as a Liberal. The sitting members were James Stansfeld and Colonel Edward Akroyd, and both were Liberals. They were the only opponents of Greening, who, apparently, forced a contest. The official candidates appear to have been a good deal perturbed at the appearance of the Labour man, and Akroyd wrote to Thomas Hughes asking him to request Greening to retire. Hughes did so, but the Labour man refused to withdraw, refused arbitration, and urged that, if he retired, another candidate would be put in his place. This was the only contest fought by Greening, who does

not figure prominently in the movement, He polled 2,802 votes against 5,278 for Stansfeld and 5,141 for Akroyd.

Thus, on the first occasion, when working-men asked to be sent, on behalf of their class, to assist in making the laws of their own country, the total poll was 4,012.

During the election, Holyoake[1] went down to Birmingham, his native town, to offer himself as a candidate if the working-men desired to put him forward. He went down to test and advocate the question of Labour Representation, but tells us that "there was no strong feeling on the part of the working-class in favour of representation of their order,"[2] and no candidate was put forward.

In an eloquent and impassioned address, delivered at the Town Hall, he said that one result of the extended franchise would be that, sooner or later, working men would find their way to Parliament. Democracy, he remarked, was a great trouble, as everybody had to be consulted. The Conservative

[1] Mr. Joseph McCabe, in his *Life and Letters of Holyoake*, has written the following of the latter's proposal to run as an independent Labour candidate: "Holyoake's candidature was another of those idealistic moves that give an apparently eccentric complexion to his political progress in the sixties. In reality it was only eccentric in the sense that each step was taken in simple truth to the feeling of the moment and without regard for conventional political considerations. We saw that he stood out from the Chartists with an explicit trust in the middle-class representatives of the workers. His friends were mainly of the middle-elass, and their real sympatby with the workers impressed him. In the course of the sixties, he went on to include Tories like Lord Elcho in the group, and declared there was only one class in the community at bottom. He seemed to be drifting from the Radical side of Liberalism." (Vol. I, p. 40.)

At the same time Mr. McCabe agrees that Holyoake was a pioneer of Labour Representation, but "desired perfect amity with the Liberals—the Liberal-Labour was his ideal for the rest of his life."

[2] *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life.*

was enraged to have that necessity put upon him; the Whigs never meant it to come to that; and he was not sure that many of the Radicals liked it. Several things would now happen. The Irish Church would go.

"Well I remember," the speaker exclaimed, "the horror with which the news was received in the workshops of this town of the massacre of Rathcormac, when a clergyman of the Irish Protestant Church had the sons of poor Widow Ryan shot before her eyes for the non-payment of tithes. A middle-class mother cannot feel resentment as a poor woman can; she can afford to pay tithes, and no dragoons shoot her children down. But Widow Ryan's sons were labourers—they belonged to us. We in England could do nothing to avert or avenge the murders, but let us not have the baseness to forget it. Now, too, the slow, tardy, long-lingering retribution has put the Irish Church in a noose, let *us* hope it will be allowed a good drop."

Holyoake went on to say they would have compulsory education. "There is no ascendancy without sense. We live in a world where the battle of life can no longer be fought by fools." They would put away with contempt "the fitful, partial, mendicant instruction with which voluntaryism" had "cheated and degraded" them so long. Pauperism would go down as the infamy of industry. Every law which deprived industry of a fair chance should be attacked. Whatever facilitated the accumulation of immense fortunes and checked the natural distribution of wealth should be stopped.

They would have the ballot. Their voting was a "mere insolent device for getting at those electors who did their duty." The poll-book was "a mere penal list first made publishable by those who in-

tended to act upon it, and it was acted upon by all who were enraged at defeat."[1]

His programme, Holyoake has told us, was looked upon as mere Utopian enthusiasm; but he believed it did good to create a popular belief that the day of progress had arrived.

The address[2] made a considerable impression and, to some extent, inspired the foundation of the Labour Representation League; but this second attempt at a national organisation for the representation of Labour was, like the first, largely influenced by the trade unionists being put upon their mettle owing to the crippling of their organisations.

[1] *Sixty Years.*

[2] It was afterwards circulated in pamphlet form and urged the workers to create an election fund, to cease looking after "a rich Radical," and not to allow their candidates to be pushed to the bottom of the poll by "inane people with money-bags about them."

CHAPTER III

THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION LEAGUE

The working-class is the only class which is not a class. It is the nation.—FREDERIC HARRISON.

I do not say that the working-men's view is, in general, nearer the truth than the other (the employers') ; but it is something quite as near, and, in any case, it ought to be respectfully listened to, instead of being, as it is, not merely turned away from, but ignored.—JOHN STUART MILL, in the *Beehive*, 1870.

IN spite of the poor results of the agitation of the London Working-Men's Association, prior to the 1868 election, the leaders of the movement had no intention of letting it lapse. On the other hand, the opposition offered to the Labour candidates, by both the great parties, does not appear to have created a more independent spirit. In 1869, there were by-elections at Stafford and Nottingham. Odger was nominated by the working-men of the former place, but an official Liberal was also placed in the field. Neither candidate would voluntarily withdraw, so a ballot of the Liberal electors was taken. Odger received the fewer votes, and thereupon retired. The candidate at Nottingham was George Potter, the senior member, Sir Robert Clifton having died. Potter was nominated by the Working-Men's Political Union, and he received a manifesto from Birmingham working-men in support of his candidature. He also received letters wishing him

success from many leading Radicals,[1] but ultimately he retired and threw his whole influence on the side of the other Liberal candidate, who won the seat.

But the failure of the movement, initiated by the Working-Men's Association, made it clear to many that what was needed was an organisation worked from a central body, on some sort of plan, with more machinery, though not, necessarily, less persuasion. In the summer of 1869, there were several meetings in London, called with the object of establishing a central association embodying all sections of London working-men. Out of these efforts emerged the Labour Representation League.

The League was the first organisation formed for the purpose of carrying on a national campaign for the return of working-men to Parliament, and with it were associated a large number of the most capable leaders of the working-class movement of the time.

Its prospectus,[2] which set out, at length, the reason for the formation of the League, what were its aims and what the methods by which it hoped to accomplish those aims, admirably presents the ideas which dominated the movement at the time.

The document pointed out that, although about 20,000,000 of the population belonged to the working-class, and although the welfare of that large number depended "on a correct understanding and wise treatment, by the British Parliament, of questions in which they are specially interested," there was not a single working-man in the House of Com-

[1] They included the Rt. Hon. A. H. Layard, M.P., John Holmes, M.P., Peter Rylands, M.P., David Chadwick, M.P., J. H. Palmer, M.P., Edgar Bowring, M.P., S. Plimsoll, M.P., E. Baines, M.P., and Edmund Beales.

[2] For the full prospectus see Appendix I.

mons. This, too, in a Parliament "reformed professedly for the purpose of securing equitable representation of every section and every interest in the community." It was to remedy such a state of things that the League had been formed.

The League was to promote the registration of the working-class vote throughout the kingdom "without reference to opinion or party bias." Its aim was to fully organise the strength of the working-class as an electoral power, in order that it might be effectually used to influence such questions as involved the interests of the working-class. The principal duty of the League would be to secure the return of working-men to Parliament; "persons who, by character and ability, are competent to deal satisfactorily with questions of general interest, as well as with whose in which they are especially interested." Beyond this, however, it would "recommend and support" such candidates, other than working-men, whose attitude to Labour questions appeared to justify such assistance.

But the object of the League was not only to place Labour men in the House. Its intention was to watch the progress of Parliamentary Bills especially affecting the working-class, and to promote similar Bills. It also intended to collect, from Parliamentary papers and other documents, information which would be of assistance to working-men and their causes. In addition, it would, if requested to do so, procure the registration of rules emanating from working-men's organisations, and would assist and arrange deputations to Ministers and members of Parliament. In short, the promoters stated, the League would, "by a well-arranged and constantly acting economical machinery," seek to accomplish what had before been done in "a desultory, in-

effective and expensive manner; or, what is worse still, left altogether undone."

The President of the League was a barrister, Robert Marsden Latham, its treasurer was William Allen, the General Secretary of the Engineers, and its secretary Lloyd Jones. Allen was, of course, one of the leading Trade Unionists of the day; for over twenty years he guided the fortunes of the engineers as their secretary, and died in office in 1874. His parents were Scotch, but he was born at Carrickfergus, in Ulster, in 1813. Lloyd Jones was born at Randon, Co. Cork, in 1811. Coming to Manchester, in 1827, he had taken up his father's trade of fustian cutting, which, at that time, was a domestic industry and one that was comparatively well paid. He had been much associated with Robert Owen and his schemes and was ardent for co-operation. With a good presence and fine voice he was in more public discussions than any other supporter of Owen, and Holyoake tells us[1] he had much readiness and courage in controversy and was the best public debater of his day. In later life, he earned his living by his writings.

On November 4th, 1869, at the Sussex Hotel, Bouverie Street, the League held its inaugural meeting. There was a large attendance of the foremost working-class leaders of the metropolis and the speech of the chairman, Robert Latham, aroused considerable enthusiasm. Loud cheers greeted the close of his peroration in which he stated that the League was conceived in an "enlarged and generous spirit having for its end and aim not the promulgation of utopian theories, or the pursuit of treacherous phantoms, but the harmonising of working-men's interests with those of the general community, in

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography.*

order that the growth of the nation in prosperity and intelligence shall embrace all classes; in short, that our country while continuing to be a splendid, may, at the same time, become a happy and contented land."

It was George Odger who moved the resolution expressing the desirability of Labour Representation and George Druitt, the secretary of the London Operative Tailors' Association, who seconded it. The constitution and rules were adopted on the motion of George Potter, seconded by Thomas Paterson; and the resolution of Cremer, seconded by Holyoake, resolving the meeting into the General Council of the League, was carried. Mr. Bradlaugh was amongst those present, but a proposition of his that it was "undesirable to form any League without a declaration of principles" was lost. Anxious not to give the gathering the appearance of a meeting initiating a class movement, care was taken to appoint six members to represent the organisation on the National Education League.

The Executive of the Labour Representation League was to elect annually a General Council of thirty-two members, and the Council was to deal with such matters as were referred to it. Each branch was to have two delegates on the Council and was to have full control over half its contributions; the other half was to be sent to head-quarters. From head-quarters, all the literature of the League was to be supplied to the branches at cost price and assistance, in the shape of lectures and deputations, was to be given as circumstances permitted. The Executive had the power to make a public appeal for funds. Indeed, the League does not appear to have been at all inclined to narrow down the source of its income, for associations which could not affiliate, but were "in sympathy" with the objects of the League, might

contribute to its funds. In the case of a vacancy, or expected vacancy, in a constituency, the Executive had to meet and consider what action should be taken, and every candidate who received the support of the League had to receive a majority of the votes of the Executive. The views of the local branch were "always to be taken into consideration by the Executive Council in giving their approval to any applicant."[1]

The League was not long in setting to work in London. Early in 1870, a by-election occurred at Southwark and it was there that the League ran its first candidate.

The Liberals in the constituency had several candidates in view. Milner Gibson was the first to be invited to stand, but he refused to do so. A meeting was then held and Sir Sydney Waterlow, who had consented to stand if the Liberals were united, was proposed. His proposer would have been "most happy" to see Mr. Odger elected, but he felt that was impossible, and had no wish to give the seat to the Tories. At this, there were dissentient voices from the working-men, who felt that the defeat of one of their class was something too readily taken for granted. There was some mention of Mr. Bradlaugh, and eventually the candidature of Sir Sydney was left in abeyance.

Urged on by the Liberal Association of Greenwich, a branch of the Labour Representation League was immediately founded at Southwark and Odger was adopted as its candidate. The meeting was held in the Winchester Music Hall and, the same evening, at the King's Arms, in the Old Kent Road, another body of working-men decided to put forward Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Bradlaugh, however, retired in

[1] See Rules.

favour of Mr. Odger. Subsequently, two other Liberal nominees entered the field, in the persons of Mr. Labouchere and Sir Francis Lycett, but both of these afterwards withdrew, leaving the fight to be fought by Odger, Waterlow, and the Tory, Colonel Beresford. In the constituency, there were about 8,000 Irish voters, chiefly labourers and bargemen of Bermondsey, and it was rumoured that, encouraged by the success of the Fenian, O'Donovan Rossa, at a recent election at Tipperary, a candidate was to be run in the Irish interest. Colonel Burke's name was frequently mentioned in this connection, but the candidate who was eventually nominated—and who retired—was J. P. McDonnell, the secretary of the Fenian Amnesty Committee, which had been dissolved shortly before.

Odger estimated the working-class vote at 11,000 to 12,000, at the lowest calculation. His programme was mainly the Radical programme of the day, and included "Justice to Ireland," the ballot, abolition of the £10 lodger qualification, and a demand that candidates should be made responsible for all acts of bribery. He also urged, "as a Unionist of thirty years' experience," that arbitration should be substituted for strikes and lock-outs. Sir Charles Dilke and Sir Henry Hoare—the latter the man who refused to retire in favour of Odger at Chelsea—each contributed £30 to the working-men's election fund. Odger was repeatedly urged to agree to a ballot of the Liberal electors, as to whether he or Sir Sydney Waterlow should be the Liberal candidate, in order that the Liberal vote might not be split; but he refused on the grounds of expense. The contest proceeded, and the eventful day came round.

The hustings were erected near the Borough Road Railway Station, and a large and disorderly crowd

assembled. Neither Sir Sydney nor the Colonel could be heard two yards away, and although Odger received more attention, he had anything but a good hearing. Odger was proposed with a protest against class legislation.

Excitement was at a high pitch when the time arrived for a show of hands, which the High Bailiff declared to be in favour of Odger. Tumultuous cheering followed; but a poll was demanded on behalf of the other candidates, and this took place the following day.

Until mid-day Odger and his Liberal rival kept very close, and the Tory, with a majority of 400, was steadily gaining. At noon a deputation, consisting of Professor Fawcett, Sir Charles Dilke, and Messrs. A. Johnson, and Jacob Bright, waited on Sir Sydney and urged him to retire. Sir Sydney's reply was that he had placed himself entirely in the hands of his committee. An hour later, Colonel Beresford was so far ahead that there appeared to be but little hope of overhauling him with the Liberal vote divided; but Sir Sydney and his supporters could not make up their minds to withdraw, and waited to see the result of the next hour's polling. At two o'clock Sir Sydney was 600 votes behind Odger, and the Colonel had a clear majority of 200. Half an hour later, notices were posted stating that Sir Sydney had retired. As soon as the decision was arrived at, willing messengers were off in hot haste to bear the news round the constituency, but some people would not believe it, and it was claimed afterwards by Mr. Odger's supporters that the notice announcing the retirement was not posted at all the booths. The poll closed at four o'clock, and the Tory won the seat. The figures were: Beresford, 4,686; Odger, 4,382; Waterlow, 2,966.

A month or two later Mr. Odger was nominated by the Radical working-men of Bristol. Two other Liberal candidates were nominated. A ballot was taken. Mr. Odger was at the bottom of the poll, and withdrew from the contest.

In connection with the Southwark contest Mill sent the following letter to Odger :—

"AVIGNON, *February 19th*, 1870.

"Dear Mr. Odger,

"Although you have not been successful, I congratulate you on the result of the polling at Southwark as it proves that you have the majority of the Liberal party with you, and that you have called out an increased amount of political feeling in the borough. It is plain that the Whigs intend to monopolise political power as long as they can without coalescing with the Radicals. The working-men are quite right in allowing Tories to get into the House to defeat this exclusive feeling of the Whigs, and may do it without sacrificing any principles. The working-men's policy is to insist on their own representatives and, in default of success, to permit Tories to be sent into the House until the Whig majority is seriously reduced when, of course, the Whigs will be happy to compromise and allow a few working-men representatives in the House. "JOHN STUART MILL."[1]

The following year the League put George Howell forward as a candidate at a by-election at Norwich. In his address Howell stated that his "efforts would be directed to the furtherance of all movements tending to the development of intellectual and moral progress and the extension of material wealth so as to secure the participation of all in the general prosper-

[1] For a further letter of Mill's, dealing with the subject of working-class representation, see Appendix II.

ity of the country without prejudice to any interest and without injury to any class." His programme included State education, mining regulations, the employment of idle labour on the land, and the reform of the Land Laws; also the complete reorganisation of the military system, "the inefficiency of which" was "as notorious as its expensiveness."

The manifesto which the Labour Representation League issued in support of Mr. Howell was singularly moderate—one is almost tempted to say humble—in its tone. It declared: "We do not ask for all; we do not ask, at present, even for our share; but we do ask for some small recognition of a right: a mere instalment of a fuller justice that will have, at no distant date, to be conceded." It was on these grounds that an appeal was made to the middle-class electors to support Howell, and so prove that they had no prejudice against working-men, but were willing to trust them.

There was a meeting of the Council of the Liberal Association which passed a resolution urging Howell to withdraw in favour of its own candidate, J. J. Colman, on the ground that the Liberal Association was formed so as to give all classes an opportunity of assisting in the selection of a candidate; and at this blast from the official Liberal trumpet Mr. Howell stood down.

In the meantime, however, activities of the League were being directed to securing local, as well as Parliamentary, representation and, for the first election for the School Boards, established by the Act of 1870, it made great efforts. The arrangements were in the hands of the Working-Men's School Board Central Committee, a body established by the League, and of about seventeen men who were nominated, or negotiated with, nine went to the poll. The candi-

dates advocated compulsory, free, and unsectarian instruction, and one, Benjamin Lucraft, was successful. He gained a seat at Finsbury. All the seats contested were in the metropolitan area.

Attempts to obtain representation on the School Boards were made throughout the existence of the League, which, in 1873, ran Henry Broadhurst, who, however, was not successful.

Much educational work was done by the League, which held frequent meetings for debates on current topics and social problems; and the League, consistent with its policy of showing the broad outlook of the working-class movement, and the interest it took in matters other than those which immediately affected the wage-earning population, frequently passed, and published, resolutions on public questions.

When the Franco-Prussian War broke out, in 1870, a sub-committee was appointed to draw up an address to the working-men of England. It stated that the working-class saw that "no legitimate national interest, no fundamental principle of government, no question of national faith or honour was involved which could not be settled by ordinary diplomatic action. . . . It is the duty of the workers of England to declare their utter abhorrence of such a gross and shocking violation of Christian morality and sound national policy; and to express the hope that, whatever settlement may follow, will be of such a character as to secure the future peaceful relations between France and Germany." The address pointed out that, before the outbreak of the war, the Executive Council of the League protested, in the name of the working-men of England, against the "dynastic ambition" by which, it was claimed, the conflict was brought about.

In 1871—about the time when Howell withdrew

from the Norwich contest—the League passed a resolution concerning the marriage of Princess Louise, which marriage created a little controversy in the political world. The marriage had been a much more private affair than is usually the case with Royal marriages and had not been influenced, in any way, by diplomatic considerations. In spite of this, however, the Government gave the usual dowry. Certain of the Radicals took exception to this, holding that the Princess should not have a double advantage: if she sought increased domestic felicity, by making matrimony a matter of purely private choice, then she had no right to what was usually the compensation for governmental interference; a dowry from the State. The League, if it had any sympathy with the Radical attitude, preferred not to show it publicly; or else it considered the matter unworthy of notice, for—moved by the President and seconded by Robert Applegarth—a resolution was carried condemning the "offensive references" made to the dowry, by some working-men, and expressing the hope that the working-men would not have their attention drawn away from the great questions of the day by a "paltry and vexatious attempt to excite unworthy prejudice in a matter which, in its liberal and exceptional character, commends itself to the hearty approval of the nation." The implied suggestion that the Radicals were drawing away the attention of the workmen from the more important questions is an independent note of a kind not very common in those times.

In the Elections Bill of 1871, the League took an active interest and, indeed, the Bill was one which was intimately associated with its principal object; the return of working-men to Parliament. Lack of funds had always been the great drawback and, for

many years, the hopes of the movement were centred upon the payment of Members, and election expenses, by the State. Indeed, in later years, the attitude of the Labour movement—and particularly of the Trade Union Congress—was almost Micawber-like in regard to the payment of Members. It was always waiting for that desirable reform to turn up, and would set aside schemes for raising funds, in favour of an expression of opinion in favour of payment of Members. Looked at from the point of view of principle, the attitude was quite a proper one; but the longest way round might have been the shortest way home.

The Elections Bill, in its original form, had a clause placing the payment of the official expenses of candidates on the rates. This gave rise—or, at any rate, was supposed to give rise—to a fear that having the expenses so paid would result in a great rush of Toms, Dicks, and Harrys for Parliamentary honours, many of whom would be in no sense genuine candidates, but be out for sport, self-advertisement or to serve pecuniary ends. To prevent this, the clause held that every candidate should deposit £100 before his nomination, and this, under certain conditions, might be forfeited. It was to this that the League took exception, and a memorial on the subject was drawn up and presented to W. E. Forster, who had charge of the Bill. It pointed out that, while the insistence on the £100 deposit would be a great barrier to the placing of working-men candidates in the field, it would fail to accomplish its object; for wealthier candidates, and the representatives of wealthy interests, could afford to sacrifice £100 if it suited their purpose to do so. The League might have saved itself the trouble. It is possible, indeed, that by showing how much it was counting on the Bill as a means for helping the Labour Repre-

sentation movement, more harm than good was done. Clause 18, the clause which placed the election expenses upon the rates, never went to the Lords.

In some quarters there was considerable dissatisfaction at the attitude taken by Mr. Gladstone. He had held that the Bill was not a party measure, and the Whips were not put on. This led many working-men to talk of "easing the screw" to get the Government out of a tight place.[1]

The defeat of the clause was a bitter disappointment, and the League drew up a manifesto which was circulated in all the popular constituencies and in working-class organisations all over the country. It had a much more militant tone than most of those which had previously emanated from the League, and concluded: "Gather yourselves together in every constituency. Disregard meaningless party cries, and as a first necessary step for the vindication of your claims, punish, by their exclusion from Parliament, the men who, by their political treachery, cowardice, and worship of wealth, have decreed that you shall not cease to have branded on you the degrading stigma of political inferiority."

[1] Mr. Gladstone said, "It might be that nearly the whole of those on the opposite benches were opposed to the proposals of the Government. It might be that a large majority were in its favour; but he knew of no motive connected with party that ought, in his judgment, to influence opinion one way or the other."

Mr. Gladstone also said, "The great blot on their representative system was that they had not been able to bring working-men within those walls. When the Reform Act of 1867 was passed, so largely increasing the constituents, there were few honourable members who did not hope that one result of that change would be that they would have had the pleasure of welcoming, in the House, some of their fellow-citizens of the working-class." (Hansard, 3 S, Vol. CCVIII.)

Those Liberals who voted for the clause numbered 162, 65 voted against it, and 162 abstained from voting.

It will be remembered that the Lords rejected the Bill. When the second measure was introduced, in 1872, Gladstone declined to receive a deputation of the League on the subject.

This was admirable preaching, and by very slow degrees some practice followed. In 1872, an election committee was appointed to investigate the feeling in various constituencies, and note those in which working-class candidates had a chance of success. In December, the same year, it convened a conference of delegates of various working-class organisations to consider a plan of campaign for the following General Election. The meeting does not seem to have been a large one, for it was held in one of the committee-rooms at the Birmingham Town Hall. Nor was it intended to be confined to working-class delegates. Those invited to be present included John Bright, George Dixon, M.P., P. H. Muntz, M.P., and A. Brogden, M.P., none of whom attended. Bright, who was recovering from a serious illness, wrote that it would not be in his power to attend; Dixon merely gave thanks for the information received; Muntz understood that the object of the League was the return to Parliament of working-class representatives who should remain working-men, and did not see how that was possible—there were those who had been working-men already in the House—and Brogden expressed sympathy with the objects of the League.

What did the Conference do? It listened to papers on Labour Representation by G. H. Beddells, of Birmingham, and H. Broadhurst, and to papers on Electoral Reform by George Howell and Thomas Mottershead, and passed resolutions which were merely declarations of opinion. Conference in the afternoon resolved that the time had arrived when working-men should be returned to the House of Commons; that the constituencies should be re-arranged; that the county and the borough franchise should be equal; that the choice of candidates should be wider; that a protest should be entered

against the refusal of Parliament to grant the payment of election expenses, and that the working-class should raise a national election fund to be placed in the hands of trustees. At night a public meeting was held, and the resolutions were passed a second time! Nothing practical was done; no electoral machinery was initiated.

A year later—in March, 1873—the League issued a manifesto "hoping" that branches would be formed in every town in the kingdom, and about this time a sub-committee was appointed to consider which of the constituencies were most suitable for Labour candidatures. This committee reported to a conference held in September, and recommended Blackburn, Newcastle, Wenlock, Bolton, Hartlepool, and Salford among other places. The secretary was instructed to communicate with men of influence in the places named, and to institute arrangements for the adoption of working-men candidates, who were to be chosen by the local organisation, and, if approved by the League Executive, to receive its countenance and support. If, however, local organisations, whilst desirous of running a candidate, could not decide upon a champion, the Executive was to assist them and submit to them a list of candidates which it had drawn up.

The upshot was that, directly or indirectly, the League placed a dozen working-men in the field as Parliamentary candidates at the General Election of 1874, and of these Mr. Thomas Burt and Mr. Alexander Macdonald were elected for Morpeth and Stafford respectively.

The elections will be dealt with in the following chapter. When they were over, the League steadily declined. By 1880, we are told,[1] the League, "speci-

[1] Henry Broadhurst's *Autobiography*. Mr. Broadhurst was secretary of the League during its later years.

ally formed to promote the cause, had practically ceased to exist," although "the seed sown by it was taking root."

In 1874, it was responsible for another Labour candidature. This was at a by-election at Stoke, and the League had for its candidate Alfred Armstrong Walton, one of those who had pioneered the movement from its early days, and who was appealing for Labour Representation even prior to the effort made by the London Working-Men's Association. He was born at Hexham, in Northumberland, in the year 1816, and was a middle-class rather than a working-man. His mother was the great granddaughter of "Johnny" Armstrong, of Guilknock Hall, one of the most celebrated of the Border chiefs, and one who has been immortalised in the pages of Sir Walter Scott. Walton's father had a builder's business, in which, as a young man, the son was engaged at Newcastle, where he was interested in local politics. Later in life, he became an architect, having saved sufficient money to become articled. An active political worker, he was associated with Cobden in the Free Trade movement, and was foremost in endeavouring to convert the Trade Union Congress to the idea of Labour Representation. He wrote a *History of Landed Tenures in Great Britain and Ireland.*

At Stoke, he had H. T. Davenport as his Conservative opponent, and Dr. Kenealy—the advocate of the Tichborne claimant—ran as an Independent. The polling was: Davenport, 3,901; Kenealy, 6,110; Walton, 4,168. Of Mr. Walton, the *Saturday Review* wrote that he was "supported by the demagogues and revolutionary theorists who, under various collective designations, associate themselves together for the purpose sometimes of abolishing property, and sometimes taking the preliminary step of con-

ferring absolute power on the numerical majority of the population."

At another by-election, in the same year, the League put Howell forward at Norwich; but the candidate withdrew for the already common reason —the prevention of a Liberal split.

Concerning the other activities of the League, we find that it founded a committee for the separation of Church and State, with Howell as the chairman, Potter the secretary, and Guile the treasurer.

After 1875, there is greater and greater difficulty in following this organisation which, with the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the passing of the Trade Union Act of 1876, was evidently dying a natural death. In 1876, we find it entering a protest against the assumption, by the Queen, of the title of Empress; a title "wholly repugnant to the feelings of the English people and, like the word Emperor, associated with the worst forms of despotic government." That was in April. In October it was regretting the failure of the Government to settle the Eastern question.

In 1878, five hundred electors of Greenwich waited upon Howell to discuss the question of his standing for the borough, but their first query was as to his religious beliefs. He refused either to answer or to refer to the matter in election address or speeches, and he was not chosen. The writer has not been able to ascertain what part, if any, was played by the Labour Representation League in this episode, or in the by-election at Stafford in 1881, on the death of Alexander Macdonald, when Howell, as a Radical, polled 1,185 against 1,482 for T. Salt, the Tory; but it is certain that by that time the League itself was almost defunct. Its spirit, however, still found expression.

CHAPTER IV

1874

Liberty will not descend to a people; a people must raise themselves to it. Liberty must be earned before it can be enjoyed.

COLTON.

THE year 1874 was historic in the Parliamentary annals of the kingdom, for it was in that year that the working-class was first directly represented in the Legislature, and that, up and down the whole country, working-men for the first time sought the suffrages of their fellow-citizens.[1]

Since the previous election, Labour had had a hard and anxious time; a time of disappointment and persecution with, in the background, the ever-present fear that the fortifications Labour had been raising for three-quarters of a century were to be demolished by laws in the making of which Labour had no part.

In 1868, the whole weight of the Labour movement was thrown into the Liberal scale. True, there had been a movement for the placing of working-men in the constituencies as Parliamentary candidates; but it was a movement by a comparatively small section. Only six candidates began a campaign; and only three went to the poll. But, in 1874, the force behind the movement was the Labour Representation League, and that, as we have seen, had associated with it

[1] For the Labour Members of Parliament for 1874 and onwards, see Appendix III.

the best brains and highest personal character in the working-class movement of the time. There was a more militant and independent spirit in the whole campaign, and many influential men who worked for the Liberal party in 1868 rendered no help in that direction in 1874; for the fruit of Liberal promises in 1868 had consisted of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the puny Trade Union Act of 1871, with sentences of imprisonment, on trade unionists, for distributing handbills, and on women for shouting "Bah!" at a blackleg.[1]

Both Mr. Burt and Mr. Macdonald, the workingmen victors at the 1874 election, were officers of Miners' Unions, and both had, in early life, earned their bread by strenuous work in the mine. Mr. Burt was born at Muston Row, a small hamlet two miles from North Shields, in November, 1837. His father, Peter Burt, was a devout Primitive Methodist, whose spare time was given to his religion—he was a local preacher—and Trade Unionism. The home of Thomas Burt had its ups and downs. When he was seven years of age, a great miners' strike occurred in Northumberland, and Peter Burt was prominent on the strikers' side. With several others, he was evicted from his little cottage and, in great straits, had to accept the hospitality of a warm-hearted farmer who sheltered three families in two rooms. The same year Mr. Burt began work as a trapper, at Haswell colliery, Durham, with tenpence in wages for a twelve-hours' day. In turn, he was a donkey-driver and a putter and, at eighteen years of

[1] In their *History of Trade Unionism*, Mr. and Mrs. Webb write, of these Acts, that "it seemed only too probable" that it would be "a criminal offence for the trade unionists to stand quietly in the street opposite the works of an employer against whom they struck." By the Criminal Law Amendment Act the Government "took away with one hand what they gave with the other."

age, became a hewer. During all these years, he read long into his sleeping hours and, in 1865, he left the pit on his election to the secretaryship of the Northumberland Miners' Association, the office which he occupied when he entered Parliament.

Alexander Macdonald was born at Airdrie in 1821, and was the son of a miner. He was descended from the famous Highland clan, the Macdonalds. Although he began to work long hours underground at the tender age of eight, he had learned to read intelligently two years later, and managed to obtain the speeches delivered by Shaftesbury and Oastler during their campaign against the infamies of factory life at that time. These utterances, no doubt, helped the young Scotsman to realise the injustice with which his class was afflicted, and inspired him to throw himself into the fight for a better life. At the age of twenty-one, he was a leader among the miners, and was victimised for the part he played in the great strike of 1842—a strike for a better wage than two shillings for a twelve-hours' day; and one which ended in defeat. By 1846, Macdonald had scraped together sufficient money to take a three-months' course at Glasgow University, where he attended for three sessions, working and saving between them to enable himself to carry on his studies. Subsequently, he was offered the post of a mine-manager and accepted it. But Macdonald was too much alive to the sufferings of the miners to hold for long a position under mine-owners and, after a year's service, he resigned his position. In 1851, he opened a school at Airdrie and, four years later, he took up the organisation of the miners, and rose to the position of secretary of the Scottish Miners' Association. When elected to Parliament he held that position.

Such, in brief, were the lives of the first true sons of the people who were sent to Parliament to voice the rights of the people.

The Stafford election took place before that of Morpeth, so that Macdonald was the first direct Labour representative. His nomination paper read: "Alexander Macdonald, of Holytown, in the county of Lanark, Scotland, Secretary of the Miners' Association of Scotland and President of the Miners' National Association.—Proposed by James Godwin, seconded by John Geddes." His election address was couched in language of a singularly homely description, with a total absence of the flowery phrases which so often characterise such documents. No apology is needed for giving it in full. It ran as follows:—

"TO THE ELECTORS OF STAFFORD.

"Gentlemen,

"As promised, in a former notice, I beg now formally to state, for your consideration, some of the leading subjects that would claim my attention and support if returned by you to serve in Parliament.

"The anomalous condition of the County Franchise cannot much longer be maintained, as it deprives a large portion of our fellow-citizens of the privilege that others possess. It would be my endeavour to get the Borough and County Franchise assimilated.

"Following as a right, we would require a redistribution of seats. Any measure brought forward for that purpose would have my most cordial support, if just in its character and suited to the needs and requirements of the case.

"Having long taken a deep interest in the question of Restricted Hours of Labour for Children,

I would sedulously watch all matters pertaining to the extension and application of the Factory and Workshop Acts to such occupations as need to be brought within the provisions of these and similar Acts.

"All questions affecting the interests of Capital and Labour would have my constant and undivided attention, believing, as I do, that it is only by a more peaceful relation of these interests that the greatness and strength of our country can be maintained.

"With these views, I would support a measure for the total repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, modification of the Master and Servants Acts, so as to remove the criminal clauses, a clear and defined Law of Conspiracy, and such other changes as would remove the limitation that now exists, which is alike injurious to employees and employed.

"The present enormous taxation would also have my attention. I would support every effort made for real reduction. Pensions and sinecures would be most carefully watched.

"The easy transfer of land, the abolition of the Game Laws, a peaceful foreign policy would have my cordial support, if returned.

"As regards Local Government in Ireland, I am impressed with Mr. Butt's opinions, and would give them my hearty support.

"Many other important matters, which I cannot touch upon here, I will personally, by public meeting and by visitation, explain at length then, and give such explanations as I hope may lead you to support me.

"I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
"Your obedient servant,
"ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

"Holytown, N.B. *January 28th*, 1874."

Stafford was a "double-barrelled" constituency, the Liberals only put one man forward, and many men of their party, other than working-men, gave the miner their support.

During the contest, Macdonald was frequently accused of being associated with a movement which was responsible for the then exorbitant price of coal. His reply was that it was the miners who had pressed for a Select Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the matter, and that Committee had shown that, during a period when the price of coal rose 15s. per ton, the wages of the miners increased by only 1s. 4d.

The result of the poll was: T. Salt (Conservative), 1,238; A. Macdonald (Liberal), 1,183; Bridgeman (Conservative), 947; Pochin (Liberal), 903.

Macdonald, in a letter returning thanks, described his election as a "very distinguished honour."

The *Staffordshire Advertiser* says the election was one of the most orderly ever held in the borough, although there was considerable excitement. Indeed, it records that "several free fights took place in the market-place, but there seemed to be an absence of any malicious feeling"—a queer enough comment on the populace of Stafford!

The Parliamentary history of Morpeth, the borough captured by Mr. Burt, and one which has been held by him ever since, dates back to 1352. In that year a writ was issued by Edward III summoning Lord Greystock to attend him in Parliament at Westminster. Members for Morpeth were first elected in 1553, in which year there were two elections—one, in the spring, before the death of Edward VI, and the other in the autumn after Mary had come to the throne. From that time, until 1832, the borough was represented by two members, but

the Reform Bill made it a single-member constituency, and Captain Francis Howard won the seat. He died in 1833, and was succeeded by the Hon. E. G. S. Howard, who retired in 1837, when Lord Leveson (afterwards Earl Granville) was returned. Three years later, that member retired, and E. G. S. Howard once more represented the borough. Retiring in 1852, he was succeeded by Sir George Grey, who held the seat until 1874, when he resigned on Mr. Burt coming forward.[1]

Mr. Burt had been strongly urged to contest Morpeth in 1868, but he felt he could better be of service to the miners of Northumberland by remaining outside the House of Commons, and this, in conjunction with the Radical views of the sitting member, Sir George Grey, caused the project to be abandoned.

Between 1868 and 1874, the miners fought and won their fight for the franchise. As they did not pay direct rent for their cottages, they paid no rates, and were held to be excluded under the Act of 1867. Early in 1872, the Miners' Franchise Union was formed and, after a lengthy and difficult campaign, the miners were placed on the register. Joseph Cowen, who, on the death of his father the following year was elected member for Newcastle, was an active worker in the Association.

In 1872, Sir George Grey, who had grown old in the service of the constituency, decided to retire and, in response to a requisition signed by a large number of electors, Mr. Burt agreed to stand, although he felt a victory to be impossible.

It was at a meeting at Bedlington on October 18th,

[1] For most of the details of Mr. Burt's campaign the writer is indebted to Mr. Aaron Watson's book, *A Great Labour Leader. Being the Life of the Right Hon. Thomas Burt, M.P.* (London, 1908.)

1873, that the miners' representative consented to be nominated. Cowen, who loyally supported Mr. Burt throughout his campaign, and who contributed £100 to the funds, was in the chair. In the course of his speech Mr. Burt said: "It is chiefly because you recognise in me the representative of a principle; because you want the exclusive barriers which have hitherto kept poor men out of the House of Commons and made that House a 'rich man's club' broken down and swept away; it is because you want labour, which has so long been trodden down and scorned, even by those who owe everything to it, exalted in its proper place and recognised, even in the highest places in the nation; it is chiefly because of these considerations that you have asked me to come forward as a representative on your behalf."

Mr. Burt's address was almost the same as Macdonald's; but he included the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church and licensing legislation on the lines of local option.

Mr. Burt, who ran as a Radical-Labour candidate, was not opposed by the Liberals, and with the Conservative candidate, Major Duncan, he was, in a personal sense, on the best of terms. Indeed, the two candidates sometimes toured the constituency together. Mr. Watson tells us that the contest was distinguished "not as anticipated in some quarters, by unseemly and violent proceedings, but by frank and even rollicking good humour, by the most courteous relations of the two candidates, and by the most bountiful delight of the new electors in their admission to political power."

It was during this contest that Mr. Burt came out with a dictum which has taken its place as a stock aphorism of political life: the dictum that "the

Conservative working-man is either a fool or a flunkey."

The miners were always courteous to the Major, and gave him a careful hearing. In this connection, Mr. Watson has a good story. So favourable appeared the attitude of the audience, at one of the Major's meetings, that someone ventured to propose a vote of confidence in the candidate. When, however, the vote was put to the meeting, only the mover and seconder held up their hands. The Major was astonished. "What do you mean?" he asked. "You cheer my speech, and then vote against me." And a voice cried from the crowd: "We like ye weel enough; but we're gan te vote for Tommy Bort!"

But the great feature of the contest was the poetry of Robert Elliot, a miner whose dialect poems, during the election, attained great popularity. The favourite was, "The Pitman gan te Parlement," and in this Elliot was not far from the truth when he wrote:—

Wey lads, aw just think hoo the biggins will stare,
When into St. Stephen's a Howkie goes there!
Ah, mon, they will glower an' ne doot thor is sum,
Will conclude thit the end o' creashun is cum.
They will watch him, nae doot, with a curious gaze;
An' tek stock of his visage, tek stock of his claes;
Just as if he had cum frae some far away place,
An' belanged to some savage untemable race.
They may think thit he's quiet, but faith they'll sune know,
That Tommy's a boy thit kin talk to them a';
An though he's a Howkie, he'll show them he can
Discourse with the wisest; behave like a man;
An' thit if ye luik in the papers ye'll see,
Is mair than a vast o' the biggins kin de.

Mr. Burt polled 3,332 votes against 585 for Major Duncan, and the wildest enthusiasm followed the declaration of the poll. Throughout the campaign, it was held by some of the Tories that, if returned, Mr. Burt would be no more than a Trade Union delegate. Mr. Burt repudiated this allegation in his speech after the declaration of the poll. He said an attempt had been made to impress people, other than miners, with the notion that he would go to Parliament as a delegate, "bound hand and foot" in regard to what he should do. If that were so, he said, it would be as degrading to himself as it would be to them. They reposed the fullest confidence in him and they had voted for him, that day, simply because his opinions were in thorough unison with theirs. It was the Tory Press which had particularly attacked Mr. Burt in the matter; it compared his relation to the miners' union with that of the Irish landlord to his tenants who were marched to the poll.

By the time Mr. Burt stood for Morpeth, he had accepted Unitarianism, and this caused some of the electors a little disturbance. He was asked, during the contest, if he believed the Bible to be true. His reply was that the contest was political, not religious, and that he was not a candidate for a professorship of theology or the ministry; and he declined to answer the question. "I maintain," he declared, "that the constituency has no right whatever to institute an inquisition into the faith or creed of any candidate who may solicit its suffrage." This love of tolerance was shown by the support given by Mr. Burt to Mr. Bradlaugh, in the latter's heroic and ultimately successful struggle to take his seat in the Commons.

In March, under the auspices of the Labour Representation League, a banquet was held to celebrate the victory. Robert Elliot was in the chair, and Major

Duncan was present. Elliot said, "They had struck a blow against snobbery and sham respectability. The miners of the North of England—of England generally—had been looked down upon and despised by the other classes of society, but they might depend upon it that, in future, they would be looked upon with greater respect. When they began their agitation at Bedlington they were told they had no more right to vote than the pit ponies ; and a gentleman whom they had consulted had told them that, unless they paid £10 rent, they were outside the Constitution."

Mr. Burt did not receive an invitation to a banquet given by the Conservatives—a function at which, Mr. Watson tells us, the clergy showed their discomfiture at the victory of the miner, and announced their intention of taking in hand the political education of the electors.

Both Mr. Burt and Mr. Macdonald were paid by their unions while members of the House of Commons, and both were members of the Labour Representation League.

The League manifesto, in support of its candidates, asked the electors to vote for the Labour candidates in order that they might "practically assert the principle of direct Labour Representation." It went on, "We ask you also to vote for the Labour candidates that you may remove from yourselves the degrading stigma of class exclusion. And we again ask you to vote for the Labour candidates at present in the field that the voice of those who have worked and suffered among you may go forth to the nation from the House of Commons to justify your claims and vindicate your rights."

One of the most interesting of the candidatures, in 1874, was that of Thomas Halliday, the President

of the Amalgamated Association of Miners. Halliday was born at Preston, near Bolton, in July, 1835. When two and a half years of age his father was burned to death in the mine; and at eight years of age the boy began work in the same pit. His mother worked in a cotton mill, for the support of her young children and, subsequently, young Halliday left the mine and became a half-timer in a spinning factory. Later he returned to the pit—this time with a stepfather—and, in 1863, he left the mine to devote his whole time to organising the Lancashire miners.

Halliday was adopted as the candidate for Merthyr Tydvil. A fortnight before the polling-day, however, he was indicted for conspiracy at Burnley in connection with a local strike; but his supporters would not desert him, and he went to the poll and received 4,912 votes. The constituency was a double-seated one, and Halliday was opposed by two Liberals. No Conservative was put forward.[1]

The Labour candidates who went to the poll

[1] The following are details of other candidatures: At Stoke-on-Trent, Walton polled 5,190 against two Liberals and one Conservative, being bottom of the poll; at Finsbury, Lucraft polled 3,205 against two Liberals and one Conservative; at Cricklade, W. Morris polled 497, there being six candidates, two Conservatives, three Liberals (including Morris), and one Independent, for two seats. James Hardaker, at Bradford, a "double-barrelled" constituency, opposed by two Liberals and one Liberal-Conservative, was bottom of the poll with 8,115 votes; W. Pickard, at Wigan, where there were five candidates, two Liberals, two Conservatives, and himself, for two seats, polled 1,134; G. Potter, at Peterborough, polled 562 against four Liberals and one Conservative, being fourth on the poll; G. Howell polled 1,144 at Aylesbury; John Kane, in a three-coruered fight at Middlesbrough, received 1,544; Odger, at Southwark, against two Liberals and two Conservatives, 3,496; Mottershead, at Preston, where there were two Conservatives and himself for two seats, 3,606; Cremer, at Warwick, against one Liberal and two Tory opponents, received 180 votes, and Broadhurst, in a three-cornered fight, at Wycombe, polled 415.

numbered fifteen, an increase of twelve on the election in 1868, and the vote increased from 4,012 to 33,601. Mr. Burt, as we have seen, ran as a Radical-Labour man, Howell and Cremer ran as Radicals, and Pickard as an Independent Liberal. All the others described themselves as Liberals.

There were, of course, candidates who were nominated and who failed to go to the poll. W. Brown, the miners' agent for North Stafford, was one; it was proposed that he should run at Tamworth; and at Marylebone, Maltman Barry had to retire for lack of funds.

The men returned were to be maintained in Parliament by their unions, or by a fund subscribed by the trades which jointly ran the candidate, as at Bradford, where James Hardaker, of the Stonemasons' Society, was run by the organised trades which announced their intention of raising £1,500 to maintain him as a Member of Parliament.

It will be noticed, too, that, in spite of the acceptance by the working-class leaders of the Radical programme, the Liberal party, in some constituencies, put forward a candidate for each seat, while the Conservatives did not. At Stoke there were two seats to be won, and two Liberals tried to win them; but only one Conservative was put forward, and Walton made the fourth man. The case was precisely the same at Finsbury, where Lucraft was the Labour candidate. At Peterborough, where the candidate was George Potter, four Liberals stood for the two seats, but only one Conservative. In spite of Odger's candidature, two Liberals were put forward at Southwark. At Warwick, however, the Liberals only put one man forward, and at Aylesbury, which was also a double-seated constituency, there were only two candidates—a Liberal and a

Tory—in opposition to Howell. True, the Conservatives may not, in some cases, have been able to find a man to fight the constituency; but that does not make the Liberal attitude less uncompromising. Labour, when allowed a straight fight at Stafford and Morpeth, won the day.

It will be appropriate, perhaps, to close this chapter with a reference to the impressions which the House of Commons gave Mr. Burt, who, besides being one of the first working-men to enter the House, has held his seat from the time it was won, has risen to the position of Privy Councillor, and to-day is "Father" of the Commons. Mr. Burt's biographer, Mr. Watson, tells us that the former's impressions were "wholly favourable." Mr. Burt "credited his associates in Parliament with a certain earnestness of desire to deal equitably with the working-class." He felt that they were anxious to become acquainted with the true wishes and feelings of the poorer classes, but believed that "those who had been brought up on the comfortable side of life" had a "certain natural incapacity" to understand how the working-class would be affected by Parliamentary measures. "They fail in their efforts," he thought, "from want of special knowledge, and are unjust rather from want of sympathy than from the absence of a desire to do right."

CHAPTER V

EIGHTEEN YEARS OF THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS

I do not believe that the people of this country have any desire to change the form of their government, nor do I join with those who think that the wide extension of the suffrage . . . would either altogether, or generally, effect a change in the class of persons chosen as representatives. The people would continue, as at present, to choose their representatives from the easy class—among the men of fortune.

RICHARD COBDEN.

IN order that our survey of the movement for Labour Representation may not be narrowed down to those organisations formed for the definite purpose of sending working-men to Parliament, it now becomes necessary for us to retrace our steps. We must go back to the year 1868, the year which saw the first Trade Union Congress, and trace the attitude of the unions towards Labour representation for nearly twenty years from that time.

Almost all the leaders of the working-class movement, whether or not they favoured direct Labour Representation, were Trade Union leaders and, sooner or later, the most skilled and best paid workers—and, therefore, the most powerful—were organised in unions. The Trade Union Congress was, therefore, for many years, the best medium for reflecting the opinion of the working-class, taken as a whole, on any political or social question. Moreover, it was the unions which possessed the best organisation and the most funds and, this being so,

their active support of the movement for Labour Representation was half the battle.

Mr. Howell has told us[1] that the object of the promoters of the Trade Union Congress was to enable representatives of the unions to "confer annually upon urgent questions affecting workingmen and Labour associations, whether the result of legislation or otherwise. It was not proposed to interfere with the legitimate work of Trade Unions; their organisation, mode of arrangement, constitution, rules, or other matters of internal economy; but to promote co-operation in respect of general questions affecting labour and watch over its interests in Parliament." Labour Representation was, surely, one of the "general questions" on which the unions might have been expected to co-operate in Congress.

Conferences of trade unionists had frequently been held prior to the first Trade Union Congress in 1868: the United Kingdom Alliance of Organised Trades, established mainly by the Sheffield unions, with the principal object of promoting amalgamation and federation, met in 1865 and the two following years.

The list of subjects for consideration by the 1868 Congress, as shown by the invitation to the meeting,[2] contains no reference to Labour representation or, indeed, to any other political matter. Politics entered the Trade Union Congress when it met for the second time, the following year.

It will be remembered that it was in that year—1869—that the Labour Representation League was founded, and three papers on the subject of working-

[1] *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements, and Labour Leaders.* George. Howell (London, 1905.)

[2] See Appendix to the Webbs' *History of Trade Unionism.*

class representation were placed before the Congress.

William Harry, a member of the Executive of the League, brought an address from the Chelsea Working-Men's Parliamentary Association. The address was decidedly modern in its tone, and at that time was, indeed, a voice crying in the wilderness. The paper gave as the causes of poverty, the possession of the land by the landed aristocracy, and the "generally recognised principle of private property in land"; the drain upon the resources of the people in the shape of "taxation, rents, etc.," and an "inability to obtain wise and just legislation from hereditary legislators." But, the great heresy was the description of the two great parties as "equal enemies of the people." The practical suggestion was the formation of an industrial party pledged, "if necessary," to the nationalisation of the land, by purchasing it from those who held it, and the creation of a national paper currency, based upon the productive wealth of the nation, combined with a national system of credit and exchange.

Where two members were to be returned, the working-men, the paper held, should insist on nominating one, and if the Liberals would not agree to that course the Tory candidate should be supported—which implied, despite the statement about Liberals and Tories being equal enemies of the people, that the former were the more friendly. The address, however, went on to declare, that the Tory was the more honourable opponent as he "acted the part of an open foe"; but the Liberal that "of a false and perfidious friend, who, while professing sympathy with, and proffering service to, the cause of working-men sought only to overthrow it." Reference was also made to the "iniquitous

policy of the Whigs . . . or so-called Liberal party."

The cause of the Labour Representation League was espoused by its President, R. M. Latham—through George Howell, who read the paper sent—and by Alfred Armstrong Walton. The idea of both papers was for the working-men to insist on nominating one of the Liberals where there were two seats to be won. Walton pointed out that, while trade unions and friendly societies were invited to join the League, membership would not necessarily involve a call upon their funds.

Then it was that the Congress first declared itself in favour of the direct representation of Labour in Parliament. The resolution ran as follows, and was moved by Odger and seconded by Potter: "That this Congress endorses the papers read by Mr. Harry, Mr. Walton, and Mr. Latham, as containing sentiments thoroughly in accordance with the wants and wishes of working-men; and this Congress recommends their Constituents, and working-men generally, to support the Labour Representation League, just established in London, to obtain the return of actual working-men to the Commons' House of Parliament."

In 1870, there was no Congress, but again, in 1871, we find Mr. Latham with a paper on Labour Representation. It contained no hint of a fund being established by Congress. The delegates in that year were busily engaged discussing the Trade Union Bill, and the paper did not command much attention; but the meeting found time to express the opinion "that the direct representation of Labour is a necessity, not only in the interests of the working-men as a class, but also in the interests of the nation at large."

Again, the following year, Mr. Latham was at the Congress, his paper this time being on "The Best Means of Securing Labour Representation in Parliament." He reminded the delegates that "God helped those who helped themselves." Once more, a resolution endorsing the paper was moved and seconded; but a dissentient voice was raised. Samuel Dale, who was representing the Warp Lace-makers of Nottingham, was of the opinion that Congress should enter a protest against the enunciation of such "strong political feelings," and he moved that the paper "be not received." The resolution found a seconder, but Applegarth, Odger, Howell, Broadhurst, and Walton rose in support of the representative of the League. Broadhurst appealed to the delegates not to be misled by the cry of "No politics!" and Walton moved a resolution—which was seconded by Potter—pledging the delegates to urge upon their societies the necessity of returning working-men to Parliament. Dale then withdrew his motion, which seems to indicate that the bulk of the feeling was against him, and, for the third time, Congress declared for Labour Representation.

The resolutions passed, however, the delegates do not seem to have troubled themselves about the matter. In the autumn of 1872, the ever-watchful Walton[1] was pointing out that nothing practical had resulted from the expressions of opinion by Congress. He expressed the belief that very few members had fulfilled the pledge embodied in the resolution of the previous Congress, and added that, "if he was correctly informed," some of the delegates had done all they could to "pooh, pooh" the matter. He hoped that, at the next Congress, full

[1] See article in the *Beehive*, September 7th, 1872.

power would be given the Executive Committee to "organise various trades for Labour representation and for members of the Committee to visit various towns and see if there were any traitors, who, while they had said nothing in Congress, had gone away opposing the idea."

In 1873, the fight over the Labour Laws was at its height, and Latham told the Congress that "on the merest grounds of self-defence, on the merest sense of duty to yourselves, as honest, self-respecting men, you cannot under any pretence of allegiance to party overlook this matter." A paper by Walton was "taken as read"; an ill omen for the cause it advocated. It urged that, if Liberals would not co-operate with working-men, the responsibility of dividing the Liberal interest would lie with them. Working-men, it held, need only show a bold front to obtain the support of the best part of the middle-class. The instinct of self-preservation would bring over the Liberal party. If the mountain did not come to Mahomet, Mahomet would have to go to the mountain.

Walton made an effort to give effect to what, as stated above, he had been preaching, and moved "that it be an instruction to the Parliamentary Committee, in the event of an election, where application is made to them, to give advice and assistance in organising trade societies in any borough where a fair prospect of returning representative working-men to Parliament is apparent; and to give such advice and assistance as, in their judgment, may appear best calculated to secure the return of as many competent men as possible at the next General Election." It will be noticed that even this resolution left it to the local organisations to take the initiative. Until they did so, the Parliamentary

Committee might keep their hands folded. But so fearful were some delegates of any action by the Parliamentary Committee where Labour Representation was concerned, that an amendment was moved urging the formation of local electoral committees with control of their own funds and no outside interference until they put forward a candidate worthy of national support. The amendment was lost, but its object was to leave local organisations without any assistance from the Parliamentary Committee until a suitable candidate had been chosen. Mr. Cremer actually advised the withdrawal of the resolution ; but it was adopted by Congress.

Yet, the following year, the Report of the Parliamentary Committee contained no reference to anything it had done to secure the return of working-men. It congratulated the movement on a rise in wages and a shortening of hours and on the growth of trade unions. It also counselled "moderation and prudence in all movements," as they had "continually to contend with misrepresentation in the Press and on the platform ; but the Committee, on the whole, held their own by setting right those who were uninformed, and resenting and exposing the calumnies of the unscrupulous."[1] The temporary prosperity probably had something to do with the decision of Congress that it was "unwise and undesirable to pledge itself to any course of action in respect to Labour Representation in Parliament, and that each representative be at liberty to take what action he thinks proper. . . ." One of the public meetings held during the week was, however, notable for the suggestion of a Parliamentary levy upon the trade unions. The suggestion was made by Mr. Broadhurst, who estimated the number of

[1] *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements, and Labour Leaders.*

unionists at 1,000,000, and pointed out that a shilling levy would produce £50,000.

The 1874 resolution is somewhat remarkable when it is remembered that the year 1873 had seen the formation of the National Federation of Employers, an organisation the avowed object of which was to checkmate the trade unions, largely by Parliamentary action. The Federation was formed as the result of a conference called by the General Association of Master Engineers, Shipbuilders, Iron and Brass Founders, and the National Association of Factory Occupiers. The circular convening the conference referred to the motion of Mr. Harcourt to call attention to the state of the Conspiracy Laws, under which the notorious conviction of the Beckton gas-stokers, for threatening to strike, had taken place. The authors of the circular considered the motion "one of a series of steps which trade unionists have arranged" to force the matter upon the attention of Parliament. The Iron Trade Employers' Association, it pointed out, had called upon its committee to "take steps to resist the trade unions in their attempt to efface from the Statute-book such laws as experience is daily showing to be of paramount importance for the safety of capital, the protection of labour, and the prosperity of the country."

In April, 1873, the Federation was founded, and Mr. Howell tells us that "in wealth, influence, and representative character no such formidable organisation had ever been pitted against Labour."[1]

In a manifesto, dated December 11th, 1873, the Federation pointed to the growing strength of the unions, which were spoken of as urging the working-class "to dictate terms to candidates for Parliament." It went on to state that they—the

[1] *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements, and Labour Leaders.*

unions—"exercise a pressure upon Members of Parliament, and those aspiring to that honour, out of all proportion to their real power and beyond belief except to those who have had the opportunity of witnessing its effects. . . . Active Members of Parliament are energetic in their service. They have the attentive ear of the Ministry of the day, and their communications are received with instant care and attention. The necessary and legitimate result of this powerful organisation . . . must be to give it to a large extent the control of the elections and, consequently, of Parliament; the power to dictate terms everywhere between employers and employed, and the mastery over the independence of workmen as well as over the operations of employers. This course of procedure tends, not only to secure the permanence of their special order, but to gratify the not unnatural ambition of several of them to obtain seats in Parliament as advocates of the policy of the Unions."

Proceeding, the manifesto tells us that to acquire Parliamentary influence was the main object of the Federation, which would have an efficient literary staff "ever watchful and ready" in the defence of its policy. It would have extensive communication with the Press, and would examine and take such measures as were thought necessary with reference to every Parliamentary proposal, and it would endeavour to influence all legislation dealing with industrial questions and the relation of employers and employed.[1]

This, as is apparent, was a declaration of war against the unions, and a declaration of the intention

[1] See extracts from the manifesto, printed as an Appendix to *The Coming Force: the Labour Movement.* Frank H. Rose (Manchester, 1909).

of the employers to obtain a share in the control of Parliamentary affairs. But the Trade Union Congress was not impressed with the necessity of fighting the employers with weapons similar to those used against the unions. Two Congresses were held in 1875, and at both of them the delegates merely resolved that "it was the duty of Trade Unions and other bodies of working-men to miss no opportunity of sending to Parliament men of their own order," and recommended the formation of local committees for that purpose. The following year there was, once again, a similar expression of opinion, which left the Labour Representation movement to thrive, as best it could, without the support of the great Trade Union movement as a whole.

It will be well, at this juncture, if we take a glance at the work which the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress was doing throughout this period, seeing that it could not, or would not, in its corporate capacity, give any practical assistance to aid the return to Parliament of working-men.

The Parliamentary Committee, Mr. Broadhurst tells us[1]—and as secretary of it, for fifteen years, he should be the man to know—fulfilled the function of the Radical wing of the Liberal party, and exerted itself "not merely for the working-classes, but on behalf of the community at large." Its activities were indeed multifarious. It accepted no financial help from outside bodies, and, in the early days, the Committee had difficulty in carrying on its work owing to insufficient contributions from the unions. It was this which caused the infrequence of its meetings.[2]

From its formation, until 1875, the main object of the Committee was the complete legalisation of trade

[1] *Autobiography* (London, 1901). [2] *Ibid.*

unions and the protection of their funds.[1] In 1868, the Labour movement supported the Liberal party on its promise to accomplish this if returned to power. In 1869, a temporary measure was passed to protect the unions from the plunder of their funds by dishonest officials, a protection which, as we have seen, the judicial decision of 1867 held they did not enjoy. But this was the beginning and the end of Parliament's service to trade unions. Early in 1871, the Trade Union Bill was introduced, and the battle began. Mr. Bruce, the Home Secretary (afterwards Lord Aberdare), was immediately interviewed, and it was pointed out to him that, under the Bill, there would be more convictions of unionists than under the old law of 1825. Mr. Bruce refused to discuss the matter, and the deputation retired dissatisfied. The Trade Union Congress, which met about the same time, appointed a committee consisting of Howell, Potter, Macdonald, Lloyd Jones, and Joseph

[1] Other work of the Committee consisted of obtaining the Mines Regulation Act (1872), the Arbitration Act (1872), and the Nine Hours Bill (1871). It also interested itself in the reform of the Jury Laws, the amendment of the Summary Jurisdiction Act, and the Shipping and Patent Laws. With the assistance of Frederic Harrison and Henry Crompton, the Committee agitated for the codification of the Criminal Law, owing to the harsh treatment meted out to Labour leaders. It drafted a Bill dealing with boiler explosions through the neglect of employers to employ qualified men. Broadhurst drew up a Bill for the abolition of the property qualification for membership of local governing bodies, which was introduced by A. J. Mundella in 1876, and became law two years later. The Committee drew up a Bill dealing with the liability of employers to compensate workmen for injury, which was subsequently read a second time and referred to a Select Committee. It also used its influence to secure the Act consolidating the Factory and Workshop Laws, an Act which reduced the hours of labour of women and children ; and it was active in securing, under the Shipping Act of 1883, that skippers should hold a Board of Trade certificate and keep a log of accidents and loss of life, as well as of punishments and payments of wages. Such was some of the principal work of the Committee in the seventies and early eighties.

Leicester, to watch the progress of the Bill and to take what action they thought fit. This committee issued a circular, which was sent to every Member of Parliament with an appeal to oppose the criminal clauses of the Bill. The circular contained a resolution stating that Congress refused to sanction in any way a Bill which presupposed "criminal intentions or tendencies on the part of the English workmen as a class."

The move of the Government was then to introduce two Bills—a Trade Union Bill and a Criminal Law Amendment Bill. It was apparent that one was the complement of the other, for they were taken together in the House and ultimately received the Royal Assent on the same day. The opposition to the trade unionists, in connection with these measures, came from many unexpected quarters; from men who had worked with the Trade Union leaders in many other matters.[1]

The Bills became Acts. The unionists looked upon the Trade Union Act as a charter legalising the unions and felt that, had the Government passed that Bill and done nothing more it would have been entitled to the gratitude of the working-class for "fully and faithfully redeeming the promise they had made";[2] but the Criminal Law Amendment Act would have to be repealed.

The Lords had introduced an amendment into the Trade Union Bill, of which Mr. Bruce said that "any man standing by a factory door might be convicted by it"; and the amendment was opposed by

[1] *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements, and Labour Leaders.* The present writer has added something, but this sketch of the fight over the Labour Laws is mainly built on the information given in Howell's work.

[2] *Memorandum and Digest of the Trade Union and Criminal Law Amendment Acts* (*1871*), prepared for the Trade Union Congress.

the Government. Nevertheless, it was carried, and of those who voted for it 130 were members for leading industrial centres, and of that number 101 were Liberals. Well might the Parliamentary Committee state, in a manifesto, that Parliament "had deliberately endeavoured to strengthen the hands of the capitalists at the expense of the liberties and independence of the working-class"; and well might the committee specially appointed to watch the Bill point out to Congress how the voting had gone, and ask the organisations to note the fact and "compare it with the professions on the hustings, where most of the men (named) promised to vote for an honest Trade Union Bill."

The Parliamentary Committee drew up a memorial, explaining the attitude of the unions towards the Criminal Law Amendment Act and giving a list of cases which had been taken under that measure. There had been sixty prosecutions, and six women had been sent to gaol. The memorial was sent to the Home Secretary and, on March 21st, 1872, a deputation met him to discuss it. Mr. Bruce drew attention to the fact that the Government had opposed the Lords' amendment.

The union leaders enlisted the sympathy of Mr. (afterwards Sir) W. V. Harcourt and Henry James (afterwards Lord James of Hereford), and with their assistance, and that of Mr. R. S. (later, Justice) Wright, a Bill was drafted and came up for reading a second time on July 5th, 1872; but the debate was adjourned on account of "the lateness of the hour," and the measure was disposed of for that session. The picketing clauses of the recent Act were defended by Mr. Bruce and, Howell tells us, the whole tenor of his speech was quite opposite to the attitude he took in several of the interviews with the

Trade Union leaders, and "a flat contradiction of his letter to his constituents," on April 2nd.

Subsequently, Mr. Harcourt brought up the matter on a motion for the adjournment of the House. His object was to get information as to whether the Government intended to amend, or define, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and whether they would afford facilities for a measure having that object. Harcourt[1] "begged the indulgence of the House while he took a course he was not in the habit of taking; making observations on his question, and then concluding with a motion—for the adjournment—in order to put himself in order."

The attitude taken by Mr. Gladstone on this occasion was much resented by the advocates of the trade unions. Howell describes Gladstone's reply as "chiefly jocular, devoted to a criticism of the way Mr. Harcourt raised the question," and Henry Crompton, at the Leeds Congress, spoke of the Liberal leader's "flippant refusal" of the demands of Congress.[2]

Possibly, it was not so much what Mr. Gladstone said as the way in which he said it. He is recorded to have stated[3] that "if motions for adjournment were to be made in relation to questions standing upon the Notice Paper, the House must be prepared for an increase of whatever inconvenience attended the practice. He was aware of the strong and patriotic motives which influenced his Right Honourable and

[1] *Hansard*, 3. S., Vol. CCXII.

[2] In the same Report, Crompton said, "Parliament has trifled long enough in this matter, playing the game of deception; declaring, at one time, that they would do what was wanted in order to avert the rising popular indignation; and then, when the agitation had subsided, they passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act in spite of their pledged word which they falsely and perfidiously broke."

[3] *Hansard*, 3. S., Vol. CCXII.

learned friend: but there were multitudes of honourable members under the influence of equally strong and patriotic motives, and it was only fair to admit that these motions of adjournment were always made under the influence of strong and patriotic motives." Gladstone, "being aware of the importance and difficulty of the subject . . . was sorry to say that the Government were not prepared to bring in a Bill" that session. He reminded the House that it was the House of Lords which made the picketing clause more stringent and that, when the Government tried to restore the existing Act to its original state they had been overruled by the House. "That," he said, "showed the division of opinion in Parliament on the question; and, as the Act was only passed in 1871, the Government had not the least hope, if they introduced a Bill on the subject, that they would, after so limited an experience, be able to induce Parliament to reverse the decision already come to. On that ground he was reluctantly obliged to answer the question in the negative."

So the fight went on, and was embittered by the prosecution and sentence of the gas-stokers, from which time the trade unions insisted on the total repeal of the hateful Criminal Law Amendment Act, hope of compromise in regard to which disappeared: and to this demand was added one for the repeal of the Master and Servants Acts and an amendment of the Conspiracy Laws.

On May 12th, 1873, Harcourt introduced a Bill repealing the Criminal Law Amendment Act, but failed to get it to a second reading. In consequence of this, Mr. Auberon Herbert gave notice of motion for the appointment of a Select Committee "to consider what change it is desirable to make in the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1871." By a majority

of four, the motion was defeated; and thirteen members of the Government voted against it. Later, Harcourt moved a resolution to amend the Conspiracy Laws; "those exceptional laws which enforce the civil contract of servants by criminal penalties, are unjust in principle and oppressive in their operation"; and subsequently notice of a Bill was given.

In the north and west of England and in South Wales many meetings were held, as part of the agitation against the Labour Laws, and, on June 2nd, a great demonstration, organised by the London Trades Council and the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress, was held in Hyde Park.

Harcourt's Bill, to amend the Conspiracy Laws, was introduced on June 12th. The Bill was backed, among others, by A. J. Mundella, Henry James, and Douglas Straight, and provided that no prosecution for conspiracy should be instituted unless the offence was indictable by Statute or was punishable under the provision of some Statute with reference to violence, threats, intimidation or molestation. Under the measure, no prosecution was to be instituted except with the consent of the Attorney or Solicitor-General, and persons convicted were not to be liable to any greater penalties than those provided by law for such cases. The Bill proposed to make the consent of the Law Officers of the Crown necessary for a prosecution, because many of the magistrates who dealt with such cases were employers. The Bill was mutilated and abandoned, and at the beginning of the following year Liberalism was routed at the polls.

To the surprise and disappointment of the Labour leaders, almost the first thing the new Conservative Government did was to appoint a Commission on

the Master and Servants Acts and the Conspiracy Laws. The appointment was thought to be a deliberate attempt of the Tories to shelve the question, and the London members of the Parliamentary Committee immediately held a meeting of protest. The question, they held, was ripe for legislation, and had been thrashed out by the Commission which reported in 1869. There was a difficulty in obtaining friends of Labour to sit on the Commission, and it was only an hour or two before the names were to be submitted to the Queen that Mr. Burt, Mr. Macdonald, and Mr. Thomas Hughes were invited to join ; and the two last-named accepted the invitation. Complaints were subsequently made because Macdonald and Hughes had not consulted the Parliamentary Committee on the matter and that, at a congratulatory banquet to Burt and Macdonald in celebration of their return to Parliament—held in the evening of the day the seats were accepted—they gave no explanation of their position nor said a word in support of the proposal for a Royal Commission. Potter charged Macdonald with being a traitor to the working-class by accepting a seat on the Commission. Macdonald's explanation was that he only accepted the position on being assured by Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary, that the inquiry was intended to facilitate legislation and that, if he and Mr. Hughes had not accepted the position, others would have been appointed. This explanation was accepted at a meeting of the Council of the National Association of Miners at Leeds, which passed a resolution expressing the "utmost confidence" in Macdonald, during the sitting of the Commission, and calling on Potter to retract his "unmanly and uncalled-for remarks."

The Committee continued hostile to the Com-

mission—which it subsequently described as a "mere excuse for delay"—and pledged itself to "continue to protest against the whole scheme as being a surprise, an intrigue, and a fraud." At the same time it recommended the trade unionists "to refuse to have anything to do with it either in the way of giving evidence or of recognising in any way any action, pro or con, of the Commission." Howell was requested to give evidence, but remained true to the decision of the Committee and refused to do so. For this he was excluded from the lobby of the House of Commons, but was soon readmitted. Subsequently, certain Labour men came forward as witnesses, the principal being George Shipton, of the London Trades Council, Andrew Boa, of the Glasgow Trades Council, and John Sale, a prominent worker, of Birmingham.

Prior to the appearance of the Report of the Commission, the Parliamentary Committee was again called to great activity. This was due to the appearance of a Friendly Societies Bill, the object of which was to repeal the Trade Union Act of 1871, and consolidate the law on friendly societies. The measure was based on the assumption that the objects of a trade union and a friendly society were similar, and the Committee succeeded in getting it withdrawn.

The Majority Report of the Commission was in favour of the abolition of the penal clauses of the Master and Servants Acts, a slight modification of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and a slight limitation of the law of conspiracy. Macdonald, in a separate report, advocated more drastic reform of the Master and Servants Acts, the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and endorsed Mr. Harcourt's Bill of 1873 concerning conspiracy. The upshot was the passing of the Employers and

Workmen's Act, the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act, the Trade Union Amendment Act (1876), and the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

For what they had received the delegates at the Trade Union Congress were truly thankful, and all, with the exception of three or four, voted for a motion thanking the Home Secretary for what he had done.

Such is the brief outline of the events which passed in the six years ending 1876, years in which Congress, as a body, could not see its way to do anything practical to aid the return of working-men to Parliament. In the face of the "flippancy" and "jocularity" of Liberalism and the "surprise, intrigue, and fraud" of Toryism, it seems strange that an effort was not made by the Trade Union movement to take matters into its own hands by securing the presence of working-men in Parliament. It must, however, be remembered that, at the time, Trade Unionism, on which so much store was set, was fighting for its very existence and every man was needed in the fighting-line. We have noted the hostility with which the idea of Labour Representation was met by the governing classes, and it is quite conceivable that the Labour movement had enough to do in fighting for Trade Unionism. Then, too, it must be recollected that, while the working-class not only accepted, but prized, Trade Unionism, they had yet to be converted to the idea of Labour representation. Would the leaders have been wise to relax their efforts on behalf of Trade Unionism and set about a very uphill propaganda in favour of Labour Representation? In trying to secure both a Labour party and a firmly established Trade Union movement neither might have been attained; and the

trade unions had taken years of labour and sacrifice to bring them to the position they then occupied, and were just beginning to feel their strength and have hopes of reaping the harvest of the seed sown for so many years. Moreover, the trade unions would, as subsequent events have shown, form a basis upon which to organise a Labour party.

When, however, the safety of trade unions was assured, the attention of Congress was not turned to the cause of Labour Representation. In 1876, a resolution stating that "It was the duty of Trade Unionists," etc. was again passed, the voting being 71 to 9, and in 1877 and 1878 similar resolutions were passed, calling upon "all Trade Unionists to do the utmost in their power to return competent working-men to Parliament and to agitate for manhood suffrage as the basis of representation."

In 1878, Howell's *Conflicts of Capital and Labour* was published, and in it he dwelt on what he considered were fit objects upon which to expend Trade Union funds. These included the provision of better homes and the sending of craftsmen to study, at exhibitions, the products of their competitors in the industrial race; the collection of statistics and the preparation of reports on the style of workmanship, the material, wages, cost of living, hours and food, and on matters "of enduring interest to all classes." Labour Representation was not specified as something on which the money of the unions should be spent; and Howell was a typical Trade Union leader.

Three years later, the resolution—now a hardy annual—took a slightly more practical turn. The return of working-men to Parliament was a matter of "paramount importance," and the Parliamentary Committee was instructed to give "trustworthy

working-men candidates all the assistance they possibly could." The following year, an attempt was made to identify Congress still further with the movement for Labour Representation. George Shipton moved a resolution the purport of which was the establishing of a special fund, "by the organised working-men," with which to contest local and Parliamentary elections and support any men who were elected. Congress, however, could not tolerate this, and, by 63 votes to 43, substituted a declaration in favour of the payment of members and election expenses by the State. In 1883, a similar resolution was again moved, and a similar amendment was again put forward; and this time the movers of the resolution, seeing the temper of the Congress, accepted the amendment. John Wilson, of the Durham Miners, at the 1884 Congress, brought forward a resolution regretting that so few Labour men had been returned to Parliament, and declaring that such a state of things would continue unless the working-class would "effectively organise themselves" for that object. Again, payment of members was moved as an amendment, but it was referred to the Standing Orders Committee to be drafted as a separate motion. Mr. T. R. Threlfall then moved a further amendment to the effect that the Parliamentary Committee should be empowered to form a fund and to appeal for funds for the election and maintenance of members. So strong was the feeling that Trade Union funds should be *tabu*, so far as Labour Representation was concerned, that Threlfall's amendment received only four votes. The original resolution was unanimously carried. The following year, Threlfall was President of the Congress, and, in his address, expressed the opinion that Trade Unionism was at a critical period of its existence. It must, he held,

either lead or follow; form the nucleus of a Labour party of the future, or sink into comparative insignificance.[1]

In 1886, eighteen years after the meeting of the first Congress, trade unions set up some machinery to secure Labour representation. The decision to do this was the result of a resolution by Threlfall, which was carried by 59 votes to 9. It held that it was essential to form a Labour Electoral Committee to "act in conjunction with the Parliamentary Committee, the Labour representatives in the House of Commons, and the friends of Labour Representation throughout the country." The proposal was that such a Committee should be elected annually by Congress; and a committee was there and then established.[2]

But, the following year, this branch of the Trade Union movement, for the return of working-men to Parliament, separated from Congress and became an independent body, with the title of the Labour Electoral Association.

To this Association a separate chapter must be devoted, but we must first see how the Labour Representation movement had progressed from the time of the advent of the first Labour members, in 1874, to the time of the establishing of the Electoral Association; through years when the part played by the Trade Union Congress was the part of words and not deeds.

[1] *The Coming Force: the Labour Movement.*

[2] For the purpose, the United Kingdom was divided into eight divisions, the representation to be as follows: East, 2; West, 3; North, 5; South, 3; Midlands, 4; Scotland, 3; Ireland, 2; and Wales, 1. The members of the Committee were empowered to form electoral committees in their own districts.

CHAPTER VI

LIBERAL-LABOURISM: THE RISE OF A PARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Extremes are dangerous; a middle estate is safest; as a middle temper of the sea, between a still calm and a violent tempest, is most helpful to convey the mariner to his haven.—SWINNOCK.

THE quotation, at the head of this chapter, admirably expresses the attitude of early Labour members in their political work. They were not extremists themselves, and had little patience with those who were; and to be, in their eyes, an extremist, was to be, in the eyes of many, an impossiblist. Working-men by birth and upbringing, Trade Union leaders through hard work and business capacity, and Liberals in politics, they were fully alive to the fact that the entrance of working-men into influential political life and the presence, in the House of Commons, of men who had earned their living by the sweat of their brow for by far the greater part of their life, meant a silent revolution. They had had practical experience of the bitter resistance offered by the governing classes to any attempt at what those classes considered to be a trespass upon their rights and a usurpation of their powers; they knew the difficulty of securing an inch, and that the difficulty was greater if a yard were clamoured for; and they were feeling their way, with "prudence and moderation" as their watchword. They were eminently "practical" men, some of them with no proper appreciation of the

utility of ideals. Howell, evidently, was one of these. He declares[1] that the "aspirations of Labour differ in character and degree according to time, circumstances, and the 'dreamer of dreams' who undertook to voice them. Plato, More, Bacon, Owen, Ruskin, Bellamy, each had ideals; but poor humanity is not much the better materially for any of them." Even Howell might have omitted Ruskin and Owen from the list.

With the passing of the Labour Laws of 1875 and 1876, and the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the leaders of the working-class were purely Liberal in politics, and hailed Mr. Gladstone as their chief. It was this which accounted, very largely, for the decline of the Labour Representation League. The League had, however, made its mark on the working-class movement; but by 1880 Labour and Liberalism were on quite friendly terms.

There were not many Labour candidates at this election, and only one fresh victory; that of Henry Broadhurst. In the metropolis, George Shipton ran as a Liberal, and was opposed by both Liberal and Tory, the former, an iron merchant, being nominated by Daniel Guile. Shipton polled 799. At Tower Hamlets, Lucraft polled 5,572 with four candidates for two seats; Macdonald and Mr. Burt went back for Stafford and Morpeth, the latter unopposed. Broadhurst ran hand in hand with William Woodall, a Liberal manufacturer, against Robert Heath and Dr. Kenealy. Joseph Arch fought the Wilton division as a Radical, as the candidate of the Liberal Society, and with, of course, the bulk of the Liberal element at his back.[2]

[1] *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements, and Labour Leaders*, Vol. II.

[2] Arch polled 397 votes against 819 for his opponent.

Broadhurst's constituency was Stoke-on-Trent, which he had been nursing for two years, and he was the candidate of the Liberal and Labour Party. He was returned by a combined majority of over 10,000 votes. Broadhurst has written of events after the poll[1] that "the two members were called upon to drive through the whole length of the Potteries district. In many cases work had not yet been resumed, and the whole countryside seemed to have given itself up to the celebration of the great victory. In Langton market-place many enthusiastic supporters secured me and carried me round and round the square shoulder high." Broadhurst has also placed it on record that[2] "it is not too much to say that, on this occasion, the wives of the voters, and the working-girls, showed a power and influence over the fortunes of the election which I have never since witnessed, in the same degree, either in my own contests or in the great number of elections in which I have taken part all over Great Britain."

For his maintenance in Parliament, Broadhurst received £150 a year, out of which he had to pay for any clerical assistance he required.

Joseph Arch had been brought into prominence by his leadership in the formation of the Agricultural Labourers' Union and, in 1877, he had been invited to stand for both Woodstock and Southwark; but he refused to do so, largely on account of the anger and jealousy of the other leaders of the Union at the idea of his entering Parliament.[3]

In 1880, he was invited by the Liberal Society of Wilton to contest that division, and consented to do so. His opponent was the Honourable Sidney

[1] *Autobiography* (London, 1901). [2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Autobiography* (London, 1898).

Herbert who styled himself an "Independent," but who had mostly been found in the lobby of the Tory Government and who had voted for the retention of the "cat" in the Army—a point on which Mr. Arch and his followers of the soil were particularly sensitive in view of the large number of agricultural labourers who entered the Army. The abolition of flogging in the Army was a plank in Mr. Arch's platform. His description of himself at the time was —"a thorough Liberal"; he was an ardent follower of Gladstone who, with Lord Hartington and Earl Granville, was much praised during the fight.

Mr. Arch did not canvass, a fact which, according to the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, was unique in the history of the constituency. His expenses were paid from private sources.

Broadhurst was a very active member; nor were his activities confined to one sphere. He succeeded in getting Hanley made a Quarter Sessions town, that place being more convenient for the district, and also getting Mr. Brinley—"who belonged to one of the old families in the neighbourhood and practised in the circuit"—appointed as the first Recorder. Broadhurst tells us,[1] "I took pleasure in my success in this direction, which entirely disproved the theory that a Labour representative could be of no service to the general and commercial interests of the constituency and would confine his attention to voicing the desires of the working-class only."

The Parliamentary Committee drew up a Bill for alleviating the lot of the women chain-makers and another Bill placing official election expenses on the rates. Both Bills were introduced by Broadhurst. The former was defeated, and this was due largely, Broadhurst held, to the "Woman's Rights people"

[1] *Autobiography.*

—and the latter failed to secure a place in the ballot. These measures were dealt with in 1885. The following year, the hours of polling were extended from four till eight o'clock—an extension for which Labour had agitated for years and one which meant much to working-men candidates.

In 1885, the Parliamentary Committee was able to report to the Congress, at Southport, that working-men had, for the first time, been appointed Justices of the Peace. Broadhurst had worked for this innovation. These Labour members of the Bench were, Messrs. Slatter (Secretary of the Manchester Typographers' Association), Birtwistle (Secretary of the Cotton Weavers' Association of Accrington), and Fielding (Secretary of the Bolton Cotton Spinners). With his colleagues, Broadhurst was also active in agitating for better inspection of mines and the appointment of workmen as factory inspectors. In 1885, the best wage-paying firms were admitted to compete for some of the Government printing.

A measure was also passed, about this time, for regulating life on canal boats and, under this Act, Broadhurst was offered a post as inspector. It was worth £600 a year, but he declined the offer. His reason, given in his *Autobiography*, was that he was "deeply immersed in public work at the time, of both a political and industrial nature, and had in charge several important Labour questions in the House of Commons." It seemed to him that he "had no right to sacrifice these things" to his "private advantage and personal welfare."

Before coming to the General Election of 1885, mention must be made of events concerning a by-election, at Leicester, in the previous year. Mr. P. A. Taylor, the Radical member retired. Leicester had supported Bradlaugh, so Holyoake, with the

object of aiding the settlement of the Parliamentary oath question, allowed his name to go before the Liberal Council. In his address, he said,[1] "If you think it worth while to assist in opening a door through which a gentleman, and an honest man, can enter without shame or humiliation, I offer you my services." The names before the Council, in addition to Holyoake's, were those of Messrs. Chamberlain, Frederic Harrison, J. Passmore Edwards, Joseph Arch, and Herbert Spencer. Holyoake received 50 votes, and no candidate reached three figures. *The New York Tribune*[2] said Holyoake was "neither Tory, Radical, Social Democrat nor Reformer-by-confiscation, but a thick-and-thin, up-and-down, now-and-all-the-time-follower of Mr. Gladstone."

The 1885 election was fought under new conditions; the labourers possessed the vote, and there had been a redistribution of seats. Again, there were a good number of Labour men in the field.

The Redistribution Act had divided Stoke-on-Trent, and this led Broadhurst to decide not to contest the constituency again. The difficulty of retaining the seat appeared to him to be great, although he believed afterwards that he had much exaggerated the improbability of winning it single-handed. The creation of one-member constituencies by the Act did, in some cases, have a detrimental effect upon Labour candidatures. Local prejudice was stronger. So Broadhurst was adopted as the Liberal candidate at Bordesley, and won the seat, against a wealthy brewer, by 1,200 votes. He was, by this time, whole-heartedly with the Liberal party, spoke for it in the other divisions of Birmingham, and met with a good deal of denunciation in consequence from a small, but growing section of the

[1] McCabe's *Life and Letters of Holyoake.* [2] *Ibid.*

movement. He has written[1] that "utterly unfounded allegations of disloyalty to the Labour cause, whose falsity had been exposed and denounced time after time by responsible authorities of the Trades Unions, were hashed up again and served to the Bordesley electors as a savoury dish, in the hope that time and opportunity to expose the slanders would fail me."

Joseph Arch won his way to Parliament as the representative of North-West Norfolk, which had been held by a Tory for sixty or seventy years. The Labourers' Union was largely instrumental in putting him forward, and some of the middle-class Liberals marked out Sir Bampton Gurdon as their man. A ballot was taken, and Arch received double the number of votes accorded the knight. Mr. Arch's opponent was Lord Henry Bentinck, and in his address he described the contest as "a fight between a live Lord and a live labourer." "As far as I know," the address proceeded, "my brethren of West Norfolk are not going to desert me for the gaudy toys of the Primrose League. To the labourers of Norfolk, in every division, I would say, follow the example of your brethren in the south and deliver your country from the bondage of Toryism."[2] Mr. Arch's "platform" was Free Trade for all articles of food; complete reform of the Land Laws; local government by boards for county districts; compensation for improvements in the soil; total abolition of the Law of Distress; power to local bodies to purchase land at a "reasonable purchase value" and to relet the same in allotments; disestablishment of the Church; free, secular education; Sunday closing of public-houses, except to bona-fide travellers; abolition of perpetual pensions,

[1] *Autobiography.* [2] *Reynolds's Newspaper.*

and equal laws for all parts of the United Kingdom. The Tories fought hard, and not always, according to Mr. Arch, with creditable weapons; but the Liberal-Labour man won by 640 votes, polling 4,461 against 3,821 for the lord.

Mr. Arch's sponsors were—strange reading in the light of after events—Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Collings.

When elected, Mr. Arch was receiving a salary of £2 10s. a week from his union (a reduction of 10s. having been made in 1879), which continued to pay him that sum until the organisation began to break up soon after 1885. It was vigorously assailed from without by those who had declared themselves its best friends, and there was jealousy within. With a fall of wages in 1890, there was a temporary revival; the flicker of the candle before it went out.

The 1885 election saw a new party in the political arena; the party for Socialism. During the five previous years, the Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist League, the Fabian Society, and other Socialist organisations had been founded, and at this election Socialist candidates took the field.

It was in 1885 that Mr. John Burns fought his first Parliamentary contest. He ran at Nottingham as a Social Democrat, and had, of course, to face the opposition of Liberal and Tory. On the polling day there was great excitement, and windows were broken. The police made an attempt to clear the market-place, and, the crowd offering resistance, they drew their staves and charged. The people retaliated with stones, and many were injured and removed to the hospital. At nine in the evening the mayor telegraphed for the 15th Hussars, which were stationed at Leeds, and the troops were ordered to be in readiness. There were, however,

not sufficient horse-boxes on the railway to convey the mounts, and the troops were unable to move. When this news was received in Nottingham, an urgent appeal was sent to Sheffield, and about midnight 108 men of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Regiment left Sheffield for Nottingham, where a serious riot had broken out.[1]

Mr. Burns, who had fair organisation at his back, polled 598 votes against 6,639 for the Liberal and 3,797 for the Tory. The Social Democratic Federation—formerly known as the Democratic Federation—had been founded in 1883, and in 1885, with more courage than political sagacity, it ran Mr. J. Williams at Hampstead and Mr. J. Fielding at Kennington. Mr. Williams described himself as a Socialist, and polled twenty-seven votes. Mr. Fielding, who wrote "Labour" after his name, polled thirty-two.

Labour men returned, in addition to Messrs. Burt, Broadhurst, and Arch, were William Abraham, W. Crawford, W. R. Cremer, C. Fenwick, G. Howell, Joseph Leicester, B. Pickard, and John Wilson. Several had a straight fight. Howell, at North-East Bethnal Green, against only Tory opposition, polled 3,095. He ran as a Liberal. Cremer, under similar circumstances, but running as a Labour man at Haggerston, polled 2,736. Pickard, of the Yorkshire miners, was returned for Normanton, Wilson and Fenwick were for the Northumberland miners, Crawford for the Durham miners, and Mr. Abraham for the South Wales miners. Leicester, who was secretary of the Glass Workers' Society, was returned for South-West Ham. During this campaign, the Land Restoration League ran five candidates in Scotland.

[1] *Reynolds's Newspaper.*

The polls were: Morrison Davidson (Greenock), 65; Wallace Greaves (Tradeston, Glasgow), 86; John Murdock (Partick, Glasgow), 74; Shaw Maxwell (Blackfriars and Hutchesontown, Glasgow), 1,158; William Forsyth (Bridgeton, Glasgow), 978. The candidates had been in their constituencies for two years.

There was now a group of eleven genuine working-men in Parliament, or, strictly speaking, one of ten, for in February, 1885, Gladstone offered Broadhurst the post of Under-Secretary at the Home Office, an offer which the latter accepted. The General Election had taken place in June. All the successful candidates were Liberals and followers of Gladstone. On Labour questions they almost invariably acted together, but beyond an occasional formal meeting there was nothing in the nature of organisation. Consultation in the lobbies was the most frequent way by which a line of action was decided upon. It may be noted also that they always obtained the attentive ear of the House.

The Labour group was reduced to ten by the 1886 election. Broadhurst, as a Liberal Home Ruler, won West Nottingham from Colonel Seeley, but Arch, Wilson, and Leicester were defeated, the first-named by the narrow majority of twenty. Home Rule had caused bitter division in the North-West Norfolk ranks. Recruits to the Labour group were found, however, in J. Rowlands, who was returned for East Finsbury, and Cunninghame Graham, for North-West Lanark.

On Home Rule, all the Labour members were whole-heartedly with Gladstone. Prior to the election a manifesto was issued signed by Arch and Leicester and "approved by other Labour representatives in Parliament."[1] It was addressed to the

[1] *Reynolds's Newspaper*, June 20th, 1886.

"Sons of toil and Artisans of England," and appealed to them to rally to the banner of Gladstone, "the hero of a hundred fights, the champion of Liberty, of the people's cause and the public peace," rather than to the banner of Lord Salisbury, "the upholder of class privilege as opposed to popular rights, the enemy of your recent franchise, the coercionist and would-be exterminator of millions of horny-handed sons of toil from their Motherland to make way for flocks and herds." The General Council of the Social Democratic Federation also issued a manifesto stating that the cause of the Irish people was the cause of the English people, and declaring, "the men who oppress you, crush them; the classes who hate you, vilify them."

Since 1886, the lowest number of the Labour group has been ten, the number that year and after the election of 1900.

We now come to the Labour Electoral Association, which originated, as we saw, in 1886, the year in which eleven men, who typified its ideals, were returned to the House of Commons.

CHAPTER VII

THE LABOUR ELECTORAL ASSOCIATION

"So long as the great mass of the people of this country see that there are men in earnest who are advocating a great reform like this, they will wait and wait patiently. They may want more; but so long as they believe that men are honestly and resolutely striving for reform, and will not be satisfied till they get it, the peace and safety of this country . . . are guaranteed."—COBDEN ON HOUSEHOLD SUFFRAGE.

THE Labour Electoral Association was a Radical organisation. It had a profound belief in the honesty of the Radicals, no matter to what class they belonged, and it accepted the Radical programme. It believed in lending its influence to the advanced wing of the Liberal party and in trusting to the combined force to coerce Whiggery, and policies which were Liberal only in name, rather than in regarding all Liberals as politicians tarred with the same brush and so working on independent lines. Independence, to the Labour Electoral Association, meant the sacrifice of brains, influence, and experience for the sake of a technicality—the theoretical oneness of Radicalism and official Liberalism—and because of an unjustifiable distrust of men who had neither worked with their hands nor had occasion to rejoice at a shilling rise in wages. The method of the Electoral Association was to co-operate with all, no matter of what class or party, who were in favour of their programme; although, inside the organisation, middle-class men were not welcomed

in prominent positions. In 1888, the Association decided that all candidates and conference delegates should be either working-men or of working-class origin — an obvious inheritance from the Trade Union Congress. The aim was to return Liberal-Labour men to Parliament.

By the time the Labour Electoral Association was founded, activity to secure representation on local bodies was becoming general. Between the years 1882 and 1892 the number of representatives on local bodies increased from twelve to two hundred,[1] and in 1895 there were six hundred Labour representatives on Borough Councils alone.[2] Moreover, Liberal-Labourism, for which the Association stood, had shown that it had come to stay and did not meet with much opposition from the Liberal party. The friendliness of Liberalism to Liberal-Labourism was doubtless hastened by the Home Rule split, after which the Liberal party needed all the help it could obtain. Mr. Schnadhorst, the organiser who led in the work of rallying the Liberal ranks after the split and the defeat of 1886, was announcing that the Liberal party would support Labour candidates "where possible."[3] "Where possible" meant, it may be safely inferred, in constituencies where a Liberal-Labour candidate had good organisation at his back and a fair chance of winning in a straight fight. Judging by their public utterances, the national leaders had no objection to the return of Liberal working-men, but opposition was often met with from the local chiefs. Schnadhorst wrote to the secretary of the Metropolitan Radical Association: "The difficulties attending the question of Labour representation are very grave; but they do not arise from

[1] *Annual Report of Labour Electoral Association*, 1892.
[2] *Ibid.*, 1895. [3] *Workman's Times*, June 20th, 1890.

the leaders of the party. Wherever a demand for a Labour candidate exists, and a suitable man is within reach," the Liberal head-quarters "earnestly bespeak for him the generous support of the Liberal Association"; [1] that is, the local Liberal organisation. This, the *Workman's Times*—a journal which was by no means likely to err in favour of Liberalism—believed "in practice . . . to be the case, as a rule, though" it was "afraid that instances have been known in which Labour candidates have been assigned to districts in which it was known with comparative certainty that the seats were not likely to be won." It must be admitted that, in many constituencies where, at least, a Liberal-Labour man might have been returned, the working-men did not bring to bear the pressure they might have brought on the local Liberal Association; neither were they as active as they might have been in the spade-work of canvassing and registration. Although, of course, allowance must be made for the political complexion of the *Workman's Times* and the tactics it favoured, there is, possibly, a good deal of truth in its assertion [2] that, when the leaders of the working-men were "brought into the presence of the aristocrats of the [Liberal] party, they act as though they had been suddenly deprived of their back-bone. They are all smiles and amiability and full of acquiescence in the suggestions of the wire-pullers, with the

[1] *Workman's Times*, March 27th, 1891. The *Workman's Times* was founded in 1890, by Messrs. John Andrew and Co., of Ashton-under-Lyne. It was published in London, and localised editions were issued for about two years. Mr. Joseph Burgess was the editor and, during the latter part of the paper's existence, the owner. The paper was a consistent advocate of Independent Labour representation and became more militant and socialistic as time went on. It stopped in 1894.

[2] March 27th, 1891.

almost invariable result that they find foisted upon them, as their Parliamentary representatives, men in whom, in many instances, they are forced to confess they have no confidence."

During this period, Lord Salisbury, and other leaders of the Conservative party, repeatedly declared that they had no objection to the return of working-men to the House of Commons (Conservative working-men, we must assume), and placed the blame for opposition upon their local leaders.

So much for the attitude of the great parties to Labour at the time when the Labour Electoral Association was well out on the sea of politics; for, in 1890, it held its fourth Congress. In that year 120 delegates attended the Congress and represented 750,000 members. During the year, branches had been formed in Middlesex, Sunderland, Ipswich, Swansea, Birmingham, Birkenhead, Shipley, Gateshead, Leeds, Hull, London, Bristol, and Sutton-in-Ashfield, and arrangements were in progress for opening up Scotland and Ireland. The year before, at the Burslem Congress, the delegates had numbered fifty-eight and represented 370,000 members, and, at the second Congress, held at Liverpool, forty delegates represented 600,000 members.[1] There had thus been considerable progress from the second Congress in 1888 to the fourth in 1890.

The Association worked largely through the Trades Councils and would not associate itself with candidates of the Social Democratic Federation or the independent political organisations which sprang up in the late eighties and early nineties and subsequently united in the Independent Labour Party. At the 1890 Congress, a resolution was passed refusing support to candidates whose can-

[1] Report of Secretary (T. R. Threlfall), 1890.

didatures had not been endorsed by the local Trades Council "or a properly organised Labour Federation." The same resolution declared that "the action of any few men in forcing a candidate on a constituency where the general feeling of the working-class is hostile to such a candidate is an error of judgment, as such a course of action is likely to bring the cause into disrepute." The mover of the resolution—one of the Nottingham delegates—was "against propagandist candidatures."[1]

The method of the Labour Electoral Association was that usually adopted by the Labour Representation League nearly twenty years before; claiming the right to nominate one man in "double-barrelled" constituencies, or having a test ballot to decide which of the candidates nominated should go to the poll. It was opposed to three-cornered fights. For this reason, Mr. Hardie was not supported at Mid-Lanark, in 1888, as he would have been had the Electoral Association succeeded in getting him nominated by the Liberal Association—a course to which that body would not agree. In running as a third candidate, Mr. Hardie was going against the declared policy of the Electoral Association, of which he was a member. The Association was strong in Nottingham, and at a meeting of the Trades Council of that town and district, on August 8th, 1890, an invitation was received from the Liberal Executive, inviting the co-operation of the Council to place Labour candidates in three wards of the borough. It was moved that the invitation should be accepted, and an amendment to the effect that the Council should remain independent of the Liberal and Tory parties

[1] This gentleman, Bailey by name, was extremely sanguine. He declared that "in the next two years, they should have, at least, a hundred Labour representatives in the House."—*Workman's Times.*

received only four votes. The opinion was expressed that independent Labour representation was "utterly impossible." Although, however, the Association was always ready, not to say eager, to co-operate with the Liberals, some of its branches would not allow members to be attached to other political parties. This was the case at Bristol,[1] where membership was to consist of "all wage-workers of either sex" who signified their adherence to the objects and programme, and who did not "belong to other political parties, and who subscribe not less than sixpence a year to the funds."[2] At Dover, the first of the "objects" was "to organise the workers of the borough as an Independent Political Party."

The Labour Electoral Association was associated, directly or indirectly, with almost all the Liberal-Labour candidates at the General Election of 1892, and it entirely dissociated itself from the independent men. At the fifth Congress of the Association, held in Leicester, two or three months before the election, it decided to support not only Liberal-Labour men, but all candidates who were "prepared to support Labour principles." Congress also decided to appeal for funds, but, in no case, was "help to be rendered unless the candidate had submitted himself to the various trades and Trades Councils in the division." Nor would Congress commit itself to the support of all candidates adopted by a trades council. The Association supported Mr. Illingworth, the Liberal, in his opposition to Mr. Ben Tillett in West Bradford, on the grounds that it would be no party to a course of action which would give a Liberal seat to the Tory party. Mr. Tillett received

[1] The Bristol organisation was entitled the "Trades Council Labour Electoral Association."

[2] Constitution and Rules.

much support from the Fabian Society and, at the 1892 Congress, one of the Bradford delegates declared that candidates should not receive support if funds were sent them from "the Fabian Society, the Carlton Club, and other societies not recognised as Labour organisations."[1]

It may be observed, in this connection, that there was something curiously paradoxical about the policy of the old Trade Union leaders and their followers. They were willing enough to co-operate with and, at times, stand aside for, middle-class Liberals at the polls, yet it was they who, by amendment of the Standing Orders, made "working-men only" the policy of the Trade Union Congress by seeking to exclude all who were not either Trade Union officials or men actually at work at their trade. They were repeatedly declaiming against a Labour policy which was a purely class policy yet were ardent trade unionists; and Trade Unionism is essentially a class movement. Again, when the Liberal-Labour leaders sought to justify their presence in the House, and the policy for which they stood, they pointed, almost invariably, to measures for the regulation of industrial life which, although in the long run they might prove profitable to employers, were designed primarily for the benefit of the wage-earning population.

It must, of course, be understood that, while the great majority of the Electoral Association were Liberal-Labourites, the independent element often made its voice heard at the Congress meetings; but it was always voted down. The hostility of the Association to independent tactics is well illustrated by an announcement of a meeting after the 1895

[1] This was Mr. Loewy, who announced that he had travelled all night on purpose to discuss the question.

election, an election at which the Independent Labour Party and the Social Democratic Federation were responsible for a sprinkling of independent candidates. The object of the meeting[1] was to initiate work which would make for the progress of the Labour movement in a "safe, practicable, and steady" way. The announcement declared: "Disaster has fallen on us, not from *without* but from *within*. The Labour Barque has been treacherously piloted upon rocks by frothy ecstatic dreamers and administrative failures, who seek to ruin and destroy, by spite and spleen, all homogeneity and unity in the ranks of Labour. Save our representatives, our old men, our wages, our unemployed, our hearths and homes from their cruel, crossheaded and blighting influence."[2]

But the Electoral Association was breaking up. At its eighth Congress, in 1895, there were only eighty-nine delegates; thirty less than there were five years before. It had become closely identified with the Liberal party. The Report in 1895 stated that the Government, "while not enabled to pass all the Labour legislation the people desired," had "shown itself sympathetic to the Labour cause"; and the Hon. Philip Stanhope, M.P., who, in the Liberal interest, had opposed Mr. Hyndman at Burnley, at the recent General Election, was one of the principal speakers at the public meeting, and described the Social Democratic leader as "not a friend to the Labour movement."[3] Mr. Stanhope was seconding a resolution moved by Mr. W. E. Harvey, of the Derbyshire miners, a resolution which declared the

[1] It was held in the Mayor's Parlour, Stratford E., and Havelock Wilson, M.P. (Vice-President of the Electoral Association), John Gray, and William Johnson were announced to speak.

[2] See reprint in the *Labour Leader*.

[3] See report of meeting in *Reynolds's Newspaper*.

need for more representation of Labour, and expressed the belief that more progress would be made by acting on "constitutional lines, in accordance with the best traditions of Trade Unionism," than by "a reckless policy of running candidates without first fully consulting the electorate in the division and obtaining some guarantee of possible success."

The 1895 Congress was the last held by the Electoral Association, and the following year its demise was partly evidenced by the attempt to form a similar organisation under the title of the "Radical Workers' Party." The object of this organisation was to form a "National Radical Party by forming an alliance, for concerted Parliamentary action, with Radical centres" with a view to "freeing Radicalism from Liberal influence and Liberal leadership." The organisation was never a power in politics.

CHAPTER VIII

SOCIALISM AND THE NEW UNIONISM

We must some day, at last and for ever, cross the line between Nonsense and Common Sense. And in that day we shall pass from class Paternalism, originally derived from fetish fiction, in times of universal ignorance, to Human Brotherhood in accordance with the nature of things and our growing knowledge; from political government to industrial administration; from competition in individuals to Individuality in co-operation; from War and Despotism, in any form, to Peace and Liberty.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

EARLY in the eighties, a new element entered English political life—the element of Socialism. By this it is not meant, of course, that Socialist theory has been an influence in England for only thirty years. Early in the century, Socialism of the communist type, without much foundation in economic theory, had found a leader in Robert Owen, and there was an element of Socialism in the Chartist movement; but it is scarcely thirty years since a propaganda was set up throughout Great Britain by organisations formed with the definite object of abolishing the competitive system and substituting in industry State ownership and control for individual enterprise. Marx's presence in England had, naturally enough, been a help to the foundation of a Socialist movement in this country, and the principles for which he stood had been spread in England, to some extent, by French and German refugees. Among the political economists, the conversion of John Stuart Mill to Socialism must have

had not a little influence.[1] Then, in 1879, Henry George published his *Progress and Poverty*. His masterly demonstration of the results of the private ownership of land led to the foundation of Land Nationalisation societies in England; and some of these, in modern political parlance, eventually went the "whole hog" and developed into Socialist organisations. On the political side, the policy of Mr. Gladstone, in Egypt and Ireland, reacted beneficially on the Socialist cause, inasmuch as it greatly displeased many staunch Radicals.

William Morris said the "Liberal 'leaders' 'led' the party into mere Jingoism."[2] Morris was one of those who, by this time, had renounced all allegiance to Radicalism. In a letter, dated June 22nd, 1883, he wrote: "I used to think that one might further real Socialistic progress by doing what one could on the lines of ordinary Radicalism: I have been driven of late into the conclusion that I was mistaken; that Radicalism is on the wrong lines, so to say, and will never develop into anything more than Radicalism: in fact, that it was made for and by the middle-class, and will always be under the control of rich capitalists; they have no objection to its political development, if they think they can stop it there, but as to real social changes they will not allow them if they can help it. We may see almost any day such phrases as 'this is the way to stop the spread of Socialism,' in the Liberal papers, the writer never

[1] "In short, I was a democrat but not the least of a Socialist. We were now much less democrats than I had been, because so long as education continues to be so wretchedly imperfect, we dreaded the ignorance and especially the selfishness and brutality of the mass; but our idea of ultimate improvement went far beyond Democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists."—*Autobiography*.

[2] *Life of William Morris*, J. W. Mackail (London, 1907).

having taken the trouble to find out what Socialism meant, and also choosing to ignore the discontent, dumb indeed for the most part, which is widespread, even in England."[1]

Morris was very active during his two years' membership of the Democratic Federation, and his work in that connection, Mr. Mackail tells us,[2] took up an "absorbing share of his time, thought, and energy." He believed in street preaching, was often heard in the open, and broke down in health in consequence. The Democratic Federation was founded by Mr. Hyndman, in 1881, and he had Mr. Herbert Burrows, Miss Helen Taylor, and Joseph Cowen, M.P., among his immediate supporters. Land Nationalisation was the only distinctly Socialist item in the programme, but, in 1883, the organisation became entirely Socialistic, and took the title of the Social Democratic Federation. In London, it quickly became a great influence and a large number of enthusiastic, self-supporting branches sprang up all over the country.

At the end of 1884, there was a split, and Morris headed the foundation of the Socialist League. The League was mainly an educational body, and its Socialism was of a type which favoured the ownership of the means of production by loosely federated groups. Branches were set up and, on February 4th, 1885, the first number of the *Commune*, the organ of the League, was issued. About a year previous, *Justice* had been founded, as the journal of the Social Democratic Federation. The League was breaking up in 1890, and Morris then joined the Federation.

The year 1883 saw the beginning of the Fabian Society, which supplied many lecturers to gatherings

[1] *Life of William Morris.* [2] *Ibid.*

up and down the country, and, through the Christian Socialist Society, the movement was begun in the churches. The last-named society had a member on the Staffordshire County Council soon after that body's formation. There were also a number of organisations unconnected with any central body, such as the Sheffield Socialists, among whom Edward Carpenter was prominent, and the Clifton and Bristol Socialist Society, the members of which were mainly of the middle-class.

Courage and great enthusiasm characterised the early days of the Socialist movement. A former member of the Socialist League has written that many who know the movement now "would find it difficult to realise the frame of mind" in which they worked in '85 and '86, when, he writes, "the coming revolution loomed large in our imaginations, and it seemed as though the flood of pent-up discontent would burst and swamp us before we could tell people of the new gospel which alone could bring salvation to the social soul; the spirit of exultation in which we ran about with our red flags—a broomstick and a bit of bunting—brought a chair and proclaimed the truth to a handful of corner-men; or the fierce joy of comradeship and equality which required every letter to begin 'Dear Comrade,' and end 'Yours fraternally'; which led us to strip off our starched linen and assume the red tie! I often wonder if Hyndman realised the shock and sense of disillusionment, the chill sinking of hearts, which his top-hat, frock-coat, and general air of respectability brought to many a young enthusiast in those days! We admired his ability, we respected his pioneer work, we felt that the Marxian theories were great, although we did not presume to understand them; but the awful thought was there: 'Could

a man be really saved who came to speak to us dressed like a stockbroker?'"[1]

While this was going on, the secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress was Mr. Broadhurst, who had become a tower of strength in the Liberal party, and who, according to his own statement, in his *Autobiography*, was generally the principal speaker at the meetings of the campaign set on foot in 1886 to retrieve the fallen fortunes of Liberalism. All the leaders who had risen to influence in the seventies were Liberals. Dissension in Congress was inevitable.

Broadhurst voted against the Miners' Eight Hours Bill, and his attitude was highly resented by many. In one representative quarter it was written that "Mr. Broadhurst's Sandringham junketings do not appear to have improved his knowledge of democratic principles,"[2] and, at the 1887 Congress, Mr. Keir Hardie led the attack. Broadhurst's grounds of speaking against the Bill were that he considered it would be an impeachment of the utility of trade unions to let the Government do for them what, he claimed, they could do for themselves by combination. Mr. Hardie moved that the fact that Broadhurst voted against the Bill "in the name of the Congress" should be recorded in the Report of the Parliamentary Committee. Mr. Hardie also objected to working-men "stumping the country" to catch votes for either of the great parties. Broadhurst, in a sarcastic reply, remarked that the nex, time he made a speech he would go to Ayrshiret "to the High Priest of political virtue and ask him for his direction and blessing on the enterprise."

[1] Raymond Unwin, in the *I.L.P. News*, January, 1902.

[2] *Reynolds's Newspaper*, September 4th, 1887.

Mr. Hardie's motion was lost by the great majority of 80 to 15.

The years 1888 and 1889 were eventful ones and had great influence on the "New Unionism," as it was styled. The match-makers of the then best-known English firm came out on strike, in the former year, and, with Mrs. Besant as their leader, won public sympathy and better conditions. In the same year, men of the London Gas Workers' Union struck for an eight hours' day and other improvements. They also proved victorious, and several thousand more men were engaged. Similar strikes were successful in Bristol, Leeds, and other towns. The following year came the historic fight for the "Docker's tanner," when 10,000 men were brought out in London and every dock was closed. The great bulk of the riverside labourers struck in sympathy; the public subscribed £48,000 for strike pay; £30,000 was remitted, by telegraph, from Australia; and the dockers won. The leaders were Mr. John Burns, Mr. Ben Tillett, and Mr. Tom Mann, whose influence was thereby considerably increased. The same year, Mr. Burns, who was then the leader of Social Democracy in Battersea, was elected, at the top of the poll, to the London County Council, and three Socialists were placed on the Newcastle School Board. Two Fabians had been placed on the London School Board in 1888.

The Parliamentary Committee, in its Report to the Dundee Congress in 1888, made a veiled attack on the militant unionists. It complained that steps had been taken to prevent the Committee receiving the financial support it required. It asked the trades to make up their minds as to whom they were going to follow and what the future policy should be. "If," it asked, "these men who have been attacking

us are truthful guides and honest men then follow them. If, on the other hand, they are enemies in disguise, then avoid them. No progress can be made with dissension in the camp, and those who create discord are not worthy to associate with earnest men."

On the motion that the Report should be adopted, Mr. Newstead (London) moved that these sentences should be deleted, and he described them as "nothing but a series of indirect attacks, base insinuations and insults on those who had endeavoured to push on the wheels of progress in contradistinction to the retrogressive action of the Parliamentary Committee and its Secretary." The loud shouts of dissent and general interruption which greeted these remarks showed immediately the temper of Congress, and, although the amendment found a seconder, who characterised the Report as "offensive and brutal," the Committee had a huge majority in its favour.

Mr. John Wilson then moved a vote of confidence in Broadhurst, the secretary. As an amendment, Mr. Hardie moved that the secretary was "not a fit and proper person" to hold the office, and accused him of supporting employers of labour and holding shares in sweating companies. Another speaker declared that the shares were given as a bribe. So it went on until, at four o'clock, Broadhurst rose and spoke for nearly an hour in his own defence. He denied that he had ever used the Trade Union movement for the benefit of any political party, and, while he admitted holding shares, as indicated by Mr. Hardie, he repudiated the suggestion that they were given as a bribe. He also asked whence came the money to pay for the printing and circulation of matter used to attack the Parliamentary Committee. Mr. Burns was still engaged in London in connec-

tion with the dockers' strike, although he had been appointed an engineers' delegate to Congress. Mr. Hardie was thus left without valuable help in the attack. When the amendment of no confidence was put, only 11 voted for it and 177 were against. Tumultuous cheering was the result, and Broadhurst had a most flattering ovation. The independents were worsted once again.

There was another lively passage of arms in 1890, when Mr. Hardie attacked Threlfall, the secretary of the Labour Electoral Association, on account of the latter's view that middle-class candidates who sympathised with the Labour cause should not be opposed by Labour men. It was at this meeting that a resolution favouring an eight hour day was carried by a majority of fifty-eight; a great triumph in the eyes of the New Unionists.

Mr. Hardie was again to the fore, among the independents, in 1891. The time-honoured expression of opinion in favour of Labour Representation came up once more. This time it condemned the neglect of Labour questions in the House of Commons, and declared that "drastic industrial reform" would be impossible until there was a "strong and vigorous Labour Party" in Parliament. Therefore, the resolution urged working-men "to do their utmost," etc. etc. Mr. Hardie moved a practical proposal in the form of an amendment in favour of the raising of a Parliamentary fund, by the trade unions, which should be placed at the disposal of Congress for securing Labour representation.[1]

[1] The amendment read: "And would suggest to the organised trades of this country to so alter their rules as to admit of their subscribing to a Parliamentary fund to be placed at the disposal of Congress to secure Labour Representation based upon the decisions of this Congress."

The proposal received only 11 votes, and a further amendment by Mr. Hardie, to add, after the words "Labour Party," "independent of party politics," was lost by 200 votes to 93. The voting indicates some advance, almost a third voting for an independent party; but the insignificant minority for the proposal to found a Parliamentary fund shows that the idea of utilising trade unions and Trade Union funds, as the basis of an organised Labour party, received about as much support as it would have obtained twenty years before.

In 1892, the suggestion for a Trade Union Parliamentary levy was brought forward in a resolution by Mr. Fairweather (Barrow-in-Furness). The motion required Congress to ask the delegates to take a vote in their societies as to whether those organisations would be prepared to make a levy of a penny a month per member, for the purpose of a central fund to be controlled by the Parliamentary Committee and used to secure the return of working-men to Parliament, and maintain them while members, "until such time as Payment of Members is granted." The closing proviso indicates how the bulk of the unionists still pinned their faith to payment of members, and believed that reform to be imminent. Another delegate from Barrow-in-Furness—Mr. Long—seconded the motion. Mr. Hardie then endeavoured to give the resolution a more practical form, and he put forward an amendment instructing the Parliamentary Committee to prepare a scheme, with special reference to the financial difficulty, and submit it to the next Congress. Mr. Pete Curran was the seconder, and the amendment was carried. This was a great step, and the Committee issued such a scheme in March, 1893. They proposed to establish a separate fund, contributions to which

were to be optional. A levy of 5s. per 100 members per annum was suggested, and the administration of the fund was to be placed in the hands of a committee of thirteen, elected annually by Congress. The selection of candidates was to rest, in the first instance, with local organisations and, if an organisation wished to run a candidate, but could not find a suitable man, one might be selected from a special list supplied by the Committee. All candidates receiving assistance were to pledge themselves to the Labour programme, as agreed upon from time to time by Congress, and suggestions for the programme were to be sent to the secretary of the Parliamentary Committee at least six weeks before the conference.

The Socialists were in force at the 1892 Congress, and Mr. James Macdonald and Mr. Harry Quelch moved a resolution refusing support to any but Socialist candidates, and this was only defeated by 153 to 128.

The following year, the Socialists captured the Congress, which decided, on the motion of Mr. Tillett, in favour of establishing a separate fund for the return of independent working-men to Parliament and to local bodies; and further, on the motion of the Social Democrats, to give no support to any candidate but those who stood for "the collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange." The decision was come to by a big majority; but Congress could not see its way to form an independent Parliamentary group, and an amendment of Mr. Hardie's, with that as its object, was defeated by 119 to 96.

The Socialist amendment met with strenuous opposition. Mr. Johnson (Durham) thought the time had come when Congress should say whether

it was a distinctive Trade Union Congress or whether it was to be "manipulated by Socialist tendencies and Socialist parties." Men, he held, were sent to Parliament by working-men to represent the interests of Trade Unionism, and it was not right to "foist" on the Congress "insidious resolutions in which they did not believe"[1]—rather a paradoxical view. Mr. J. H. Wilson agreed with the principle of the amendment but reminded the delegates that there were only two lobbies in the House of Commons. The amendment received the support of Mr. Burns, because it "affirmed a fighting principle that working-men were compelled to stand or fall by, if not to-day a few years hence." He said it "stripped off the husks of party politics, whether Liberal or Tory, whether of the Labour Electoral Association, or the five or six bogus independent Labour parties," and was a principle which "working-men, in their Congresses, all over the world had stood by."[2]

It will be noticed that Mr. Tillett's resolution, while declaring for the establishing of a Parliamentary fund, did not state how the fund should be brought into being. Three years later, as we shall see, the New Unionists and Socialists were still endeavouring to obtain a levy from the unions.

Not much had been done but, nevertheless, there was reaction the following year, when nothing was accomplished for Labour representation, and Congress once more placed on record its desire for payment of members. It was discovered that the Congress was afflicted with "political adventurers," and that to purge the meeting of such undesirables there must be an amendment of the Standing Orders. In 1895 this amendment was made, and henceforth

[1] Report in *Reynolds's Newspaper*. [2] *Ibid.*

only men actually working at the trade, or paid secretaries of unions, were to be admitted. Messrs. Broadhurst, Burns, and Hardie were amongst those who were missing from the following year's Congress.

At that meeting, the President was Councillor Mallinson, of Edinburgh, who was of the opinion that a political party could not unite the workers in the way they were united by Trade Unionism, the strength of which, he said, lay in the fact that Unionism was a common ground on which men of all political opinions could meet.

A resolution was put forward instructing the Parliamentary Committee to circularise the unions and obtain their opinion as to whether they would contribute a penny a quarter for the purpose of a Parliamentary fund. The proposal was lost by 136 to 62 votes; and Congress passed thirty resolutions which would need Parliamentary action in order to carry them out. Messrs. Harvey and Wilson—who were supported in Parliament by their own unions—were amongst those who spoke against the proposition. It was estimated that such a levy would have realised £15,000 and thus provided for the payment of £250 a year to sixty members.[1]

The 1896 Congress again pledged itself to Socialism; six out of the seven engineers' delegates were members of the Independent Labour Party, and Mr. Will Thorne, a pronounced Socialist, was elected Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee.

The President, Councillor Stevens (Birmingham), in 1897, gave Congress a good lead. He urged that there should be a group of working-men in Parliament who should hold the balance of power

[1] *Labour Leader.* The *Leader* declared that with sixty "stalwarts" in Parliament "anything, within reason, could be accomplished."

between the Liberal and Tory parties; to do which the movement would have to work and be prepared to pay. "If," he declared, "Labour representation is worth having it is worth paying for." Nevertheless, by a large majority, Congress refused to provide the funds, and again refused to do so in 1898.

But the year after, thirty years after its foundation, the Trade Union Congress was won for the cause of Labour Representation, and the Labour Representation Committee was born.

The importance of this organisation demands for it a separate chapter, but we must first see what the militant men who stood for an Independent Labour Party had been doing in the country; how they had helped themselves when Congress had refused assistance. Their earnestness and enthusiasm could not be doubted. Many were inspired by the Socialist ideal, and so held views as to the remedy for social disease quite distinct from those held by either of the older parties. They knew what was their aim, and they had not been idle.

CHAPTER IX

THE MOVEMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE

A few diligent, active, able, and persistent men in the House of Commons can do much if they act unitedly and have a good case. They need not stand alone as an "independent labour party"; indeed, if they do, the chances are that they will frustrate their own object.—GEORGE HOWELL.

The advent of a few Liberal Trade Union officials into Parliament does not mark the beginning of Labour Representation—it does not mark a step towards it. It is impossible to accept this brand of politician, whether we have regard to the original specimens, or those who adorn the Liberal lobbies and benches to-day, as the pioneers or the exponents of any desirable or useful development.—FRANK H. ROSE.

THE difference between Liberal-Labourism and Independent Labour was that the latter, consciously or unconsciously, recognised the theory of a class war, while the former did not. This was the natural outcome of the Independent movement, deriving the whole of its inspiration from Socialism.

The view, accepted by the Socialists, that political parties and political principles are determined by the economic position of classes—providing those classes are class conscious—caused the independent men to take a view of the orthodox parties quite different from that of the Liberal-Labourites. The independents saw in the Liberal and Tory parties one great class which, by virtue of its monopoly of land and industrial capital, exploited the wage-earning population. The opposition of economic interests

was, in their view, bound to find expression in the Legislature; to them, it was anomalous, in the extreme, that classes which fought, in the industrial field, over a shilling more wages or an hour less work, should attempt to co-operate in Parliament. To them, distinct parties followed distinct interests as a matter of course. Whether this attitude of the Independent and Socialist movement was right, it is not the business of this volume to discuss; but it is plain that this branch of the movement was based on some definite economic and political principles, and that it knew for what it was striving.

The position of the Liberal-Labour section is more difficult to define. In a sense, it also recognised a class war, for it was always talking of the privileges and vested interests of the aristocracy, which the Tory party sought to defend. The class struggle, to them, was largely a struggle between the landed aristocracy and the rest of the people. When organised Labour began to be an active influence in politics, the middle-class—broadly speaking, the Liberal party—had only enjoyed political power for a few decades. There was an atmosphere of Liberty about the party. It appeared somewhat in the light of a party which had broken the back of the landed aristocracy—which had ruled the people for centuries—and done so in the interests of, and with the resulting benefit to, the masses of the people. The rising Labour movement was, in religion, overwhelmingly Nonconformist, and the opposition of the advanced wing of Liberalism to a State Church naturally appealed to it. Add to this the fact that a group of sturdy Radicals, men who were nominally Liberals, who sat on the Liberal benches and appeared on Liberal platforms, were strong advocates of the extended franchise, rendered great

help to the trade unions in the fight for their complete legalisation, and, in some measure, helped, at its birth, the movement for working-class representation—add all these considerations, and it is obvious that there were strong influences at work to bring Liberal-Labourism into being. Once formed, political ties are not easily broken. To quote again the view of Mr. Burt, Liberal-Labourism believed that the shortcomings of the rich were due rather to "lack of sympathy than from absence of a desire to do right." In the matter of political tactics, the Liberal-Labour men were diametrically opposed to the rising movement for independence, and were of opinion that independence in the House would weaken rather than strengthen the cause. The economic views of the Socialists were, of course, quite distinct from those of Liberals and Tories. Here was a definite cleavage with Liberal-Labourism. Moreover, the Eight Hours movement was unpopular with the old leaders, some of whom were opposed to eight hours for miners, by legislation. It was, therefore, quite natural that, while continuing to work in the Trade Union Congress, and to permeate it with the new ideas, the men of the new movement set to work independently in the country.

During Congress week at Bradford, in 1888, an attempt was made to form a Labour party. The attempt was quite independent of Congress, and the meeting—which was private—was held in the Central Coffee Tavern. A number of local politicians attended and some delegates to the Congress, and those present included Messrs. Keir Hardie, Tom Mann, W. Matkin, George Bateman, H. H. Champion, and Miss Clementina Black. It was proposed that a new association should be formed and an executive appointed, and Champion and Bateman

spoke strongly in favour of the proposal. The organisation, however, was never put upon its feet. This was due, we have been told, to the fact that it was not supported by certain persons "whose support was considered essential for its success."[1]

In 1889, Mr. Hardie convened a conference at Glasgow which resulted in the Scottish Labour Party, an organisation for the return of workingmen to Parliament on independent lines, which had Mr. Cunninghame Graham for its first president. In the previous year, Mr. Hardie stood as an Independent Labour candidate at a by-election in Mid-Lanark, in connection with which Mr. Rose tells an interesting story.[2] He says, "It was in the spacious days of the late Mr. Schnadhorst, the great Radical caucus-monger. The political complications foreshadowed by an Independent Labour force were instantly realised by that astute gentleman, who proceeded to the seat of the contest to interview the presumptuous young miner. Hardie refused to see Mr. Schnadhorst, and Sir George Trevelyan made an attempt with but slightly better results. Hardie saw Sir George, by whom he was offered £300 per annum and a safe Liberal seat—presumably in the official Liberal interest—and his election expenses if he would consent to withdraw. These alluring offers were treated with amused contempt and rejected. But the resources of Liberalism were by no means exhausted. By whom or what motives prompted, Mr. Threlfall, the secretary of the new Labour Electoral Association, subsequently repeated the offer and urged Hardie to accept it. That irreconcilable and truculent person violently ejected the emissary and perversely went to the poll,

[1] *Workman's Times.*
[2] *The Coming Force.*

securing 619 votes and, as he expressed it, 'more fun than he ever enjoyed before or since.'"[1] As we noted, in a former chapter, the Electoral Association was always against three-cornered contests, and thus Mr. Threlfall was only acting in accordance with the recognised policy of his organisation—leaving aside the alleged offer of £300—although, seeing that the Liberals had persistently refused to adopt Mr. Hardie, the Electoral Association might, not unreasonably, have been expected to stretch a point. It was Mr. H. H. Champion who instigated Mr. Hardie's candidature. At that time Mr. Champion was actively associated with the Electoral Association and edited the *Labour Elector*.

After the Mid-Lanark fight, organisations for the independent representation of the working-class began to spring up all over the country. Early in the summer of 1891, the London Trades Council Labour Representation League was formed. Mr. Joseph Burgess was one of the prime movers in the foundation of the organisation. The policy of the League may be gathered from the fact that at the first general meeting it was decided that no member should be allowed to speak on the platform of any candidate who did not support the programme of the League; not even of candidates whose return, in the opinion of the individual concerned, might "best promote the attainment of the objects of the League."

About the same time, the Bradford and District Labour Union was formed. The men who took the lead were mainly those who had endeavoured to secure Mr. Tillett as an independent candidate for East Bradford. At the time Mr. Tillett's health was not good. The Union was formed at a meeting in May, at Firth's Temperance Hotel, and was

[1] Hardie polled 617, not 619.

convened by Messrs. J. Batley, W. H. Drew, and E. Halford. No one who held an official position in any other political party was eligible for membership. In July, appeared the Colne Valley Labour Union, which regarded Mr. Tom Mann as a favourable candidate; and the following month the Salford Labour Electoral Association swelled the number. Its rules also declared that no official of another political party should be a member.

The result of this activity was seen in the number of Independent Labour men who went to the poll at the General Election of 1892. The Bradford Labour Union alternately invited Mr. E. D. Girdlestone and Mr. Bernard Shaw to be its candidate in East Bradford. The former refused on the grounds of ill-health. He wrote: "It is exactly M.P.'s on independent party lines, and enough of them to swamp the party slaves, that most of us want at present," and he added that the invitation was the greatest honour he had ever had done him. Mr. Shaw declined in a characteristic letter. He wrote: "Now I have over and over again said that, until the workers learn to trust one another, and choose one another as representatives, instead of running after tall hats and frock-coats, they will never have a genuine Labour Party in Parliament. There is no use in telling me that there are not half a dozen working-men in East Bradford who have more right to the votes of their fellow-workers than I have. Why not put the names in a hat and let them support whichever has his name drawn out by a blindfolded person, so as to avoid jealousies and divisions arising from rivalry between them. . . . It will cost no more to put a man of this sort in Parliament than to put me. . . . I stick to it that seats in Parliament ought not to be made the

prize of fluent speakers and smart writers. . . . The aristocrats and plutocrats take care to vote for candidates of their own class only; you never find them voting for men like John Burns out of admiration for his ability to speak." Mr. Blatchford subsequently consented to stand, after a requisition signed by 700 people had been presented to him, and later Mr. Tillett was adopted in the Western division.

The Liberals soon made an offer of compromise. Mr. W. P. Byles, in the adjoining division of Shipley, offered to withdraw if the Liberal Executive would adopt either Mr. Tillett or Mr. Blatchford, and Mr. W. S. Caine, who stood in the Liberal interest in another constituency, offered to retire if Mr. Tillett would run as a Liberal-Labour man, with perfect freedom as to the advocacy of Labour questions. The Labour Union, the Trades Council, and the Labour Electoral Association were invited by the Liberals to meet at a conference—presumably to try to arrange some compromise—but the invitation was declined.[1]

Mr. Tillett received much support from the Fabian Society, which issued an appeal for funds on his behalf. It appealed "to Radicals, who desire to see reality given to the pledges of their leaders, to Trade Unionists who wish to see their vast interests adequately represented in the coming Parliament, and to friends of popular as against class govern-

[1] Whether the Bradford Labour Electoral Association was an independent organisation—as the Salford Labour Electoral Association appears to have been—or whether it was a rebellious branch of the national Association, the writer is not prepared to say. In any case, as was noted in a previous chapter, the Labour Electoral Association was officially on the side of Mr. Illingworth, the Liberal opponent of Mr. Tillett.

ment, to help us in backing the cause of a worker against that of a capitalist, in a community which has, in the last few months, suffered bitterly from the exactions of men of Mr. Illingworth's class." At this election the Fabians printed questions for candidates, and sent them into the constituencies where they were required. They asked whether an Eight Hours Bill would be supported, together with the statutory limitation of excessive hours of railway workers and those in dangerous and unhealthy trades, and whether the candidate would press for the payment of members, and the necessary election expenses by the State, before another dissolution.

Mr. Blatchford did not go to the poll. His main reason for retiring was that he had about this time started the *Clarion*. He said he went into the contest unwillingly, and was glad to get out of it, and he did not think he should ever stand again. "I have," he stated, "a rooted objection to the whole thing. I dislike politics and politicians. The repugnance I have to them is constitutional, and I do not think I will get over it. But, for all that, I want to see them strike out for themselves."[1]

In 1892, the Scottish Labour Party put forward eight candidates in Scotland, Mr. Cunninghame Graham at Camlachie and Mr. Bennett Burleigh in the Tradeston Division of Glasgow being the most noteworthy. The Social Democratic Federation ran Mr. W. K. Hall as a Labour candidate in South Salford, and was actively interested in a few other candidates, while the Labour Electoral Association interested itself in all the Liberal-Labour men, of whom there were a goodly number. The Labour men who were co-operating with the

[1] Interview with *Workman's Times*.

Liberals, had in most cases big Tory majorities to wipe off.[1]

The finish of the polling saw three independent Labour men and twelve Liberal-Labour men in the House of Commons. The former group consisted of Mr. John Burns for Battersea, Mr. Keir Hardie for South-West Ham, and Mr. J. H. Wilson, of the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, for Middlesbrough, the first independent working-class candidates to be returned.

Mr. Wilson won his seat in the face of Liberal and Liberal-Unionist opposition, with a majority of 679. Mr. Burns polled 5,616 votes against 4,057 for his Conservative opponent, Mr. W. H. Chinnery. He ran as a Labour candidate, and refused invitations to become the nominee of the Battersea Liberal Association. On the polling day, Mr. Hardie had only the Tory against him, Joseph Leicester, who stood in the Liberal interest, having retired when feeling appeared strongly in favour of Hardie. The latter, however, was never officially supported by the Liberals, neither did he desire or encourage their organised support. That he received many votes which would have otherwise gone to Mr. Leicester is, of course, obvious.

When Mr. Hardie's victory was announced the enthusiasm was overwhelming. The crowd broke through the cordon of police and rushed up the Town Hall steps waving hats, handkerchiefs, and umbrellas. Torches were blazing and bands playing.

Mr. Hardie's majority was 1,232. In an interview

[1] The following are examples: W. T. Davis (Birmingham, Bordesley), 3,435; T. R. Threlfall (Liverpool, Kirkdale), 912; W. C. Steadman (Kent, Medway), 1,904 in 1885, 1886 no contest; S. Woods (Lancashire, Ince), 1,080; F. Maddison (Hull, Central), 1,807; George Bateman (Holborn), 965 at the previous (by)-election, 1,575 in 1885, 1,701 in 1888.

with the *Daily Chronicle* he admitted that the triumph was, to a certain extent, a triumph for Radicalism. "But," he added, "it also shows that working-men are tired of the 'Grand Old Man' and the 'Grand old umbrella,' and such-like cries. They are tired of shouting themselves hoarse because Lord Kimberley has supplanted Lord Cadogan and Mr. Shaw Lefevre sits in the seat of Lord Cross." The new member stated that he was not opposed to the main planks in the Liberal platform, and would work for the Newcastle Programme, with the exception of leasehold enfranchisement, to which he was strongly opposed. If Labour questions, such as the unemployed question, were shirked, the Labour men would, he said, use every effort to bring them before the House, irrespective of party convenience. The land question, the limitation of the hours of labour by law, and municipal workshops were matters to which he wished attention to be given.

Mr. Arch was again elected for North-West Norfolk. The labourers' representative received no help from the gentry, as was the case in 1885, on account of his support of Home Rule. The Tories expected a victory and, when the counting was over, the chagrin of the High Sheriff was so great that he refused to announce the figures, and the duty had to be performed by the Under Sheriff. Mr. Arch shook hands with the High Sheriff, and the latter deliberately took out his handkerchief and wiped the hand that had grasped the Labour man's. Mr. Arch favoured the settlement of the Irish question, and then the institution of Parish Councils, which, he held, would give back to England her vanished peasantry and revolutionise the villages.[1] He polled 4,911, and had a majority of 1,089.

[1] *Autobiography.*

The defeat of Broadhurst was a great blow to the Liberals, who were also very anxious about the result of the fight in West Bradford. Mr. Illingworth won, but polled only 557 more than Mr. Tillett, who received 2,749 votes.[1]

When Parliament assembled Mr. Hardie went

[1] The *Daily Chronicle* said the return of Mr. Hardie marked a new era in politics and, together with Mr. Tillett's poll, was a "striking example of the new spirit in politics; the first curl of the wave which is rising from the dim depths of popular life." In an article in the *Daily News*—"The scene at the National Liberal Club"—the Liberal victory in West Bradford was described as the "crowning mercy" which "awoke the echoes over the face of old Father Thames."

Candidates other than those already mentioned were :—

George Bateman (Holborn)
Ben Jones (Woolwich)
W. J. Davis (Birmingham, Bordesley)
Eli Bloor (Birmingham, N.)
F. Maddison (Hull, Central)
T. R. Threlfall (Liverpool, Kirkdale)
T. Aspinall (Wigan)
W. C. Steadman (Kent, Medway)
S. Woods (Lancashire, Ince)
W. Johnson (Warwick, Tamworth)
G. M. Ball—an agricultural candidate—(Sussex, Rye)
J. Wilson (Durham, Mid.)
C. Fenwick (Northumberland, Wansbeck)
B. Pickard (Yorks, Normanton)
G. Howell (N.E. Bethnal Green)
Major Eustace Edwards (Dover)
J. Bedford (Norwich)
J. Ward (Aston Manor)
E. D. Lewis (Durham, Jarrow)
Frank Smith (Hammersmith)

These were Liberal-Labour men.

There were also: Ben Ellis (I.L.P.), who polled 95 at Peckham; H. R. Taylor, who ran against Howell and a Tory, and polled 106; W. K. Hall (Socialist), South Salford, 553; R. Donald (Labour), Hoxton, 19; J. W. Mahoney (Labour), Birmingham West, 31; R. B. Cunninghame Graham (Labour), Glasgow, Camlachie—against two Liberals and one Liberal-Unionist—906; R. Brodie (Labour), Glasgow, College division—three-cornered fight—225; Bennett Burleigh (Labour), Glasgow, Tradeston—three-cornered fight—783; R. C. Robertson (Labour), Stirlingshire—three-cornered fight—663; J. Wilson (Labour), Edinburgh, Central—three-cornered fight—438; J. Macdonald (Independent Labour), Dundee—five candidates for two seats—354; H. H. Champion (Independent Labour), Aberdeen South—three-cornered fight—991; J. Wooller (Independent Labour), Perth—three-cornered fight—907.

In spite of difference of description all these were independent candidates.

down to the House in a rough tweed suit, a cap and muffler. It was called theatrical. Perhaps it was; but Mr. Arch tells us that, when returned to Parliament, he himself "aped nobody," "did not put on a black coat," but wore his "rough tweed suit and billycock hat," the same as he usually wore at his country meetings; and to-day the newspapers are never tired of reminding us of the partiality of the President of the Local Government Board for a blue serge suit and bowler hat!

On the day Parliament opened, the unemployed were demonstrating on the Embankment, and were charged by the police with drawn batons. Mr. Hardie, who sat in opposition, made his Parliamentary début in the debate on the Address. He moved, as an amendment, "And further we humbly desire to express our regrets that Your Majesty has not been advised, when dealing with agricultural depression, to refer also to the industrial depression now prevailing and to the widespread misery due to large numbers of the working-class being unable to find employment, and to direct Parliament to legislate promptly and effectively in the interests of the same."

Mr. Hardie said it was a remarkable fact that one section of industrial distress should be noticed and not the other, and added that there were some in the House who thought that, if the interests of landlords were not bound up so closely with agricultural depression, the reference to even agricultural distress would not have appeared in the Queen's Speech. He went on to say that he would have been "unfaithful and untrue to every election promise he had made" if he had not brought the question forward. The amendment, the speaker proceeded, was said to be a vote of want of confidence in the Government —"any government who failed to deal with the

unemployed ought not to have the confidence of the House."[1] Sir Howard Vincent seconded the amendment, and it was supported by Sir John Gorst.

The opposition of Independent Labour and Liberal-Labourism in the country now found expression in the House. Mr. Cremer was "not disposed to censure the Government for an omission which might be due to inadvertence." He said some of the Labour members had discussed the whole matter, and "notwithstanding the implied threats the honourable member for West Ham had thought it worth his while to indulge in with regard to the action they had decided to adopt, the honourable member would not find any of the Labour members follow him into the lobby in support of the amendment." Mr. Cremer added that he had informed his constituents of what he was going to do, and "to a man" they had risen and cheered him. He also said Mr. Hardie had been captured and made a "cat's-paw,"—a suggestion which was indignantly repudiated. The amendment was lost by 276 votes to 109. Mr. Burns was away at Halifax working on behalf of John Lister, the candidate of the Independent Labour Party; but it has been stated that Mr. Hardie had offered to second an amendment on unemployment if Mr. Burns would move one, and that the latter took no action.[2]

The 1892 election gave a fillip to the movement for independent representation. Prior to the election a London and District Provisional Council had been formed with its policy: "(1) To nominate members as Independent Labour representatives; (2) To officially support no other nominations." "All

[1] Reuter's *Parliamentary Debates*, fourth series, Vol. VIII.

[2] *John Burns: The Rise and Progress of a Right Honourable.* Joseph Burgess (Glasgow 1911), p. 159.

hand- and brain-workers" were eligible for membership, but no "Labour exploiter, landowner, lawyer, or usurer" was to be admitted except by vote. In April, 1892, Mr. George Gerrie, of Aberdeen, the Vice-President of the Scottish Labour Party, drafted a constitution of an "Independent Labour Party of Great Britain and Ireland." Membership was to be open to all who would sign a declaration to the effect that the "interests of labour are paramount to, and must take precedence of, all other interests, and that the advancement of these interests must be sought by political and constitutional action." The party was to be formed for "the sole purpose of accomplishing the emancipation of the workers from their present economic slavery." District Councils were to be elected annually at a meeting of the ordinary members of the party in the district, and the members of the councils were not to be members of any other political party, "its club, association, or organisation of any kind whatever, nor have any transactions of any kind with them or their agencies without the express permission of their Council." Where practicable, the local Trades Council was to be made the District Council of the party. These councils were to nominate municipal candidates who were subject to the same political restriction as the members of the council themselves. The District Councils were also to select the Parliamentary candidates; or the General Council, it was assumed, if, in the district where the candidate was run, there was no District Council. Candidates were to sign a written promise to obey the instructions of the council, to undertake no business other than their Parliamentary duties without the consent of the council and to resign their seats if requested to do so. Only district councillors were to be eligible for the position of

Parliamentary candidates, but a constituency of one district was to have the right to select its candidate from the council of another district. The General Council was to have the power to defray election expenses and to pay candidates who were elected. It was to sit in London and was to have power to formulate the policy of the party and take steps (within the constitution) for carrying that policy into effect and to raise funds for the purpose.

This constitution was printed in full in the *Workman's Times* and *Autolycus*—Mr. Joseph Burgess—of that journal, acted as secretary, and printed a form of membership of the proposed party. This was on April 30th, 1892.[1]

In September, steps were begun to consolidate the various organisations for independent representation into one party. A meeting was held with Mr. Hardie in the chair. It consisted of representatives of the Independent Labour organisations, and Trade Union Congress delegates, and a resolution was passed declaring that the time had arrived for the consolidation, and that representatives of independent organisations should be invited to take part in a conference at an early date. There was some difference of opinion as to what organisations should be invited to send delegates; some objection was taken to the permeating method of the Fabians, and

[1] Figures were given week by week showing the number of adherents to the proposal. They included: May 14th, 165; May 21st, 259; May 28th, 381; June 4th, 488; June 11th, 693; June 18th, 431; June 25th, 912; July 2nd, 975; July 16th, 1,107; July 23rd, 1,203; July 30th, 1,317; August 6th, 1,401; August 13th, 1,509; August 20th, 1,549; August 27th, 1,731; September 10th, 1,948; September 17th, 2,022; September 24th, 2,103; November 5th, 2,546; November 12th, 2,598; November 19th, 2,620; December 24th, 2,751; January 7th (1893), 2,893; January 14th, 2,893. The Independent Labour Party was formed at a conference held on January 13th and 14th, 1893. When the figures reached 1,000 Birmingham and London had the biggest totals.

the Social Democrats were waived aside, by some, as mere theorists. Mr. Hardie favoured making independent political action the only test. A committee was appointed consisting of Mr. W. H. Drew (Bradford Labour Party), Mr. W. Johnson (Manchester I.L.P.), Miss Katherine St. John Conway—now Mrs. Bruce Glasier (Bristol I.L.P.), Messrs. J. Macdonald and P. Curran (London District National Independent Labour Party), and Mr. George Carson (Scottish Labour Party).

Over thirty years from the time when William Harry went down to the Trade Union Congress with the message, from the Chelsea Working-Men's Electoral Association, that the Liberal and Tory parties were "equal enemies of the people," and from the time when John Stuart Mill told workingmen that, in order to obtain representation they could, without any sacrifice of principle, let Tories into the House, the Independent Labour Party was founded. It was formed at a conference held at the Labour Institute, Peckover Street, Bradford, on January 13th and 14th, 1893. The delegates consisted of ninety-four from Independent Labour organisations, five from the Social Democratic Federation, twelve Fabians, four from the Cumberland Workmen's Federation, two from the Chemical and Copper Workers' Union, and one each from the Southport Socialist Society, the Bloomsbury Socialist Society, the Carlisle Trades Council, the Medway Trades Council, the Lancaster General Labourers, the London Trades Council Labour Representation League and the Eight Hours League.[1] Mr. Hardie was in the chair.

[1] The Fabian Society sent a letter expressing sympathy with the object of the conference, but stating that it could never affiliate with a party to be known as an "Independent Labour Party."

The Conference having decided to form the party, a discussion as to the name and "objects" ensued. Mr. George Carson moved as an amendment to the title "Independent Labour Party," "Socialist Labour Party," and remarked that in Scotland they had come to the conclusion that it was best to call a spade a spade. This met with opposition from Mr. Tillett and Mr. Burgess. Mr. Tillett wished to take advantage of the Trade Union organisations; "a body of men who were well organised, who paid their money, and were Socialists at their work every day and not merely on platforms, who did not shout for blood-red revolution and when it came to revolution sneak under the bed." The title "Independent Labour Party" was agreed upon. Mr. Bardsley, of Heywood, moved that the object of the party should be "to secure the collective and communal ownership of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange."[1] Mr. Mahon, of Leeds, proposed, as an amendment to this, that the object should be "to secure the separate representation and protection of Labour interests on public bodies." Speaking of this, Mr. Shaw Maxwell—who was subsequently elected secretary—said Labour representation was the means, not the object. He asked the Conference not to "blink the fact that the most earnest members of the party were Social Democrats and, if they had made a concession in regard to the title, let it stop at that." They should not, he said, "run the risk of losing some of the best minds in the country." Another opposer of the amendment said it would mean that the way would be open by which "men such as

[1] Similar resolutions had been sent from the Central Executive of the London I.L.P., the Nelson S.D.F., the Scottish Labour Party, the Bradford Labour Union, and the Camberwell I.L.P.

Fenwick and Burt would creep into the same offices and damn the Labour party to all eternity." Eventually, the original resolution was carried by 56 votes to 23, the words "and communal" after "collective" being deleted.

It was decided that the Executive should raise funds to assist independent candidatures, and "take such action as circumstances may justify in constituencies in which an election is pending and in which no Independent Labour Party organisation exists." Candidates were only to be assisted on the condition that they subscribed to the objects and programme of the party; that, if returned, they would form one of the Independent Labour Party and sit in opposition, "no matter which party be in power"; and that they would act with the majority of the "Socialist Independent Party in Parliament in advancing the interests of Labour irrespective of the convenience of any political party."

The Independent Labour Party was launched with high hopes and the most sanguine expectations.[1] In two years, the election came, and the party put twenty-eight candidates in the field.[2] Their votes

[1] Speaking at a demonstration, in the evening, Mr. Hardie said, "At the next General Election, whether it came in six months or six years, they could decide absolutely who should occupy the Government benches. The figures at the last General Election showed they had 14½ per cent of the voting power in the industrial centres. The Land Restorers and Agricultural Labourers' Union had an equal hold on the agricultural counties. Those influences would grow and, if the General Election did not come for two years, they would be able to command 25 per cent of the electorate" (*Workman's Times*).

In the early days of the party there was some amount of controversy over the "Fourth Clause," by which, when no candidate of the party was in the field, the members were to abstain from voting; a clause the enforcing of which now lies with the branches.

[2] The original number was 29, but Mr. Breame Pearce withdrew from Camlachie. This was on account of the rejection by the party of a recommendation by the National Administrative Council

totalled 44,321. Mr. Hyndman fought his first contest at Burnley, and polled 2,498. The candidates of the Social Democratic Federation, all over the country, however, only received a total of 3,700 votes.

Mr. Hardie was not opposed by the Liberals but was defeated by the Tory, Major Banes. In an address, issued after the election, he said: "Teetotallers worked hand in hand with publicans; some Trade Unionists with Free Labourers, Liberals with Tories; priests and professed Home Rulers with coercionists, and all to secure the defeat of the representative of Labour." The Labour group in Parliament, after the election, numbered twelve. Howell, Cremer, Rowlands and Woods were defeated.

The tactics of the Independent Labour Party and

to disown connection with the methods and principles of anarchism. Mr. Peace considered this tantamount to negative support. The I.L.P. candidates and their polls were: R. Smillie (Glasgow, Camlachie), 696; Prof. Watson (Glasgow, Bridgeton), 609; J. E. Woolacott (Glasgow, St. Rollox), 405; Frank Smith (Glasgow, Tradeston), 368; Shaw Maxwell (Glasgow, Blackfriars), 368; P. Curran (Barrow-in-Furness), 414; J. Burgess (Leicester)—against two Home Rulers and one Conservative—4,011; G. N. Barnes (Rochdale), 1,251; John Lister (Halifax)—against two Home Rulers and one Liberal-Unionist—3,818; Keir Hardie (South-West Ham), 3,975; B. Tillett (West Bradford), 2,264; F. Brocklehurst (Bolton), 2,964; J. Sexton (Ashton-under-Lyne), 415; S. G. Hobson (E. Bristol)—against a Liberal only—1,874; H. R. Smart (Huddersfield), 1,594; J. Tattersall (Preston)—against two Conservatives—4,781; James Macdonald (Dundee), 1,313; J. Johnston (Manchester, N.E.), 546; Parnell (Fulham), 196; J. R. Macdonald (Southampton), 866; G. Christie (Hyde), 448; E. Hartley (Dewsbury), 1,080; T. McCarthy (Hull), 1,400; A. Haddow (Govan), 430; Dr. Pankhurst (Gorton), 4,261; Arthur Shaw (Leeds, S.), 622; F. Hamill (Newcastle), 2,302; T. Mann (Yorks, Colne Valley), 1,245. The other candidates included John Burns (Battersea), 5,019—majority reduced from 1,559 to 244; J. L. Mahon (Aberdeen, N.)—an unattached Independent Labour candidate—608; H. W. Hobart, Socialist (Salford, S.), 813; G. Lansbury, Socialist (Newington, Walworth), 203; F. Jones, Socialist (Northampton), 1,216.

the Social Democrats met with the most hostile criticism of the Liberals and the Liberal-Labour men. In Battersea Park, Mr. John Burns made a great onslaught. He said: "Fortunately, the Labour movement has ceased to regard the S.D.F. as the mouthpiece of rational, sensible Social Democracy. Every movement must have its dust-bin—the S.D.F. fulfils that position efficiently. Without the courage of anarchists, or the patience of politicians, they have, once more, by their part in this election, proved to be incapable of responsible action. After fourteen years' work, in a city of 500,000 voters, they can only poll 203 votes. They are factious, fanatical, intolerant, suspicious and ignorantly impracticable. Like the Bourbons, they neither learn nor forget." Speaking of Mr. Hardie, Mr. Burns said: "Parliamentary anarchism always meets its fate and unscrupulous demagogy, whether in a Tory or a Labour leader, is soon found out." He charged Mr. Hardie with having promised to get the Government to build two cruisers and an ironclad at West Ham to provide work for the unemployed, which, he said, "outbid everything in the way of political seduction and bribery to get votes." Mr. Hardie's unemployed agitation, Mr. Burns declared, was the most "senseless, sentimental, anti-Socialist and futile movement" Labour had ever witnessed, and it would have "reduced the problem of the unemployed to a chaos of charity, doles, and disaster, to the permanent injury of the interests of Labour." Mr. Burns said he was sorry there was no prospect of the formation of a Socialist party in England. It was the Socialists who prevented it. "So anxious are they to reach the millennium that they sacrifice each other on the road."[1]

[1] *South Western World*, August 10th, 1895.

From its foundation, the Independent Labour Party frequently figured at by-elections. In 1894, it ran Frank Smith in the Attercliffe Division of Sheffield, where he polled 1,249 in a three-cornered fight, and the same year Joseph Burgess polled 4,402 at Leicester. There were two Liberals and one Conservative for the two seats. Mr. Broadhurst, who was top of the poll, tells us that Mr. Burgess used the "fairest and above-board weapons."[1] In East Bristol, the following year, H. H. Gore, a solicitor, who ran as a Socialist, and was backed by the local branches of the Independent Labour Party and Social Democratic Federation, polled 3,558 against 3,740 for W. H. Wills, his Liberal, and only, opponent. Mr. Hardie ran at East Bradford in 1896, refusing to meet the Liberals to effect a compromise, and polled 1,518, the Tory being returned. In North Aberdeen, Mr. Tom Mann polled 2,479, and reduced the Liberal majority from 3,548 to 430. Mr. Mann had little, if any, support from the Liberal-Labour element. Mr. Burns sent his best wishes to Captain Pirie, the Liberal candidate, and Mr. Havelock Wilson refused to speak for the Independent nominee. In 1897, there was a by-election at Halifax, and Mr. Tom Mann was again the candidate of the Independent Labour Party. The Liberal party offered to support a Liberal-Labour candidate at the following General Election, if the Independent candidate was withdrawn and Mr. Billson, the Liberal nominee, supported, but the offer was rejected. Mr. Broadhurst and Mr. Fenwick spoke for Mr. Billson; but the former subsequently denied that he knew Mr. Mann was a candidate when he made the speech. The Liberal won, and at the National Liberal Club,

[1] *Autobiography.*

after the news of Mr. Billson's victory had arrived, Mr. Havelock Wilson spoke and dwelt on the necessity of Liberals and Liberal-Labour men uniting. "Mr. Tom Mann," he declared, "had definitely informed him that he intended to fight the Liberal party, and that was the policy of the I.L.P. Hence it was the duty of all Liberal-Labour men to fight Mr. Tom Mann and his friends."[1] Mr. Mann's candidature had been endorsed by the Halifax Trades Council. Barnsley was fought by Mr. Pete Curran. The miners stoned him and his supporters, but he polled 3,290 votes. The Tory poll went down to 1,199, and Mr. Joseph Walton, a coalowner, the Liberal candidate, won the seat.[2]

All this time the Independent men were accused of fighting with "Tory gold," and at the Trade Union Congress, in 1897, the President (Mr. J. Jenkins) challenged the Independent Labour Party to issue a balance-sheet and show the source of its income.[3]

At the municipal elections, in 1897, the Independent Labour men polled 38 per cent of the votes in the constituencies contested, and won many seats on the Scotch School Boards. In 1898, Mr. G. N. Barnes, a member of the Independent Labour Party, was elected secretary of the Amalgamated Engineers.

[1] *Labour Leader*, quoting *Westminster Gazette*, March 4th, 1897.

[2] In 1897, two more Liberal-Labour men were returned, Mr. Sam Woods for Walthamstow, and Mr. F. Maddison for Brightside, Sheffield.

[3] In this connection, it is interesting to note that Mr. Burgess, in his *John Burns*, states that Mr. Burns's election expenses at Nottingham, in 1885, were paid by Mr. Barlow, a Fabian, the wealthy proprietor of Bay Soap, and an old friend of Mr. Champion. In 1888, Mr. Hardie's expenses at Mid-Lanark were found, through the medium of Mr. Champion, by Miss Harkness, whose literary *nom de plume* was "John Law," pp. 17 and 105.

The English Socialist movement was encouraged and elated at the result of the German elections in that year, when fifty Socialists were returned to the Reichstag, and the polling showed the Socialist vote to have risen from 100,000 in 1871 to 3,000,000. Many of the victories were obtained in strongholds of monarchy and militarism.

In 1898, a great figure was removed from English political life. May 19th saw the death of Mr. Gladstone. In view of his position and influence in the Liberal party during the whole of the movement for Labour representation; in view of the fact that it was his policy and personality which rallied to the Liberal party the bulk of the Trade Union leaders, and remembering that Mr. Gladstone strongly condemned the policy of the Independent Labour Party, and described its candidates and those responsible for them as enemies of Ireland, a memoir of the statesman by Mr. Hardie is of some interest.[1] Mr. Hardie wrote: "To him, freedom was the one condition of value in human life. . . . I well remember a private deputation of colliers, which met him in his hired house at 10, St. James's Square, to ask his support for the Eight Hours Bill. How, after we had exhausted all our arguments, the whole of his reply centred round the need for maintaining the liberty of the collier. He could not realise the fact of full-grown men being compelled to work long hours against their will. In the end, however, though not in response to the deputation, he had a glimmer of the truth borne in upon him, and he agreed to vote for the Bill. Wherever men proved their desire for freedom, by struggling to obtain it, his support was never long withheld. The modern Labour movement and the conditions which have

[1] *Labour Leader*, May 28th, 1908.

called it forth he never understood, and there was no Labour Party to evidence the fact that there was a Labour movement in existence. Surely, however, this cannot be imputed as blame to him. The fault rests elsewhere."

In the same article, Mr. Hardie relates an incident which is worth retailing. He tells us: "On one occasion, going through the division lobby with Mr. W. S. Caine, we came upon Mr. Gladstone in conversation, I think, with Mr. Mundella, standing near the fireplace. Caine left me for a minute, and said something in an undertone to the old man, who vigorously shook his head in a very decided fashion. Caine returned, and we continued our walk towards the wicket. He did not say what had transpired and, of course, I made no inquiries, but it remains a conviction with me that he had asked permission to introduce me to him and that Mr. Gladstone had declined. I honoured him for it. I was more than sick at the time of the attempts which had been made, from various quarters, to rope me in, and it came as a relief to find that the man who had most at stake would not appear to descend to such tactics as some of his pretended followers made their nightly practice."

CHAPTER X

THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE

What is this, the sound and rumour? What is this that all men hear,
Like the wind in hollow valleys when the storm is drawing near,
Like the rolling on of ocean in the eventide of fear?
'Tis the people marching on.—WILLIAM MORRIS.

IT is worthy of note that the resolution adopted by the Trade Union Congress which led to the formation of the Labour Representation Committee, made no reference to a levy upon the unions. Had such a levy been foreshadowed, it is by no means probable that Congress would have associated itself with the movement for Labour representation. The resolution which resulted in the Labour Representation Committee was passed in 1899 and, as we have already seen, Congress two years before rejected a proposal to obtain the opinion of the unions as to whether they would subscribe a penny per quarter for the return of working-men to Parliament, and in 1898 rejected a similar proposal by an even larger majority. The principle of individual trade unionists being placed in Parliament by their own unions had long been recognised; Liberal-Labourism had been largely built on this basis. But for the Trade Union movement as a whole to become part of a Labour Representation movement and to assist in establish-

ing a common fund into which a union might pay and yet have no direct representative of its own organisation in Parliament was another matter. Trade Unionism turned its back upon the idea for thirty years. On the other hand, it had never tired of placing on record its belief in the value of Labour representation and its desire to see the number of Labour representatives increased. The resolution of 1899 looked a harmless sort of proposal with no designs upon the coffers of the trade unions, and Congress passed it by 546 votes to 434. It ran as follows: "That this Congress, having regard to the decisions of former years, and with a view to securing a better representation of the interests of Labour in the House of Commons, hereby instructs the Parliamentary Committee to invite the co-operation of all Co-operative, Socialistic, Trade Union and other working-class organisations to jointly co-operate on lines mutually agreed upon in convening a special Congress of representatives from such of the above-named organisations as may be willing to take part to devise ways and means for the securing of an increased number of Labour Members in the next Parliament." The resolution was moved by Mr. J. Holmes, of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and seconded by Mr. James Sexton, of the National Union of Dock Labourers.

The Parliamentary Committee was not entrusted with the next move, but delegates from the Congress, the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Fabian Society were appointed, and these entrusted Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald with the work of drafting a constitution for the proposed Labour party.

The momentous Conference was held at the

Memorial Hall, London, on February 27th, 1900.[1] At the opening of the meeting, Mr. J. T. Chandler, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee, presided, and gave as an explanation of the absence of the co-operators, the intimation that they were considering Parliamentary representation on lines of their own. Mr. Chandler, however, was not a delegate to the Conference, and Mr. W. C. Steadman was subsequently voted to the chair. He struck the right note in opening, by the remark that, although he had only been a Member of Parliament a short time, he had been in the House long enough to see that "every interest was represented and protected except the interest of Labour."

Mr. R. W. Jones (Upholsterers) then moved, "That this Conference is in favour of the working-classes being represented in the House of Commons by members of the working-class as being the most likely to be sympathetic with the aims and demands of the Labour Movement." The motion was seconded by Mr. Paul Vogel, of the Waiters' organisation. Mr. G. N. Barnes and Mr. Burns were then found in opposition as the mover and seconder of an amendment declaring in favour of "working-class opinion being represented in the House of Commons by men sympathetic with the aims and demands of the Labour Movement and whose candidatures are promoted by one or other of the organised movements represented at this Conference." Mr. Burns described the resolution as a "narrow and exclusive proposal." If, he argued, the Conference proclaimed in favour of

[1] Of this conference, Mr. J. R. MacDonald has written that some of the delegates—who numbered 129—attended "to bury the attempt in good-humoured tolerance, a few to make sure that burial would be its fate, but the majority determined to give it a chance."—*The Socialist Movement.* (London, 1911.)

working-class candidates *only* it would be bad enough, but to give a definition to those candidates would be infinitely worse. Mr. Burns said he was "getting tired of working-class boots, working-class trains, working-class houses, and working-class margarine." He believed they had arrived at a time in the history of the Labour and Socialist movement when they should not be "prisoners to class prejudice, but should consider parties and policies apart from class organisation."[1] The amendment was further amended so as to admit the co-operators and was then carried by 102 to 3 votes.

So much for the party. The Social Democrats, through Mr. James Macdonald, made the first proposal as to policy. Mr. Macdonald moved that the working-class representatives should form a "distinct party . . . separate from the capitalist parties, based upon the recognition of the Class War, and having for its ultimate object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange." It should "formulate its own policy for promoting practical legislative measures in the interests of Labour, and should be prepared to co-operate with any party that would support such measures or assist in opposing measures of an opposite character." This was seconded by Mr. R. Macfetrick (London Tailors). Mr. A. Wilkie (Shipwrights) proposed that it should be amended to the effect that a Labour "platform" should be drawn up composed of four or five questions on which the vast majority of the working-classes were agreed, and that Labour candidates should pledge themselves to support them

[1] See Report of Conference published by the Labour Representation Committee, 3 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. The following accounts of the Committee's conferences are built mainly, but not entirely, on subsequent reports published by that body.

and "agree to act together in the promotion and advancement of those questions." Like the resolution, the amendment favoured co-operation with any party which supported the Labour cause. On "purely political questions," the Labour representatives should be left free. The seconder of this was Mr. J. Jenkins, also of the Shipwrights. In the discussion, Mr. James Sexton said the proposal of the Social Democrats was magnificent, but not war; and Mr. F. W. Rogers expressed the opinion that nothing would be more unfortunate for the Conference than for it to "label across its front 'Class War.'" The amendment was passed.

Mr. Hardie then moved as a still further amendment the proposal, which the Conference finally and unanimously decided upon, and which laid down the independent policy of the Labour party which was so soon to be founded. The amendment is thus of such importance as to deserve giving in full. It read: "That this Conference is in favour of establishing a distinct Labour Group in Parliament who shall have their own Whips and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which, for the time being, may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of Labour, and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party in opposing measures having an opposite tendency; and, further, members of the Labour Group shall not oppose any candidate whose candidature is being promoted in terms of Resolution I."[1] Mr. Hardie pointed out that under the resolution each organisation would be able to select its own candidate, on the one condition that, if elected, the candidate would form one of the Labour group and act in harmony with it. The proposal aimed

[1] See above: the resolution moved by Mr. Barnes.

at the prevention of opposition between a Socialist and an "earnest Trade Union candidate." Mr. Wilkie withdrew his motion in favour of Mr. Hardie's.

The Conference decided that the Executive Committee should number twelve, the number to be made up of representatives of the unions, the Independent Labour Party, the Social Democratic Federation, and the Fabian Society.[1] The members were to be elected by their respective organisations and were to select candidates and convene annual conferences and administer the funds. Each affiliated body was to pay 10s. per 1,000 members and be responsible for the expenses of its own candidates. It was to report annually to the Trade Union Congress and to the annual meetings of the societies represented on the committee.[2]

Of the names suggested for the new organisation we find the "United Labour Party" and the "Industrial Representation League." Mr. W. E. Clery, of the Fawcett Association, favoured the title "Liberal Party" on the ground that it was "really time that those who not only professed the principles of Liberalism, but meant to carry them into effect, should decline to surrender the title to those who professed Liberalism and hated it."

The fact that the Labour Representation Committee endorsed fifteen candidates at the General Election of 1900, a few months after its formation,

[1] The first Executive consisted of Messrs. F. W. Rogers, chairman (Vellum Binders), Thomas Greenall, vice-chairman (Lancashire Miner), R. Bell (Amalgamated Railway Servants), A. Wilkie (Shipwrights), P. Curran (Gasworkers), John Hodge (Steel Smelters), Allan Gee (General Union of Weavers and Textile Workers), E. R. Pease (Fabian Society), J. Keir Hardie and James Parker (I.L.P.), H. Quelch and James Macdonald (S.D.F.), with J. Ramsay MacDonald as secretary.

[2] For the growth of the funds and membership of the Labour party from its formation, see Appendices IV and V.

speaks volumes for the ardour of those associated with the organisation.[1] There were five three-cornered fights, the opposition of the Labour movement and a section of the Liberal party to the South African War accounting for some amount of reciprocity. The Committee's candidates polled 62,698 votes out of a total of 177,000 cast in their constituencies, and Mr. Hardie and Mr. Bell were victorious. Behind this was a membership of 312,000 and an income of the Committee of only £243 13s. 6d. for the whole year; yet £56 16s. 6d. was carried forward as a balance. The Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party supported the Committee's candidates and, in constituencies where no Labour or Socialist candidate was put forward, any decision as to how the party's vote should be used was left with the branches. The *Labour Leader* favoured the vote being given in such cases to anti-war candidates "on that ground only." There were fourteen direct Socialist candidates, and their average poll was 3,950, against 1,657 as an average in 1895. The total poll was 55,305. The percentage of the votes polled in the constituencies fought was 38 and, leaving out the low polls of Rochdale and Ashton-under-Lyne, 42.[2]

Mr. Hardie was again returned to Parliament; this time as member for Merthyr Tydvil. He polled 5,745 votes. The poll was headed by Mr. Thomas, a Radical "Pro-Boer," and the third candidate was a "Liberal Imperialist," Mr. Morgan. Mr. Bell was returned for Derby with a poll of 7,640 votes and, although the Liberals were very friendly, he had a separate organisation and separate meetings. Mr. J. H.

[1] At a by-election at Oldham, in July, 1899, the late James Mawdsley, then secretary of the Amalgamated Operative Cotton Spinners, polled 11,449 as a Labour-Conservative candidate. He ran with Mr. Churchill.

[2] *Labour Leader.*

Wilson, Mr. Howell, Mr. W. C. Steadman, Mr. Woods, and Mr. Maddison lost their seats, and Mr. Cremer, running as a Liberal, won back his seat at Haggerston. At Battersea, Mr. Burns had a bigger total poll than in 1892, and slightly increased his majority of the previous election. He polled 5,860 votes. The victory was hailed with great enthusiasm. There had been 2,000 removals and "the Tories," said Mr. Burns,[1] "took up 600 or 700 dead men from Battersea Cemetery to vote against me."[2] The election over, the workingmen in the House—including Mr. Broadhurst—numbered twelve, of whom two, Messrs. Hardie and Bell, were adopted by the Labour Representation Committee.

The Committee did not, in its early days, attempt any uniform organisation in the constituencies, as some were already organised. Such places were encouraged in their activities with a view to national organisation later on, and attention was first directed to those places which had been contested at the General Election. The policy adopted was to increase

[1] *Labour Leader.*

[2] Other results were: W. Thorne (West Ham, S.), 4,419; Allan Clarke (Rochdale), 901; J. K. Hardie (Preston), against two Conservatives for two seats, 4,834; Philip Snowden (Blackburn), against two Conservatives, 7,096; F. Jowett (Bradford, W.), 4,949—defeated by 41; J. R. MacDonald (Leicester), 4,164; F. Brocklehurst (Manchester, S.W.), 2,396; B. Jones (Deptford), 3,846; J. P. Nannetti (Dublin, College Green), 2,407; C. Fenwick (Northumberland, Wansbeck), 5,474; J. V. Stevens (Birmingham, E.), 2,835; J. Parker (Halifax), 3,276; W. C. Steadman (Tower Hamlets, Stepney), 1,718; G. Lansbury (Tower Hamlets, Bow-and-Bromley)—he ran as a Social Democrat—2,558; J. Johnston (Ashton-under-Lyne), 737; A. Wilkie (Sunderland)—who polled 610 more than the successful Liberal in 1895—8,842; W. Maxwell, Co-operator (Glasgow, Tradeston), 2,785; W. Johnson (Warwickshire, Nuneaton), 4,432; W. Wood (Lancashire, Gorton), 5,241; A. E. Fletcher (Glasgow, Camlachie), 3,107—about five times the poll of the Labour candidate in 1895.

the influence of the Labour organisations in those places with a view to securing a straight fight at the next election, especially in "double-barrelled" constituencies. In one or two other constituencies which looked promising—Norwich for example—the Labour elements were drawn together with the object of securing that a Labour man should fight for one of the two seats without opposition.[1]

The Taff Vale decision and the Denaby Main case, in the year 1900, had helped towards placing the trade unionists on their mettle, and the bitter struggle at the Penrhyn quarries and the defeat of the engineers' great organisation in its fight for an eight-hour day, in 1907, had had a similar influence. The leaders of the Labour Representation Committee naturally made all the capital possible out of these events. They described the legal decisions as "the beginning of a well-directed attempt to lay unions and their funds open to legal attack from which we imagined they were protected." They pointed out that capital was ever more effectively combining; that Armstrong, Whitworth, and Co. had a capital of £4,210,000; the sewing cotton combination (Coats, Clarke, and Kerr), £9,750,000; the Bradford Dyers Combination, £3,750,000; Wilson, Leyland, and Turner, £3,450,000; the Fine Cotton Spinners and Doublers, £5,025,000; the London Coal Ring, £3,500,000; and the Union Castle Shipping Company, £2,000,000. How, it was asked, could trade unions hope to succeed against such combinations? Attention was also called to the Employers' Parliamentary Council, which had members belonging to the Liberal and the Tory parties, and the object of which was "to take action with respect to any Bills

[1] See recommendation in Report (January, 1901), of a Committee of the L.R.C. appointed to consider the question of organisation.

introduced into either House of Parliament affecting the interests of trade, of free contracts, and of labour, or with respect to the action of imperial or local authorities affecting in any way the said interests." The example of the Miners' Federation was pointed to; but it was urged that "for political purposes Trade Unionists are one."[1] Bad social and industrial conditions were pointed to as another reason why the Committee should be supported.[2] It was also urged that the miner would not trust his employer to weigh tubs of coal without having a check-weigher, and the textile operative could not trust his employer to pay piece wages fairly without a Particulars Clause in a Factory Act. "How absurd it is," was the moral drawn, "that men who cannot be trusted in these small matters can be trusted to legislate so as to solve the Social problem in its widest significance." Soon after the meeting of Mr. Bell's first Parliament the Great Eastern Railway Company introduced a Bill, one clause of which was to establish a sick-benefit fund, to which the railway servants were to

[1] In 1901, the Miners' Federation agreed to pay a penny per month per member for the purpose of a Parliamentary Fund. The Federation aimed at running seventy candidates at the following election; the legal expenses were to be paid from the fund, and those elected were to be paid £350 a year and first-class railway fares. Each affiliated union was entitled to select one candidate for every 10,000 members. The candidates might run under whatever description they chose.

[2] "One in every three persons over sixty-five years of age—that is, one in every two of the working-class—has to live by charity. Last year over thirteen workmen were killed in mines and factories each day, and over 300 injured. Many of these accidents are preventable. Every year it is becoming more difficult for the workingman to find a decent house at a reasonable rate. Industry is crippled and the life of the worker rendered precarious by extortionate railway charges, mining royalties, and land rents" (*Labour and Politics*). Leaflet No. 1 of the Labour Representation Committee, from which this sketch of some of the grounds on which the Committe appealed for support is taken.

be compelled to contribute. Mr. Bell opposed this clause, and the Labour Representation Committee pointed out to the Trade Union world that "with Bell in the House the society's opposition to the clause was effective, and it was modified." It was held that this action had repaid Mr. Bell's election expenses—about £900—six times over.

On February 1st, 1901, the Labour Representation Committee held its first Conference. The Fabian Society had already, on its own initiative, drawn up a scheme for a Parliamentary fund which, in principle, was the same as that now adopted by the Labour party, although the machinery was slightly different, and at the Conference Mr. S. G. Hobson, a Fabian delegate, moved that the Conference should express its approval of the scheme and instruct the Executive to assist at its formation. The Conference, however, took the view that, while the scheme was, in itself, quite desirable, the time was not ripe for the Executive to put it into practice—a view put forward in an amendment by Mr. Bruce Glasier, and carried by 227 votes to 106. Mr. Watkinson, of the Social Democratic Federation, then moved that the Executive should appoint a sub-committee to arrange details of a scheme for a fund, and this was also defeated. The Conference carried the Socialist resolution of the Independent Labour Party, and rejected an amendment, moved by Mr. H. Quelch, that no candidate should receive support who was not "pledged to the above principles and to the recognition of the class war as the basis of working-class political action."

Although the suggestion of a scheme for raising something like a Parliamentary levy had been rejected by the Conference, it is evident that it was only because "the time was not ripe." During

the following year, several unions balloted their members on the question of a Parliamentary levy, and the Committee, while "considering that bodies making themselves responsible for candidates should show the genuineness of their desire by making special efforts to subscribe to their election expenses," and welcoming all such efforts, hoped "nevertheless, that, before the next General Election, a fund subscribed by the bodies and individuals interested in Labour representation will be in existence for the purpose of aiding *bona fide* Labour representatives irrespective of the unions to which they belong." Only in that way could the movement be "one for Labour representation and not merely for *trade* representation."[1]

Opinion in favour of a levy appears to have developed rapidly. At the second Conference, Mr. Curran, who represented the gasworkers, moved that the Conference should instruct the Executive "to consider ways and means of raising a fund to meet the expenses of those candidates who are run on our programme and also for providing a maintenance fund for those who may be returned to Parliament." The mover agreed to add an amendment by Mr. Sexton to the effect that the scheme should be placed before the unions and their support appealed for. The whole resolution was adopted, Conference rejecting an amendment asking the Executive to circularise the unions on the question of taking a ballot as to whether the members should subscribe a shilling a year to a Parliamentary fund.[2] The discussion on the resolution revealed that it was the recent hostile legal decisions which were haunting

[1] Report of Executive to Birmingham Conference. 1902.

[2] This was moved by Mr. Flynn (Cumberland Iron Miners), and seconded by Mr. P. Walls (Blast-Furnace Men).

some of those who thought a levy, at that time, would be premature.

The question of a name came up again at the Conference, and when a resolution was moved urging the unions to join the Labour Representation Committee in order that a "Labour Party" might be formed, an amendment proposing to alter the title to "Trade Union and Socialist Party" was lost. In the old days, the Labour Representation League held that its members of Parliament would not be in an isolated position in the House and would not confine their interests to a class within the nation; the Labour Representation Committee, while emphasising the necessity for a distinct party in the House, were equally anxious to prevent their movement from appearing to be the movement of a class within the working-class.

The year 1903 saw a marked movement on the part of unions for raising Parliamentary funds, and a number of candidates were selected by such organisations.[1]

In 1902, Mr. D. J. Shackleton, a nominee of the Committee, was returned unopposed for the Clitheroe Division, and the following year Mr. W. Crooks and Mr. Arthur Henderson made the fourth and fifth members who had been elected as its candidates; but Mr. Bell was now acting with the Liberal-Labour group, owing to circumstances to which we shall shortly refer. Mr. Henderson won a three-cornered fight at Barnard Castle by the narrow majority of 47; Mr. Crooks won in a straight fight at Woolwich.

[1] These were G. H. Stuart (Postmen's Federation); T. F. Richards (National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives); G. N. Barnes, Frederick Entwistle, G. Ferguson, Isaac Mitchell, and Frank Rose (Amalgamated Engineers); James Cowley (United Society of Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders); W. Crooks (United Society of Coopers); and W. C. Steadman (Barge Builders).

Mr. Lloyd George addressed a meeting of the Free Church Council in support of Mr. Crooks; but no Liberal speakers were allowed on the candidate's platform and the bulk of his immediate supporters were members of the Independent Labour Party.[1] Mr. Crooks polled 8,687 against 5,458 for his Tory opponent, Mr. Geoffrey Drage. Coming, as they did, while the Government of the day was still young, these by-elections were a significant expression of the grip the new movement was obtaining in the industrial centres. Mr. Shackleton was the first Labour man —not previously elected to Parliament—to be allowed a walk over. The victories acted as a great spur to further effort, and were a spur which was all the more effective because not confined to one area. Had they occurred in constituencies which were close to one another, the victories might have given an

[1] In view of Mr. Lloyd George's present position, some interest attaches to the "Open Letter" to the present Chancellor written by Mr. Keir Hardie and appearing in the *Labour Leader* of March 7th, 1903. Mr. Hardie wrote: "For over a hundred years the Whigs have played the game of gagging their dangerous rivals. No one can read the records of the past 130 years without being struck by the skill shown by the Liberals in inveigling the leaders of the people into their net and always with the same result. The earnest reformer, once he has tasted the cloying sweets of office, loses the taste for strenuousness; finds a thousand good reasons why he should cling to office, even after he knows he has been befooled and the people betrayed for whom he at one time fought. . . . But remain aloof, you would in time become the recognised leader of that force in politics which desires genuine reform, and which is not bound by doctrinaire theories and traditions. . . . There would be a cleavage between Whiggism and Radicalism." The writer went on to forecast a Labour party which, in the election after 1906, would number 50 and which, with 85 Irish members and 25 independent Radicals, would have sufficient in common to co-operate heartily in Parliament and in the country. Whig and Tory would be driven to combine. . . . "People versus Privilege" would be the cry. "Here," it was stated, "is a leadership to gratify the highest ambition and satisfy the loftiest aspiration."

appearance of strength which was false. As it was, they reflected the national character and growth of the movement.

In June, 1903, the Council of the Durham Miners' Association rejected a proposal to affiliate with the Labour Representation Committee, on the recommendation of its Executive, which, in a circular, stated that the Association had "sufficient on hand" with their own efforts to secure Labour representation, and considered that "under existing circumstances" they could "best manage their own affairs." The year previous the Association had paid £562 to victimised members, and wages had gone down 6¼ per cent.[1]

The Newcastle Conference, in 1903, was historic; it decided upon a Parliamentary levy by agreeing to the scheme presented by the Executive in accordance with the instruction at the previous Conference, and, what was more important, adopted a "Party" as distinct from a "Group" policy. The proposal was for a levy of a penny per member per annum, out of which 25 per cent of the returning officers' expenses—so long as the total so expended did not exceed a quarter of the Parliamentary fund—and £200 a year to Members of Parliament were to be paid. No payments were to be made from the fund, except in the case of a General Election, until there was a sum of £2,500 in hand.[2] Proposals to make the levy a shilling and a fourpenny one—by Mr. Henderson and Mr. Weighill respectively—were lost. The Newcastle Conference also saw the important alterations in the Constitution by which Members of

[1] *Labour Leader.*

[2] The Executive was to administer the fund and appoint three trustees, any of whom, with the secretary, might sign cheques. The first trustees were John Hodge, E. R. Pease, and Allan Gee. The two first-named have been trustees from the beginning.

Parliament were made to abide by the decision of the Parliamentary Group or resign,[1] and with candidates and the Executive to refrain from identifying themselves with other parties. The latter proposal was carried by 501,000 to 194,000. The resignation stipulation was not likely to be effective, as those who had to work it were opposed to it. The significant thing was the definite adoption of a party policy. There had, throughout the existence of the Committee, been a controversy as to whether the group policy—which up to that time was represented by the constitution—should be maintained, or whether the Committee should proceed on party lines. It was the vote of the cotton operatives who had joined the Committee since the previous Conference, which turned the scale in favour of party. By adopting a party policy the Committee inaugurated an entirely new phase of the Labour Representation movement.

The Socialist resolution was rejected at Newcastle, and the "class war," as a declared policy, by 86 to 35. Conference also refused to allow candidates to run as "Labour and Socialist," and would only allow the description "Labour."

In connection with these two latter matters it must be noted that the Social Democratic Federation withdrew from the Committee in August, 1901; at its first conference after the first rejection by the Committee of the "class war" as a basis of working-class politics. At the 1902 conference of the Federation, a proposal to rejoin was lost by a large majority.[2] The breach between the Committee and the Federation was widened by the subsequent refusals of the former to allow its candidates to describe themselves

[1] Moved by H. McManus (Belfast Trades Council), seconded by D. Hennessy (London Building Trades).

[2] Fifty-nine to twenty.

as "Labour and Socialist," and, above all, by the placing of the Parliamentary Fund at the disposal of non-Socialists and anti-Socialists. The Federation, as a Socialist body, felt that to subscribe to such a fund would be inconsistent. It declared that it did not take the attitude that it would never support a man who was not a Socialist, and that it recognised that cases of supreme importance might arise, such as the South African War, in which common cause could be made with those to whom they were generally opposed.[1] But it preferred a free hand and no alliance, as a body, which would make it support "men in whose selection we have had no voice, and who may be opposed to the principles we hold most dear."[2]

The resolution at Newcastle to enforce resignation if the decision of the majority of the Parliamentary group were not abided by was unpopular in some quarters where it was regarded as something engineered entirely by the Socialist section. Seeing that the Independent Labour Party had only fourteen delegates at the Conference, and considering the comparative insignificance of its membership compared with that of the Trade Unions,[3] and taking this in conjunction with the large majority for the resignation stipulation, the view that the resolution had—to use the old word—been "foisted" on the Conference by the Socialists as an organised body had not much foundation in fact. On the other

[1] This was done at the 1900 election, when—to give one instance—Mr. Hyndman was not put forward at Burnley as was originally intended.

[2] See *Justice*, October 8th, 1904.

[3] For the year 1902–3 the members of the Socialist societies affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee numbered 13,835; the other members, 861,150. The Conference votes by card, each vote representing 1000 or part of 1000. The I.L.P. had fourteen out of not less than 862 delegates.

hand, it must not be forgotten that, by reason of the few people they represent compared with the numbers represented by the trade unionists, the Socialists have always held a privileged position.

What may be fairly inferred to be a sequel to the decision of the Newcastle Conference occurred at the Trade Union Congress the same year. A resolution was moved endorsing the policy of the Labour Representation Committee, and urging the unions to join. To this there was an amendment, which proposed to set up the same test for membership of the Committee as existed for membership of the Congress —working at a trade or being a paid secretary of a union; under which conditions Mr. J. R. MacDonald —whose work for the Committee had been invaluable and whose energy and skill were second to none— and Messrs. Burns, Pease, and Hardie would have been among the excluded. The amendment was lost by 209 to 53, and the resolution carried by 200 to 82.[1] Had the amendment been carried, however, it would have had only a moral influence, for the Congress had no power to force its opinions on the Committee.

The Committee went on with its agitation among the unions. The method by which candidates were placed in the field was for affiliated societies who were willing to become responsible for candidates to select one or more from their numbers and place his name or their names upon a list kept by the Committee to be forwarded to any accredited person who inquired for it. From this list, a local Labour conference selected their men without "hint or pressure" from the Executive Committee, and only

[1] Mr. Hornidge (President of the Congress) expressed his opinion that each member of the Committee should be directly connected with a Labour organisation and should be a "worker." The party should not be composed of middle-class men, but of workingmen "pure and simple." See report in *Labour Leader*.

after the local agencies had moved in the matter and communicated with the Executive did the Executive Committee identify itself with any candidature.[1] Up to that time the Committee had never selected a constituency to be fought, or on its own initiative sent down a candidate. No candidate was properly promoted by the rules of the Committee who had not an affiliated society or societies responsible for his expenses, and candidates who paid their own expenses were not recognised. Some unions took the view that it was better for an organisation to be solely responsible for its candidate, as then the society would be sure that, if elected, he would be a real servant. To the Executive of the Committee such an idea "struck at the root of genuine Labour representation."[2]

At the Conference in 1904, the important step was taken of making the levy compulsory, and its payment a condition of continued affiliation to the Committee.[3] A less important step was the striking out of the clause in the constitution—only inserted the year before—by which Members of Parliament, not abiding by the decision of the majority, were to resign their seats. This was done on the recommendation of the Executive, which was then empowered to deal with offending members by withdrawing its endorsement or "dealing with the question in any other way they may deem advisable."

That year saw the Labour Representation Com-

[1] Report of Executive to 1904 Conference.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] The resolution read: "That the Parliamentary levy of a penny per member per year be compulsory upon all societies affiliated to the Labour Representation Committee, and be conditional to the continuance of affiliation, this Conference to fix the date of such levy becoming due, and any society neglecting to pay the same within three months of being due to forfeit all claims on the said fund, from twelve months from the date of such levy being made, and no benefit to any society until twelve months after becoming affiliated."

mittee start on its career as an independent body in theory, as it had always been in fact. The Trade Union Congress, as such, disowned further responsibility for its offshoot. Mr. Bell was the chairman, and on the agenda were several resolutions and amendments dealing with the constitution, and some condemning the support given by Mr. Bell to the Liberal party, a matter which, of course, was a constitutional question. A good deal of discussion was expected, for some unions were under the impression that Congress had some control over the Committee, and great was the surprise of the delegates when they learned, through Mr. Brace, the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee, that that body unanimously agreed in suggesting that "any resolution to endorse or amend the constitution of an independent and outside body" was out of order. From that day the Labour Representation Committee became, in real truth, "an independent and outside body."[1]

Those who wished to exclude the Socialist element again brought forward a resolution at the fifth conference of the Committee in January, 1905. This time it took the form of a definite proposal to exclude the Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society. Not only was this lost, but a counter resolution, admitting all Socialist societies, was carried. In addition, Conference again affirmed its determination for a strictly independent policy. It did this by carrying an amendment, by Mr. Philip

[1] Some portions of Mr. Bell's address at the Congress reflected the old distrust of the political element. He said: "Other bodies having other objects not wholly in common, must not by side issues be allowed to distract our attention from our unions or to cause us to relax our efforts in their promotion. . . . We must be prepared to co-operate with any section which sympathises, but we must zealously guard against any of these getting within our movement for purposes of their own."

Snowden, to a resolution from the Boilermakers giving the Executive power to sanction departure from strict independence if they thought such was warranted by the circumstances of a particular case; the idea behind the resolution evidently being that the constitution was not sufficiently elastic.

The Boilermakers' resolution touched the old controversy which, as we have seen, created two divisions of opinion as to the course to be taken. One section aimed at a Labour Group, the other at a Labour Party: some who wanted a party did not think one possible in the early years. We have noted how, for one year, the constitution was, in theory and on paper, so rigid that Parliamentary representatives who failed to fall in with the view of the majority of the group were compelled to resign. Other efforts to either loosen or tighten the constitution—to cultivate a group in Parliament and trust to common interests to lead to common action or to govern the group by a party organisation—were made from time to time. When the Committee was formed, it was felt that a rigid constitution would be a mistake, hence the decision to form a "distinct Labour Group" which, while it had a policy of its own, should—as was expressly laid down by resolution on the foundation of the Committee—co-operate with any party which supported a Labour question or opposed matters detrimental to Labour. It was, however, generally understood that, in the country, the Committee should not associate itself with either the Liberal or Conservative party.

But incidents had arisen which showed the awkward position in which a too elastic constitution was liable to place the Committee. In January, 1904, there was a by-election at Norwich with a Liberal, a Tory, and a Labour Representation Committee candidate: Mr. G. H. Roberts. The

Liberal won the seat, and Mr. Bell, who, it will be remembered, had himself been elected to Parliament as a candidate of the Committee, wired to the victorious Liberal—"Great triumph for progress. Hearty congratulations, R. Bell, M.P." This was considered, by the Executive, to be a "serious departure from the principles on which this movement was founded, and a breach of the provision of the constitution safeguarding the independence of the Labour Party"—as, indeed, it was, being contrary to the first resolution passed by the Committee. In addition, however, Mr. Bell, though Chairman of the Committee, in the year 1902–3, assisted Liberal candidates at Cleveland, Newmarket, and Liverpool. Besides this, in the summer of 1903, Mr. Shackleton and Mr. Henderson went into the constituencies of Market Harborough and Devonport, at by-elections, where there were no Labour candidates, and although they did not appear on Liberal platforms they spoke for Free Trade. The Executive decided that such action gave the Press an opportunity to misrepresent the movement. Prior to the Newcastle Conference, the support of Liberals, in constituencies where there was no candidate of the Committee, would not have been a violation of that body's constitution.

The institution of party policy, at Newcastle, was due largely, if not wholly, to the way in which such actions as those of Mr. Bell, during the previous year, had shown how the independent position of the movement might be sapped. During the year, the cotton operatives had joined the movement and they threw their weight on the side of a party policy. The Group idea never gained the upper hand after 1903, and three years later, the organisation did what it might have done at that time. It called itself a Labour *Party*, which was at last a reality and a power in politics.

CHAPTER XI

THE LABOUR PARTY

What we want is real leaders, themselves working-men, and content to be so until classes are abolished. But we see when a man has gifts for that kind of thing he finds himself tending to rise out of his class, before he has begun to think of class politics as a matter of principle; and too often he is simply "got at" by the governing classes; not formally, but by circumstances.—WILLIAM MORRIS.

WHEN Mr. Balfour resigned in December, 1905, it was not anticipated by the general public that the new Parliament would see a new party in the House; although, as the position in certain constituencies became known and it was seen what a number of Labour men were to meet with no Liberal opposition, there was evidence to show that events were likely to take such a turn. The resolution respecting Labour representation had turned up at the Trade Union Congress with such regularity for so many years that when, at Plymouth, in 1899, the proposal to call the conference on the subject was passed it attracted no unusual attention, and was not followed up by the Press. All the information given to the public concerning the momentous meeting at the Memorial Hall, a few months later, was conveyed in very brief reports in a few newspapers. Nor was the work of the Committee much in the public eye during the next six years. It was spade-work; work which was not carried on to the applause of crowds. Even the leaders found them-

selves but seldom in the limelight; many, like all who give themselves to the pioneering of a movement, worked and made sacrifices to lay sure the foundations in their own sphere of influence, but were never known outside it and never will be.

At the General Election of 1906, twenty-nine candidates of the Labour Representation Committee were returned to Parliament. The total vote of these candidates and those of the Scottish Workers' Labour Representation Committee[1] was 337,573. Of the miners who were not under the Committee four were returned unopposed, and all the others won their seats, and polled a total vote of 81,483. This brought the total Socialist and Labour vote to 448,808.

Of the twenty-nine successful candidates of the Committee, only five were opposed by Liberals, and of the twenty-one unsuccessful candidates of that organisation thirteen polled a smaller number of votes than the Liberal candidate, and in every case where a Conservative got in, save one, the Liberal vote was larger than the Labour vote.[2]

[1] This Committee was founded in 1900, and was an offspring of the Scottish Trade Union Congress founded in 1897. It embraced Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, and Socialist Societies, and worked much on the same lines as the Labour Representation Committee. The Labour Party having decided—in 1909, after negotiations—to affiliate Scottish Societies, the Scottish Committee collapsed. Deducting the poll of the Scottish Committee's candidates, the Labour Representation Committee's poll in 1906 was 323,195.

[2] "Story of the Labour Party," A. L. Atherley Jones, *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1906.

The polls of the Labour Representation Committee candidates were:—

ELECTED.

Barnard Castle	A. Henderson	5,540
Barrow-in-Furness	C. Duncan	5,167
Blackburn	Philip Snowden	10,282
Bolton	A. H. Gill	10,416
Bradford, W.	F. W. Jowett	4,957

[*Continued on next page.*

At this election, there were three candidates who were the forerunners—at least one of them, Mr. Hobson, consciously—of what promises to be the next phase of the Labour Representation movement. They were the Independent Socialists: Mr. S. G. Hobson at Rochdale, Mr. G. Belt at Hammersmith, and Mr. George Lansbury at Middlesbrough. These independents stood for that element in the movement which believed in a distinct and independent Socialist party; one independent of the Trade Union movement. The principle behind it was that social reform and Socialist reform are not always convertible terms. The policy, as Mr. Hobson's supporters put it, was: "Socialist unity within the ranks and absolute independence outside the ranks." Mr. Hobson believed the Labour Representation Com-

Chatham	J. H. Jenkins	6,692
Clitheroe	D. J. Shackleton	12,035
Deptford	C. W. Bowerman	6,236
Dundee	A. Wilkie	6,833
Glasgow (Blackfriars)	G. N. Barnes	3,284
Gorton	J. Hodge	8,566
Halifax	J. Parker	8,937
Ince	S. Walsh	8,046
Leeds, E.	J. O'Grady	4,299
Leicester	J. R. MacDonald	14,685
Manchester, N.E.	J. R. Clynes	5,386
Manchester, S.W.	G. D. Kelley	4,101
Merthyr Tydvil	J. Keir Hardie	10,187
Newcastle-on-Tyne	W. Hudson	18,869
Newton, Lancs.	J. A. Seddon	6,434
Norwich	G. H. Roberts	11,059
Preston	J. T. Macpherson	10,181
St. Helens	T. Glover	6,088
Sunderland	T. Summerbell	13,430
Stockport	G. J. Wardle	7,319
Woolwich	W. Crooks	9,026
West Ham, S.	W. Thorne	10,198
Wolverhampton, W.	T. F. Richards	6,767
West Houghton, Lancs.	W. T. Wilson	9,262

[*Continued on next page.*

mittee was "right in being independent but wrong in not being Socialist." The candidate was held to represent the "first deliberate attempt to show the way towards a Socialist Parliamentary Party." His

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NOT ELECTED.

Belfast, N.	W. Walker	4,616
Birmingham (Bordesley)	J. B. Glasier	3,976
Birmingham (East)	J. Holmes	5,343
Croydon	S. Stranks	4,007
Darlington	I. H. Mitchell	4,087
Dewsbury	B. Turner	2,629
Eccles, Lancs.	B. Tillett	3,985
Glasgow (Camlachie)	J. Burgess	2,568
Govan	J. Hill	4,212
Gravesend	Jas. Macpherson	873
Grimsby	T. Proctor	2,248
Huddersfield	T. R. Williams	5,813
Jarrow	Pete Curran	5,093
Leeds, South	A. Fox	4,030
Liverpool (Kirkdale)	J. Conley	3,157
Liverpool (Toxteth)	J. Sexton	2,952
Monmouth Boroughs	J. Winstone	1,678
Portsmouth	W. S. Sanders	8,172
Stockton	F. H. Rose	2,710
Wakefield	Stanton Coit	2,086
York	G. H. Stuart	4,573

The results of the Labour and Socialist candidates independent of the Labour Representation Committee were: Wigan, T. Smith (I.L.P.), 2,205; Paisley, R. Smillie (Miners and I.L.P.), 2,482; Falkirk Burghs, D. Gilmour (I.L.P.), 763; Lanark (N.W.), J. Sullivan (Miners and I.L.P.), 3,291; Ayrshire (N.), A. J. Brown (Miners and I.L.P.), 2,683; Lanark (N.E.), J. Robertson (Miners and I.L.P.), 4,658; Keighley, J. Newlove (Miners and I.L.P.), 3,102; Camborne (Cornwall), J. Jones (S.D.F.), 109; Aberdeen (N.), T. Kennedy (S.D.F.), 1,934; Bradford (E.), E. R. Hartley (S.D.F.), 3,090; Burnley, H. M. Hyndman (S.D.F.), 4,932; Northampton, J. Williams (S.D.F.), 2,537; J. Gribble (S.D.F.), 2,361; Southampton, H. Quelch (S.D.F. and Trades Council), 2,146; Accrington, D. Irving (S.D.F. and Trades Council), 4,852; Rochdale, S. G. Hobson (Ind. Soc.), 2,506; Middlesbrough, G. Lansbury (Ind. Soc.), 1,484; Hammersmith, G. Belt (Ind. Soc.), 855.

Ten Liberal-Labour men held seats in Parliament at the close of the election as well as fourteen miners' representatives.

supporters held that the "time for lecturing and tinkering seems to be passing away." "If," they declared, "we want Socialist laws we must find Socialist legislators."[1]

At the sixth Conference of the Labour Representation Committee, held at the Memorial Hall, the scene of its formation, the title "Labour Party" was adopted.[2]

Steps were taken to secure that the Labour forces in the House should be as united as possible, and at a conference with the Management Committee of the general Federation of Trade Unions and the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress it was urged that the Trade Union group should loyally support the Labour party. In return, the Labour party agreed to support all the candidates approved by the Parliamentary Committee, so far as its constitution allowed, and the two sections resolved not to oppose each other in the constituencies. The Labour party, however, made it clear that it would not support candidates of the Trade Union group on other than Labour platforms, and that it ought not to be considered disloyal for refusing to do so.

This co-operation appears to have been viewed with some concern in Liberal quarters, judging by the following letter which was sent to the Liberal-Labour members, and others of the same school, by Mr. Granville Bankes, the Liberal agent for Westminster,

[1] See appeal for funds signed by Messrs. Hubert Bland, H. G. Wells, and G. R. S. Taylor.

[2] At this Conference there was a slight alteration in the constitution, which was amended to prevent candidates from identifying themselves with Nationalist candidates. This was moved by John Murphy (Belfast Trades Council), who did not regard Home Rule as a Labour question in the North of Ireland, and said Home Rule or the maintenance of the Union should be kept apart from Labour questions.

on March 6th, 1906. It was headed "Proposed National Liberal-Labour League," and read:

"Dear Sir,

"The opinion has been freely expressed to me by Liberal leaders (who have promised considerable financial support) that a separate organisation should be formed to represent the views of the Liberal-Labour members of Parliament and to secure a substantial increase in their numbers at the next General Election.

"It is thought that a Labour Party within the Liberal Party will be a source of great strength to both, and I am requested to ask your views thereon as a Labour M.P.

"Will you please be good enough to send me a reply with suggestions, during the week, so that steps may be taken to call an early meeting?"

At the end of the letter was a "Note": "This letter has not been issued to the 29 Labour M.P.'s pledged to the L.R.C. programme."[1] The Liberal-Labour men, however, had apparently no desire to become "a Labour Party within the Liberal Party," and the League was never formed. The Socialists hoped no one would make inquiries about "Liberal gold."

In 1907, the Conference unanimously agreed to increase the Parliamentary levy to twopence. On the former basis, the Executive showed that while the income for 1906 had only been about £4,000, the trustees had to meet an expenditure of £6,290, made up by £5,800 for the maintenance of members, £100 for Parliamentary assistant's salary, approximately £20 for postage and sundries, Returning Officers' fees (approximately) £150, and £220 as the percentage to the General Fund.

[1] See reprint in *Labour Leader*.

This Conference witnessed another effort to make the Labour party a Trade Union party. Mr. Tillett moved that all Members of Parliament, delegates and candidates should belong to a *bona fide* Trade Union. If there were no union for the calling of a particular individual, permission was to be given him to join an organisation with a general clause of membership; and any Labour member, candidate, or delegate "black-legging or acting contrary to the principles of Trade Unionism" was to be expelled. Mr. Tillett urged that trade unionists who did something towards adding a shilling to the wage, or putting more food on the table of the worker, were doing a greater work than "sentimental men talking about theories." If the dockers and labourers—among whom there was only an average of fifty per cent employed—could organise, he "looked upon the clever, literary, well-educated men attached to the movement as the greatest blacklegs, if they could not organise in their own profession." Mr. Tillett argued that they ought to have the Miners' Federation in the Labour party, and if they made the party "water-tight" there was a chance of the organisation growing fifty per cent before the next meeting.

The discussion was an animated one. Mr. Hodge said the movement was not a Trade Union movement, and asked why they should seek to make Socialists hypocrites by compelling them to join organisations for which they were not eligible. To this, Mr. H. Quelch, who could not conceive of a Labour party objecting to all its members being Trade Unionists, replied that it was possible for any Socialist to be a Trade Unionist. Mr. W. F. Beston, of the Toolmakers, retorted, "What about Hyndman and Cunninghame Graham?" Were they to tell those men that before they could be recognised in the

Trade Union movement they would have to pay threepence a week and take out a membership card? This was followed up by Mr. J. R. Clynes, who declared: "The cause of Labour had received from men and women who had no contribution cards more worthy help, more brainy assistance, more self-sacrifice than it had from some men who had contribution cards." Mr. W. C. Anderson said the miners were outside the Labour party because they had not accepted the principle of independent representation; the movement could afford to wait until they had. Cries of "Rubbish!" greeted the statement of Mr. Tillett, in his reply, that all the brains outside the Trade Union movement were not worth the Trade Union movement or the Miners' Federation. Mr. Tillett's proposal was lost by 581,000 votes to 553,000.

It has been stated elsewhere that this volume is a record of the work of getting into the House of Commons rather than of what has been accomplished by those who obtained an entrance. This, therefore, is not the place to review or discuss the work of the Labour party in Parliament. Suffice it to say that, although it grew up out of the belief that the interests of Labour were neglected by the Legislature while other interests, which were adequately represented, were protected, and out of the further belief that such was the opposition of interests between Labour and those who composed the other parties that there could be no permanent alliance between them—in spite of those beliefs the Labour party has, nevertheless, always taken an interest and performed what it considered to be its duty in reference to matters not directly connected with the welfare of its class. From its beginning, the leaders were aware that too narrow an outlook would be fatal to success. Thus, in 1901, we find that the Labour Representation

Committee sent a delegate to a National Conference of Educationists, partly, no doubt, out of a genuine desire to aid educational movements, but also because "in all such matters," where there was "practical unanimity of opinion among Labour organisations," the Committee would "have to take a definite interest if it was to keep itself before the public."[1] Further, it will be difficult to quarrel with the statement that the Labour party has been "alive to the fact that no Party can obtain a footing in British politics which ignores the wider issues of our national life. Questions of foreign affairs, education, the welfare of subject races, militarism, and finance have all been dealt with by members of the Party speaking for their colleagues."[2]

Soon, another phase of the working-class movement was brought into unexpected and startling prominence. July, 1907, saw the return of the first Independent Socialist in the person of Mr. Victor Grayson. Mr. Grayson, in a three-cornered fight, captured the Colne Valley division which had for years been a Liberal stronghold, and the youth of the new member, together with the fact that, outside the constituency, he was comparatively unknown, made the victory all the more sensational. Mr. Grayson polled 3,648 votes against 3,495 for Mr. Bright, the Liberal—whom the *Times* described as the type of candidate "most useful to party managers"[3]—and 3,227 for Mr. G. Wheler, the Conservative. Following, as it did, close upon the

[1] J. R. MacDonald to E. R. Pease on the question of sending a delegate to a National Conference of Educationists, May 14th, 1901.

[2] "The Labour Movement," J. Keir Hardie, *Nineteenth Century*, December, 1906.

[3] July 20th, 1907.

victory of Mr. Pete Curran at Jarrow—also in a three-cornered contest—the return of the Socialist came as a great shock to the other political parties,[1] and a Labour and Socialist boom was the natural result.

The party, however, was soon to receive a check.[2]

[1] The *Times* (July 20th) said: "The fact that Mr. Grayson was not officially recognised by the central Labour organisation led to the anticipation that he might perhaps endanger the success of the Liberal candidate, but it does not seem to have been expected that he would defeat both candidates. . . . It shows that it does not need the direct action of the Labour organisation to deprive it (the Liberal party) of the Labour vote in a constituency. . . . Everyone may interpret that fact in his own way and may draw his own conclusions, but no one can easily deny its significance."

The London *Daily Express* wrote: "Socialism, the enemy of the world, has won again. Where are our Party organisers and our Party staffs—what are they doing? It is a startling fact that, while we have soldiers and police to protect us from riots and social revolutions, we have none but a handful of political officers to stave off political revolution, which will be accompanied by results no less disastrous for the mere reason that it is accomplished without bloodshed at the polls."

[2] In 1909 the Miners' Federation joined the Labour party, and in January, 1910, Labour went into the field a solid force. The candidates and polls of the party were:—

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES.

Barnard Castle	A. Henderson	6,136
Barrow-in-Furness	C. Duncan	5,304
Blackburn	P. Snowden	11,916
Bolton	A. H. Gill	11,864
Bradford, W.	F. W. Jowett	8,880
Chesterfield	J. Haslam	8,234
Chester-le-Street	J. W. Taylor	12,684
Clitheroe	D. J. Shackleton	13,873
Deptford	C. W. Bowerman	6,880
Derby	J. H. Thomas	10,189
Derbyshire, Mid.	J. G. Hancock	7,557
Derbyshire, N.E.	W. E. Harvey	8,715
Dundee	A. Wilkie	10,365
Glamorgan, S.	W. Brace	11,612
Glasgow, Blackfriars	G. N. Barnes	4,496
Gorton	J. Hodge	7,807

[*Continued on next page.*

On December 21st, 1909, it was laid down by the Law Lords that the basis of the party was illegal and contrary to public policy. The history of this

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Gower	J. Williams		9,312
Halifax	J. Parker		9,093
Hallamshire	J. Wadsworth		10,193
Hanley	E. Edwards		9,199
Ince, Lancs.	S. Walsh		7,723
Leeds, E.	J. O'Grady		5,373
Leicester	J. R. MacDonald		14,337
Manchester, E.	J. E. Sutton		6,110
Manchester, N.E.	J. R. Clynes		5,157
Merthyr Tydvil	J. Keir Hardie		13,841
Monmouth, W.	T. Richards		13,295
Newcastle	W. Hudson		18,241
Newton, Lancs.	J. A. Seddon		7,256
Normanton, Yorks.	F. Hall		9,172
Norwich	G. H. Roberts		11,119
Nuneaton	W. Johnson		8,154
Rhondda	W. Abraham		12,436
Stafford, N.W.	A. Stanley		8,566
St. Helens	T Glover		6,512
Sheffield, Attercliffe	J. Pointer		7,755
Stockport	G. J. Wardle		6,682
West Ham	W. Thorne		11,791
Westhoughton	W. T. Wilson		10,141
Wigan	H. Twist		4,803

UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES.

Ayrshire, N.	J. Brown		1,801
Belfast	R. Gageby		3,951
Birminghan, E.	J. J. Stephenson		3,958
Bishop Auckland	W. House		3,579
Birmingham, Bordesley	F. Hughes		3,453
Bow-and-Bromley	G. Lansbury		2,955
Bristol, E.	F. Sheppard		2,255
Chatham	J. H. Jenkins		6,130
Cockermouth	J. P. Whitehead		1,909
Crewe	F. H. Rose		1,380
Eccles, Lancs	G. H. Stuart		3,511
Fife, W.	W. Adamson		4,736
Gateshead, Yorks	J. Johnson		3,572
Glasgow, Camlachie	J. O'Connor Kessack		2,443

[*Continued on next page.*

decision—now known as the Osborne Judgment—is too recent to require fully recording here. The briefest sketch will suffice.

Govan	J. T. Brownlie	3,543
Holmfirth, Yorks.	W. Pickles	1,643
Huddersfield	H. Snell	5,686
Hyde, Cheshire	W. C. Anderson	2,401
Jarrow	P. Curran	4,818
Lanark, Mid.	R. Smillie	3,864
Lanark, N.E.	J. Sullivan	2,160
Lanark, N.W.	R. Small	1,718
Leigh, Lancs.	T. Greenall	3,268
Leith	W. Walker	2,724
Liverpool, Kirkdale	A. G. Cameron	3,921
Manchester, S.W.	J. M. Maclachan	1,218
Middlesbrough	P. Walls	2,710
Morley	H. Smith	2,192
Portsmouth	W. S. Sanders	3,529
Preston	J. T. Macpherson	7,537
Spen Valley	T. Russell Williams	2,514
Sunderland	T. Summerbell	11,053
Tewkesbury	C. H. Fox	238
Wakefield	Stanton Coit	2,602
West Toxteth	J. Sexton	2,909
Whitehaven	A. Sharp	825
Wolverhampton, W.	T. F. Richards	5,790
Woolwich	Will Crooks	8,420

The increase of the Labour party vote on 1906 was 183,506.

December, 1910:—

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES.

Barrow-in-Furness	C. Duncan	4,813
Bow-and-Bromley	G. Lansbury	4,315
Bolton	A. H. Gill	10,108
Bradford, W.	F. W. Jowett	7,729
Blackburn	P. Snowden	10,762
Clitheroe	A. Smith	12,107
Chesterfield	J. Haslam	7,283
Chester-le-Street	J. W. Taylor	*
Dundee	A. Wilkie	8,957
Durham, Barnard Castle	A. Henderson	5,868
Derby	J. H. Thomas	9,144
Deptford	C. W. Bowerman	6,357

* Returned unopposed.

[*Continued on next page.*

Some such decision had been foreshadowed some years previously, and the *Labour Leader* wrote: "It has been notorious from the first that as soon as the Labour party grew strong enough

Derbyshire, Mid.	J. G. Hancock	6,557
Derbyshire, N.E.	W. E. Harvey	7,838
Glamorgan, S.	W. Brace	10,190
Glamorgan, Gower	J. Williams	5,480
Glasgow, Blackfriars	G. N. Barnes	4,162
Gorton	J. Hodge	7,840
Fife, W.	W. Adamson	6,128
Halifax	J. Parker	8,511
Hallamshire	J. Wadsworth	8,708
Hanley	E. Edwards	8,342
Ince	S. Walsh	7,117
Leeds, E.	J. O'Grady	4,028
Leicester	J. R. MacDonald	12,998
Manchester, E.	J. E. Sutton	5,524
Manchester, N.E.	J. R. Clynes	4,313
Merthyr Tydvil	J. K. Hardie	11,507
Monmouth, W.	T. Richards	*
Newcastle	W. Hudson	16,447
Normanton	F. Hall	*
Norwich	G. H. Roberts	10,003
Nuneaton	W. Johnson	8,199
Rhondda	W. Abraham	9,073
Sheffield, Attercliffe	J. Pointer	6,532
Stafford, N.W.	A. Stanley	8,125
Stockport	G. J. Wardle	6,094
Sunderland	F. W. Goldstone	11,291
West Ham, S.	W. Thorne	9,508
Westhoughton	W. T. Wilson	9,064
Whitehaven	T. Richardson	1,414
Woolwich	W. Crooks	8,252

UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES.

Bishop Auckland	W. House	3,993
Camlachie	J. O'Connor Kessack	1,539
Chatham	Frank Smith	1,103
Glamorgan, E.	C. B. Stanton	4,675
Glamorgan, Mid.	V. Hartshorn	6,102
Huddersfield	H. Snell	4,988
Jarrow	A. G. Cameron	4,892

* Returned unopposed.

[*Continued on next page.*

to be dangerous it would have to run the gauntlet of the Law Courts, and the officials and Executive Committees of Trades Unions will do well to see that their rules are such as will stand the test. It would, in fact, be good policy to have a model clause drawn up by legal and other experts for insertion in the rules of every union."[1]

The proceedings which resulted in the Osborne Judgment were begun on July 22nd, 1908, in the High Court, before Mr. Justice Neville. The plaintiff was Mr. W. V. Osborne, the secretary of the Walthamstow branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, and a foreman porter at Clapham Junction. He sought to restrain the society from making compulsory levies and applying the funds raised to obtain Parliamentary representation, which he claimed was *ultra vires* of a trade union. The action was brought because the compulsory levy forced some trade unionists—the plaintiff among them—to pay for the return and support of candidates with whose views they did not agree. Mr. Justice Neville dismissed the application, and remarked that "given the right to spend their money to promote their interests in the House

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Kirkdale	T. McKerrell		2,992
Lanark, Mid.	R. Smillie		3,487
Leeds, S.	J. Badlay		2,706
Newton	J. A. Seddon		6,562
Preston	W. H. Carr		7,853
St. Helens	T. Glover		5,752
Wigan	H. Twist		4,110

The vote represented a decrease of 134,888 on that of the election the previous January.

[1] January 20th, 1905.

For a Model Rule, sanctioned by the Chief Registrar, under which Trade Union funds might be used to secure Labour representation, see Appendix VI.

of Commons, I think the question of how they can do so is purely a question of policy, with which the courts will not concern themselves." The case was taken to the Court of Appeal, which reversed the decision, and when the society carried it to the House of Lords, the Lords upheld the inferior court.

The decision, it has been pointed out by a high authority, was given on five distinct grounds, but no one of them was relied upon by all the members of the two tribunals, nor by all the members of the House of Lords.[1] Firstly, there had been irregularity in the making of the rule, in the Railway Servants' society, under which the levies were made, but, as this could be met by making, with proper formalities, new rules to the same effect, and as it was peculiar to that particular society, it was of but little importance, and was not considered by the Lords. Then it was held that the lawful purposes of a trade union were defined by the Trade Union Acts of 1871 and 1876, and consisted of "regulating the relations between workmen and masters, or between workmen and workmen, or between masters and masters," and "imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business." The judgment was also given on two grounds of public policy: one, that the forcing of the successful candidates of the society to sign the constitution of the Labour party converted its members from free representatives to paid delegates, and the other that it was inconsistent with political freedom for a

[1] *The Osborne Judgment and After*, by Prof. W. M. Geldart, reprinted from the *Manchester Guardian*.

An interesting table, reproduced from the Report of the Executive of the Labour party for 1911, and showing the view of the judges, is given in Appendix VII.

trade union to compel members to allow their funds to be used, and themselves to subscribe for, the support of candidates and Members of Parliament with whose views they might not agree. Lord James adopted a line of reasoning different from any other judge concerned in the case. He held that the definition clause of the Trade Union Act of 1876 was not "a clause of limitation or exhaustive definition," and that trade unions were entitled to spend their money on Parliamentary representation; but to do so and then regulate the action of Members of Parliament, as they were regulated by the signing of the constitution of the Labour party, was contrary to public policy.

It will be observed that the decision barred trade unions from all political activity, local or national, if it meant the expenditure of their money. Even if it were admitted that they had a right to pay for Labour representation, the levy was not to be compulsory, and Members of Parliament were not to sign the pledge of the Labour party to "agree to abide by the decision of the Parliamentary Party in carrying out the aims" of its constitution.

Injunctions were subsequently obtained against twenty-two other societies forbidding them to spend their money on political work as some had done for over forty years. The Labour party saw in the decision a deliberately engineered blow at itself. Mr. Osborne was a working railway servant, and he maintained that the bulk of the money with which to go to law came from working-men; but no subscription list was ever published.

At the last conference of the Labour party (1911) a step was taken to remove one of the legal objections to its support from the unions. The "pledge" was abolished. By a huge majority, the condition

that Members of Parliament must "abide by the decision of the Parliamentary Party in carrying out the aims of this constitution" was struck out. Members were to "maintain" instead of "accept" the constitution, and "accept the responsibilities established by Parliamentary practice" instead of agreeing not to oppose any candidate recognised by the National Executive. The opposition was not so much to the amendment itself as to the time at which it was proposed, it being felt that it was showing the white feather to the Lords, and was an attitude which would not react well on the chances of the party when the subject of the reversal of the judgment was fought out in the Commons. The Executive recommended the alteration on the grounds that the form of words by which the constitution was enforced had become obsolete, and was thus liable to be misunderstood. In their opinion the party had reached a point where "its policy and political position" were "so well understood that the conduct of members will be influenced by them just as Liberals or Conservatives are influenced by the policy and position of their parties." Plainly put, the view was that, in the early days, Labour members were not accustomed to a Parliamentary party, and therefore did not feel any particular obligation to act together. By 1911, the Labour party was fully established; it was organised as a party, had acted as a party, and was always thought of as a party—therefore those who consented to enter it would themselves expect to work and would naturally be expected to work in party fashion.

Another amendment to the constitution which, on the surface, appears to be of some moment was that to Clause VI. It was no longer to be one of the duties of the Executive to "report to the affiliated

organisation concerned any Labour Member, Candidate, or Chief Official who opposes a Candidate of the Party, or who acts contrary to the spirit of the Constitution": instead they were to "take all necessary steps to maintain this Constitution." But as under the amended clause action such as that referred to in the original clause could be taken if considered "necessary," and as, if it were not necessary, there would be nothing lost by not taking it, the position of the party was in no way weakened.

Another amendment emphasised the existence of a party. It added to the object of the Parliamentary Fund the provision of "the official expenses of the Parliamentary Party," whereas before, the object, as stated in the constitution, was only to pay election expenses, maintenance of Members of Parliament, and the salary and expenses of the party agent.

What course legislation will take in regard to the political activities of trade unions has not, at the time of writing, been at all definitely foreshadowed.[1] No blow, however, has yet been struck at Trade Unionism from which the unions have not more than recovered. Payment of members has, of course, eased the situation somewhat, but such payment is but one item in the expenditure of a political party. Moreover, the trade unions will fight for the right to spend their own funds in the manner they conceive to be most advantageous. And the judgment is broad.

[1] On November 22nd, 1910, the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) told a Labour deputation that the Government would "propose legislation empowering trade unions to include in their objects and organisations the provision of a fund for Parliamentary and municipal action and representation and kindred objects, and to combine for such purposes, provided that the opinion of the union is effectively ascertained and that there shall be no compulsion upon any member to contribute to this fund."

CHAPTER XII

THE BRITISH SOCIALIST PARTY

Well, then, what if we tried to rise above the idea of class to the idea of the whole community, *the State*, and to find our centre of light and authority there? Every one of us has the idea of country, as a sentiment; hardly any one of us has the idea of *the State*, as a working power. . . . And we are all afraid of giving to the State too much power, because we only conceive of the State as something equivalent to the class in occupation of the executive government and are afraid of that class abusing power to its own purpose.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat.—ISAIAH.

INDEPENDENT Socialist representation cannot, in a strict sense, come under the broader category of Labour Representation. Socialism is a social movement; it is not a class movement, like Trade Unionism, a movement against a land tax, or against factory legislation. In the present stage of historical development, however, the Socialist movement must, to a considerable extent, be a class movement and this record of the struggles of the wage-earning population for direct representation in the Commons would be incomplete without some account of the recent growth and welding together of political bodies independent of the Labour party. We must, in conclusion, briefly consider what is now known as the British Socialist Party.

What has come to be popularly known as the "Grayson protest" is recent history. In the autumn

session of 1908, Mr. Grayson sought to move the adjournment of the House, in order that the unemployed question—at that time terribly acute—might be discussed. He was out of order, persisted in the protest and refused to sit down when called upon by the Speaker, and was suspended. Repudiation by the bulk of the Labour party and a good deal of acrid recrimination followed; but Mr. Grayson had something like a triumphal tour through industrial Britain.

The oil and water of Socialism and Radical Trade Unionism, of which the Labour party was composed, had never mixed, and the Social Democrats had kept alive the ideal of Independent Socialist action. Mr. Grayson's protest fanned the sparks to a flame. In 1909, a Socialist Representation Committee was founded in Manchester, and grew steadily. Its object was "the promotion and support of avowed Socialist Candidates at Parliamentary and Local Elections, and also with a view of uniting existing S.R.C's with the object of forming a National Socialist Party." The influence of the Grayson protest is evidenced by a paragraph in the committee's constitution which read: "All candidates elected to Parliament shall be instructed to obstruct all business until the unemployed question has been thoroughly dealt with." The famous "fourth clause" of the Independent Labour Party was also embodied in the constitution and, where no candidate was standing for "an avowed Socialist Society or candidate sanctioned by the Committee," members had to "refrain either from voting for, or in any way supporting a non-Socialist candidate." Several branches of the Committee were formerly branches of the Independent Labour Party; others were formed by the fusion of branches of that party

and the Social Democratic Party. A few candidates were run at local elections. A Socialist Representation Committee was also set up at Birmingham, and another at Liverpool.

At the 1911 Conference of the Social Democratic Party, a resolution was passed under which it was decided to call a meeting of the representatives of Socialist bodies with a view to united action in the future. The summer came on, with its tremendous industrial upheavals ; with the military guarding the railways and drafted to the big towns ; with a great rising of the Newest Unionism and living arguments, forceful in more senses than one, for the Class War. The Socialist Unity Conference, as it was called, met in the Caxton Hall, Manchester, on September 30th and October 1st. The Conference expressed the opinion that "the differences of opinion and the adoption of dissimilar tactics which have hitherto characterised the various sections of the British Socialist movement, have arisen from circumstances peculiar to its initial stages," and it announced itself convinced that the time was ripe for a United Socialist Party. It appointed a provisional committee, with Mr. H. M. Hyndman as chairman, and instructed it to draw up a constitution on the basis that the party should be "not a reformist but a revolutionary party, which recognises that social freedom and equality can only be conquered by fighting the Class War through to a finish, and thus abolishing for ever all class distinctions" ; the constitution is now[1] being submitted to the branches, and it is understood that the Social Democratic Party will merge itself in the new organisation.

Thus the British Socialist Party was launched, challenging the wisdom of a permanent Socialist

[1] November, 1911.

and Trade Unionist alliance and with the experience of thirty years of Socialist politics in England to guide it. It is meeting with much criticism, and not a little abuse, from those in the Labour movement who are outside it; the tone of much of the criticism is very similar to that of the opposition of Liberal-Labourism to Independent Labour twenty years ago.

By the Labour alliance, the Socialists set out to permeate the Trade Union ranks. It was a game at which two could play. The Labour party is no mere bubble on the tide of politics, but has come slowly down the stream of political evolution. It has behind it half a century of struggle, sacrifice, and aspiration. Nevertheless, there is ground, to-day, for maintaining that the Labour party is becoming, in fact, whatever it be in name, merely a wing of the Liberal party, like its precursor the Trade Union group. Wherever may lie the truth, in the controversy which is at present going forward on the subject of the political methods of Labour and Socialism, one thing is clear. It is, that the principle of independent representation in the Legislature has been firmly implanted in working-class politics in this country. In what form that principle will find expression in the future we are not concerned here to discuss. The principle has not been long accepted, and there was bound to be experimenting as to the best way in which to carry it out. The way is being sought; it will be found; and then—

> On and on the compact ranks,
> With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd;
> Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
> Pioneers! O Pioneers!

APPENDICES

I

PROSPECTUS OF THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION LEAGUE

Labour Representation League,
21 Cockspur Street, Charing Cross.

Robert Marsden Latham . .	President
William Allen	Treasurer
Lloyd Jones	Secretary

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Allen, William . .	(Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineers).
Applegarth, Robert .	(Secretary of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners).
Campin, F. W. .	(Barrister-at-Law).
Connolly, Thomas .	(Stonemason).
Coulson, Edwin .	(Secretary of the Bricklayers' Society).
Cremer, W. R. .	(Amalgamated Carpenters).
Dodgson, George .	(Secretary of the Amalgamated Cordwainers).
Druitt, George . .	(Secretary of the London Operative Tailors' Association).
Dunning, J. . .	(Secretary of the Bookbinders' Society).
Guile, Daniel . .	(Secretary of the Ironfounders).
Hales, John . .	(President Elastic Web Weavers).

Hemmett, William .	(Secretary of the City Society of Shoemakers).
Harvey, William .	(Joiners' Society).
Holyoake, G. J. .	(Journalist).
Howell, George .	(Late Secretary of the Reform League).
Hughes, W. Thomas	(Carpenter).
Jones, Lloyd . .	(Journalist).
Latham, R. M. .	(Barrister-at-Law).
Mottershead, Thomas	(Silk Weaver.)
Newton, Robert .	(Framemakers' and Gilders' Association).
Newton William .	(Amalgamated Engineers).
Odger, George . .	(Secretary of the London Trades Council).
Pashby, John . .	(Framemakers' and Gilders' Association).
Paterson, Thomas .	(Cabinet Maker).
Perry, John . .	(Joiner).
Potter, George . .	(Manager of the *Beehive* Newspaper).
Robson, J. P. . .	(Shipwright).
Saunders, E. R. .	(Engineer).
Savage, G. F. . .	(Sinker).
Shipton, George .	(Secretary of the Amalgamated Painters).
Spilling, Thomas .	(Bookbinder).
Squire, James . .	(Painter).

There are, in the United Kingdom, about 20,000,000 of people belonging to the working-class, whose welfare as citizens depends on a correct understanding and wise treatment, by the British Parliament, of questions in which they are especially interested; and yet, not one actual working-man has found a seat in the present Parliament—a Parliament reformed professedly for the purpose of securing equitable representation of every section and every interest of the community.

THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION LEAGUE has originated in a desire on the part of a large number of persons connected with the working-classes to rectify this unsatisfactory condition of national representation; that the newly acquired political power of the people may be organised and directed so as to aid in promoting the legitimate interests of those who live by their daily labour.

The League will promote throughout the kingdom the registration of working-men's votes without reference to their opinions or party bias; its aim being to organise fully the strength of the operative classes as an electoral power, so that, when necessary, it may be brought to bear, with effect, on any important political, social, or industrial question in the issue of which their interests are involved.

Its principal duty will be to secure the return to Parliament of qualified working-men: persons who, by character and ability, command the confidence of their class, and who are competent to deal satisfactorily with questions of general interest as well as with those in which they are especially interested. Beyond this, it will, where deemed necessary, recommend and support as candidates from among the other classes such persons as have studied the great Labour problem and have proved themselves friendly to an equitable settlement of the many difficult points which it involves.

THE LABOUR REPRESENTATION LEAGUE will direct its attention to other matters connected with the interests of Labour. It will aim at promoting all such political, industrial and social questions as involve the well-being of the working-classes. It will watch the progress of Bills in Parliament, which deal with working-men's interests. It will promote Bills necessary for their security and welfare. It will collect and, where action calls for it, report on such Parliamentary papers and other documents as may contain useful information in relation to the masses of the people. It will, when requested to do so, procure registration for rules emanating from organised

bodies of working-men; and will arrange and assist such deputations as may be needed to wait on Ministers of the Crown or members of Parliament. In short, it will seek to accomplish, by a well-arranged and constantly acting economical machinery, most of what is now done in a desultory, ineffective, and expensive manner; or, what is worse still, left altogether unattended.

The business of the League will be conducted by an Executive Council, in London, which will act through a general body in the Metropolis as well as throughout the various cities and towns in the Kingdom.

Associations having objects in view similar to those of the LABOUR REPRESENTATION LEAGUE may become incorporated, if approved, on application.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.—Working-men 1s. per annum. Members who have been working-men, but have passed into other occupations, 10s. per annum. Contributions from local branches to be settled by arrangement with the Executive Council.

Subscriptions of not less than one guinea annually to the funds of the League from persons friendly to its objects will constitute honorary membership, and may be sent to

THE SECRETARY,

21 Cockspur Street, Charing Cross.

II

In a letter to Henry Kilgour, dated August 15th, 1870, J. S. Mill wrote :—

"Allow me to express my surprise that one who attaches so much importance as you do to the mere public discussion of subjects by those who are especially interested in them, should see no use in the admission into the House of Commons of representative working-men. Their presence there seems to me indispensable to a sufficient discussion of public interests from the particular point of view of the working-classes; which assuredly is not less worthy of being considered, nor has fewer truths mingled with its errors, than the point of view of other classes now so superabundantly represented in Parliament. 'The Parliamentary tone' does not seem to me to be at present so elevated as to be in any danger of being lowered by the admission of such men as Mr. Odger into a House a majority of whom seem to me to be abundantly endowed with all the characteristics you ascribe to him, except the 'considerable mental vigour' for which you give him credit. The result I should expect from bringing contrary prejudices face to face, and compelling them to listen to one another, would be a great improvement on both sides: and in my own experience the working-classes are not those who have shown least willingness to be improved by such collisions."

III

LABOUR MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS: 1874–1910

Opinions will differ as to whether men, returned as Labour members, who accept Government offices should be included in the list. They are given here in order to show that they retained their seats.

1874 (2). T. Burt, A. Macdonald.

1880 (3). T. Burt, A. Macdonald, H. Broadhurst.

1885 (11). W. Abraham, J. Arch, H. Broadhurst, T. Burt, W. Crawford, W. R. Cremer, C. Fenwick, G. Howell, J. Leicester, B. Pickard, J. Wilson.

Alexander Macdonald died in 1881.

1886 (10). W. Abraham, H. Broadhurst, T. Burt, W. Crawford, W. R. Cremer, C. Fenwick, G. Howell, R. B. Cunninghame Graham, B. Pickard, J. Rowlands.

Arch, Leicester, and Wilson were defeated. In February, 1886, four months prior to the election, Broadhurst was appointed Under-Secretary for the Home Department.

1892 (15). W. Abraham, J. Arch, M. Austin, J. Burns, T. Burt, W. R. Cremer, E. Crean, C. Fenwick, J. Keir Hardie, G. Howell, B. Pickard, J. Rowlands, J. Wilson, J. H. Wilson, S. Woods.

Broadhurst was defeated in 1892, but was returned again, at a by-election, in 1894. Crawford died while a

member of the 1886 Parliament. Austin sat for West Limerick, apparently run by a branch of the Labour Electoral Association. Crean was member for Ossory, Queen's County, under, the writer assumes, the same auspices. These two names are given as they appear in a list of Labour members, printed as an appendix to the first Report of the Labour Representation Committee. In 1892 Mr. Burt was appointed Secretary to the Board of Trade.

1895 (12). W. Abraham, J. Arch, M. Austin, H. Broadhurst, J. Burns, T. Burt, E. Crean, C. Fenwick, G. Howell, B. Pickard, J. H. Wilson, J. Wilson.

Cremer, Hardie, Rowlands, and Woods were defeated.

1900 (10). W. Abraham, H. Broadhurst, J. Burns, T. Burt, W. R. Cremer, C. Fenwick, J. Keir Hardie, B. Pickard, J. Wilson, R. Bell.

Arch resigned at the close of the 1895 Parliament. At by-elections, prior to the General Election, F. Maddison, W. C. Steadman, and S. Woods were returned; but all three were defeated at the General Election, together with Howell and J. H. Wilson. Mr. Pickard died during the 1900 Parliament, and was succeeded by W. Parrott, and on his decease the seat was held by F. Hall. Messrs. Henderson, Shackleton, Bell, and Crooks were returned at by-elections.

LABOUR PARTY.

1906 (29). G. N. Barnes, C. W. Bowerman, J. R. Clynes, W. Crooks, C. Duncan, A. H. Gill, T. Glover, J. Keir Hardie, A. Henderson, J. Hodge, W. Hudson, J. Jenkins, F. W. Jowett, G. D. Kelley, J. R. MacDonald, J. T. Macpherson, J. O'Grady, J. Parker, T. F. Richards, G. H. Roberts, J. A. Seddon, D. J. Shackleton, P. Snowden, T. Summerbell, W. Thorne, S. Walsh, G. J. Wardle, W. T. Wilson, A. Wilkie.

Miners' Group.

1906 (14). W. Abraham, W. Brace, T. Burt, E. Edwards, C. Fenwick, F. Hall, J. Haslam, J. Johnson, W. Johnson, T. Richards, J. W. Taylor, W. Wadsworth, J. Williams, J. Wilson.

Mr. Taylor was a member of the Labour Representation Committee, but was not financed by it.

Liberal-Labour Group.

1906 (11). R. Bell, H. Broadhurst, W. R. Cremer, F. Maddison, G. Nicholls, A. Richardson, J. Rowlands, W. C. Steadman, Henry Vivian, J. Ward, J. H. Wilson.

There is some difficulty in marking out the Liberal-Labour group. The names of Percy Alden and John M. Robertson, for example, might well be included.

In 1905, Mr. Burns was appointed President of the Local Government Board. Mr. J. Pointer was returned at a by-election at Sheffield (Attercliffe) in 1909, and Mr. Pete Curran at Jarrow, and Mr. Victor Grayson, the first Independent Socialist, for the Colne Valley in 1907. Mr. Broadhurst accepted the Chiltern Hundreds shortly after his election. He died in October, 1911.

Labour Party.

1910 (January) (40). J. Pointer, C. Duncan, G. Lansbury, G. N. Barnes, A. H. Gill, A. Henderson, F. W. Jowett, D. J. Shackleton, J. Haslam, J. W. Taylor, A. Wilkie, J. H. Thomas, C. W. Bowerman, J. G. Hancock, W. E. Harvey, W. Brace, J. Williams, J. Hodge, J. Parker, J. Wadsworth, E. Edwards, S. Walsh, J. O'Grady, J. R. MacDonald, J. E. Sutton, J. R. Clynes, J. Keir Hardie, T. Richards, W. Hudson, J. A. Seddon, F. Hall, G. H. Roberts, W. Johnson,

W. Abraham, A. Stanley, T. Glover, G. J. Wardle, W. Thorne, W. T. Wilson, H. Twist.

With the entrance of the Miners' Federation into the Labour party, in 1909, no trade union of any importance was outside the party. Thus the Trade Union or Liberal-Labour group, as formerly understood, may be said to have disappeared. Mr. Burt and Mr. Fenwick, who refused to sign the constitution of the Labour party, and were not opposed by other miners' candidates, retained their seats. Defeat, death, and the appointment of Mr. Bell to an official position under the Board of Trade, accounted for the disappearance of several of the group. Others, who refused to join the Labour party, must now be regarded as having definitely joined the Liberal party. In January, 1910, Mr. Grayson lost his seat.

LABOUR PARTY.

1910 (December) (42). J. Pointer, C. Duncan, G. Lansbury, G. N. Barnes, A. H. Gill, A. Henderson, F. W. Jowett, P. Snowden, A. Smith, J. Haslam, J. W. Taylor, A. Wilkie, J. H. Thomas, C. W. Bowerman, J. S. Hancock, W. E. Harvey, W. Brace, J. Williams, J. Hodge, W. Adamson, J. Parker, J. Wadsworth, E. Edwards, S. Walsh, J. O'Grady, J. R. MacDonald, E. Sutton, J. R. Clynes, J. Keir Hardie, T. Richards, W. Hudson, F. Hall, G. H. Roberts, W. Johnson, W. Abraham, F. W. Goldstone, A. Stanley, G. J. Wardle, W. Crooks, W. Thorne, W. T. Wilson, F. Richardson.

Mr. A. Smith sits for the Clitheroe division in place of Mr. D. J. Shackleton, who resigned on being appointed Labour Adviser to the Home Office.

IV

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LABOUR PARTY SINCE ITS FORMATION

	TRADE UNIONS.		Trades Councils and Local Labour Parties.	SOCIALIST SOCIETIES.		
	No.	Membership.	No.	No.	Membership.	Total.
1900–1 .	41	353,070	7	3	22,861	375,931
1901–2 .	65	455,450	21	2[1]	13,861	469,311
1902–3 .	127	847,315	49	2	13,835	861,150
1903–4 .	165	956,025	76	2	13,775	969,800
1904–5 .	158	885,270	73	2	14,730	900,000
1905–6 .	158	904,496	73	2	16,784	921,280
1906–7 .	176	975,182	83	2	20,885	998,338*a*
1907 .	181	1,049,673	92	2	22,267	1,072,413*b*
1908 .	176	1,127,035	133	2	27,465	1,158,565*c*
1909 .	172	1,450,648	155	2	30,982	1,486,308*d*
1910 .	151	1,394,402	148	2	31,377	1,430,539*e*

a This total includes 2,271 Co-operators.
b Includes 472 Co-operators.
c Includes 565 Co-operators, and 3,500 members of the Women's Labour League.
d Includes 678 Co-operators, and 4,000 members of the Women's Labour League.
e Includes 760 Co-operators, and 4,000 members of the Women's Labour League.
[1] The Social Democratic Federation withdrew in 1901.

V

FUNDS OF THE LABOUR PARTY SINCE ITS FORMATION

	Income. £	s.	d.	Balance in hand. £	s.	d.
1900–1 .	243	13	2	56	16	6
1901–2 .	343	13	1	83	11	5
1902–3 .	799	16	0	250	2	7
1903–4[1] .	1,357	16	11	181	7	3
	2,277	10	6	2,260	13	0
1904–5 .	1,486	14	9	222	14	5
	6,796	2	3	6,082	12	3
1905–6 .	2,279	15	5	360	8	7
	10,201	4	7	6,641	5	3
1906–7 .	3,128	2	0½	508	10	3
	11,970	10	0	4,792	16	0½
1908 . .	2,561	0	5	364	9	11
	16,437	19	9½	9,747	0	5½
1909 . .	3,417	16	0½	537	9	4
	23,573	13	6½	14,755	10	11
1910[2] . .	5,427	14	1	802	7	10½
	27,236	2	2½	8,411	3	11

[1] The second totals for 1903–4 and onwards are those of the Parliamentary Fund. The first are those of the General Fund.

[2] A special appeal fund in 1910 amounted to £1,738 6s. 3d., of which there was a balance of £928 11s. 6½d. at the end of the year.

VI

TRADE UNIONS AND LABOUR REPRESENTATION

MODEL RULE: SANCTIONED BY THE CHIEF REGISTRAR

The object of this society is to regulate the relations between working-men and employers and between working-men and working-men in the trade; to relieve its members when unemployed; to create benefits for sickness, accident, and superannuation; to bury its dead; and to these ends it adopts the following methods:—

(*a*) The establishing of a fund or funds.

(*b*) The giving of legal assistance in connection with any, or all, of the above objects within the limits allowed by the law.

(*c*) The securing of assistance and the securing of legislation for the protection of trade interests, and for the general and material welfare of its members.

(*d*) The adoption of any legal method which may be decided to be advisable in the general interests of members as declared by the majority voting by ballot.

For the purpose of promoting these objects and making these methods effective, the society may aid and join with other trades, or other societies, or federations of societies, having for their objects, or one of them, the promotion of the interests of working-men within the scope of the Trade Union Acts.

VII. OSBORNE DECISIONS

	Chancery Court.	Appeal Court.			House of Lords.				
	NEVILLE, J.	MASTER OF THE ROLLS.	FLETCHER MOULTON, L.J.	FARWELL, L.J.	EARL OF HALSBURY.	LORD MACNAGHTEN.	LORD JAMES.	LORD ATKINSON.	LORD SHAW
That political action comes within meaning of the Trade Union Acts, and is, therefore, not *ultra vires.*	Yes.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	Yes.	No.	Did not sent, but not deci Was not c that the ment of M bers of Pa ment v foreign or versive to objects of Union.
That the pledge of the Members to abide by the decisions of the Parliamentary Party is contrary to public policy.	No decision, except that a Member's duty to his constituents must be the primary duty.	No decision.	Yes.	That for a Member to be financially supported by people having no connection in the main with his constituency is in effect buying his votes and is against public policy.	Could foresee questions arising as to how far individual freedom of judgment could be preserved consistently with accepting pecuniary support.	Unnecessary to discuss so-called constitutional question which was introduced rather unfortunately, he thought, in the Court of Appeal.	The application of money to the maintenance of a Member whose action is so regulated is not within the powers of a Trade Union.	Unnecessary to express opinion.	Yes.
That the question as to the Union's Parliamentary representative being a supporter of any particular Party is a matter for the Union.	Yes.	The question of which particular Party was being supported in no way affected his decision.	No decision.	No decision.	No decision.	No decision.	No decision.	No decision.	No decision

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