

500 OUR HISTORY

**Roots of the
British
socialist
movement**

**All the first
50 of
CHARTIST's *Our
History*
columns**

Edited and introduced by
Duncan Bowie

CHARTIST

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OUR HISTORY: Radical and Socialist Classics of the 19th Century

Introduction

This pamphlet brings together the history columns published in *Chartist* since 2005. The intention of the column was to draw attention to the writings of earlier radicals and socialists. This was partly to inform current political activists of the history of our movement but also to provide inspiration. Each column provides an extract of the writings of the individual featured together with a short biography to set out the context in which the article or book extracted was written. It was intentional to cover lesser known and even obscure figures as well as the more iconic figures in our history. The selection was not an easy process. There is an attempt, though not an entirely successful one to include writers who were based outside London and also to include female as well as male writers. The intention was to cover British and Irish writers – the one exception being the American, Henry George, included as his role in the transition from English radicalism to socialism is critical.

The other key criterion, was that to be featured you had to have written something so individuals who were activists but not writers or theorists were left out. The writing had to be accessible – the majority of writings are taken from pamphlets and books in my own collection. The few exceptions are given in a footnote. I would also like to recognise the use of both the four part Biographical Dictionary of British Radicals edited by Batlen and Gossman and the now 13 volume Dictionary of Labour Biography, initiated by John Saville and Joyce Bellamy to provide biographical detail for featured

individuals, though it is worthwhile stressing that some of the column subjects were too obscure to feature in either of these dictionaries or to have their photographs taken and recorded for posterity.

This pamphlet covers the first fifty columns and takes us to 1907. The second 50 columns will take us to the contemporary era, but will at 6 columns a year, take to 2021 to complete.

Duncan Bowie

OUR HISTORY 1

The Peoples Charter

Published in 1838 for the London Men's Association by Henry Hetherington, this was the founding document of the Chartist movement. The main part of the Charter comprises the outline of an Act for the just representation of the People of Great Britain and Ireland in the Commons Houses of Parliament, embracing the principles of Universal Suffrage, No Property Qualification, Annual Parliaments, Equal Representation, Payment of Members and Vote by Ballot. These became known as the six points. It was prepared by a committee of 6 MPs and 6 members of the London Working Men's Association: It was drafted by the secretary of the LWMA William Lovett. This is an extract from the address of the LWMA to the Radical Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland which accompanied the draft Act. The charter also included drawings and instructions for a ballot box and balloting place.

The Six Points PEOPLE'S CHARTER.

1. **ARTICLE 1** Every man shall have the right of one vote, and no property qualification for voters.
2. **THE SUFFRAGE** The vote shall be given in person.
3. **THE QUALIFICATION** The vote shall be given by the Members of Parliament, and no property qualification shall be required for voters.
4. **THE SUFFRAGE** The vote shall be given by ballot, and no property qualification shall be required for voters.
5. **THE SUFFRAGE** The vote shall be given by ballot, and no property qualification shall be required for voters.
6. **THE SUFFRAGE** The vote shall be given by ballot, and no property qualification shall be required for voters.

"THE WORKING MEN'S ASSOCIATION, TO THE RADICAL REFORMERS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN Having frequently stated our reasons for zealously espousing the great principles of Reform, we have now endeavoured to set them forth practically. We need not reiterate the facts and unrefuted arguments which have so often been stated and urged in their support. Suffice it to say, that we hold it to be the axiom in politics, that self-government by representation is the only just foundation of political power – the only true basis of constitutional rights – the only legitimate

parent of good laws – and we hold it as an indubitable truth, that all government which is based on any other foundation, has a perpetual tendency to degenerate into anarchy or despotism, or to beget class and wealth idolatry on the one hand, poverty and misery on the other.

While, however, we contend for the principle of self-government, we admit that laws will only be just in proportion as the people are enlightened, on which, socially and politically, the happiness of all must depend; but as self-interest, unaccompanied by virtue, seeks its own exclusive benefit, so will the exclusive and privileged classes of society ever seek to perpetuate their power, and to proscribe the enlightenment of the people. Hence we are induced to believe that the enlightenment of all will sooner emanate from the exercise of political power by all the people, than by their continuing to trust to the selfish government of the law.

A strong conviction of these truths, coupled as that conviction is, with the belief that most of our social and political evils can be traced to corrupt and exclusive legislation – and that the remedy will be found in extending to the people at large, the exercise of those rights, now monopolized by a few, has induced us to make some exertions towards embodying our principles in the following Charter.”

OUR HISTORY 2

Thomas Paine: Rights of Man 1791

Thomas Paine participated in the American Revolution of 1776, the French revolution of 1789 and the English radical and secularist movement. When he published the rights of man in 1791, 2 years into the French revolution, his reputation was based mainly on his American republican work “Commonsense”.



It is not insignificant that his Rights of Man, a defence of the principles of the French revolution against Edmund Burke, was dedicated to George Washington.

The Rights of Man is based on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens adopted by the French National Assembly, the first 7 of which were as follows:

∴ “ Men are born, and always continue, free and equal in respect of rights, Civil distinctions, therefore, can only be founded on public utility;

The end of all political associations, is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; and these rights are liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression;

The nation is essentially the source of all sovereignty; nor can any INDIVIDUAL, or ANY BODY OF MEN, be entitled to any authority which is not expressly derived from it.

Political Liberty consists in the power of doing whatever does not injure another.

The law ought to prohibit only actions hurtful to society.

The law is an expression of the will of the community. All citizens have the right to concur, either personally, or by their representatives, in its formation.

No man shall be accused, arrested or held in confinement, except in cases determined by the law.”

In the conclusion to the First Part of his treatise, Paine argues that “ in these principles, there is nothing to throw a Nation into confusion.... They are calculated to call forth wisdom and abilities and to exercise them for the public good, and not for the embodiment and aggrandizement of particular descriptions of men or families. Monarchical sovereignty, the enemy of mankind, and the source of misery, is abolished; and sovereignty itself is restored to its natural and original place, the nation. Were this the case throughout Europe, the cause of wars would be taken away.”

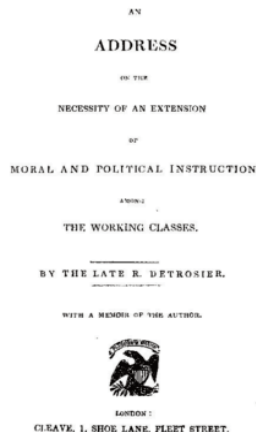
OUR HISTORY 3

Rowland Detrouisier: An address on the Necessity of an Extension of Moral and Political Instruction among the Working Classes -1831

Detrouisier was a Manchester radical who was a follower of the infidel Richard Carlisle and became secretary of the National Political Union established by the veteran radical Francis Place in 1831. He was a critic of Robert Owen and Thomas Malthus, though he co-operated with the Manchester based leader of the cotton spinners, John Doherty, who was an Owenite, and gave evidence before the Royal Commission on Factories. This was the time of Owen's attempt to set up a national trade union – the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union, and the campaign for reform that led to the Great Reform Act of 1832.

Detrouisier, as well as being a political organizer, lectured on education, science and morality. He founded the Manchester Mechanics Institute, at which this lecture was given. He also gave a lecture on the Utility of Political Unions to the National Political Union in 1832. On moving to London he established, with the young secularist, George Jacob Holyoake, the New Mechanical Hall in Finsbury. He died in 1834 just as the chartist movement was gaining ground. He gets little mention in the studies of Owenism and early trade unionism. The only study of him is a pamphlet by Gwyn Williams published for the University of York in 1965.

“Human life is a series of experiments for the discovery of human happiness; and whatever is as admired as great in the result – whatever is acknowledged as wise or beneficial – every part of the mental edifice which is looked up to as politically great or morally good, in the aggregate of human institutions, is the gratifying results of

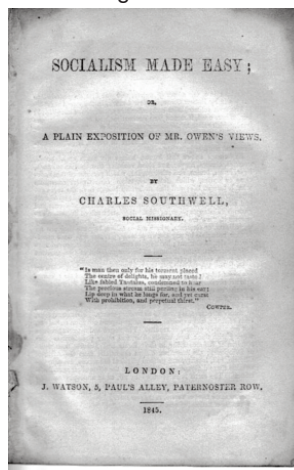


education to man – the hallowed witness of the happy and redeeming influence of the extension of knowledge. Let us, then, labour to increase the sum of that knowledge; for unlike every other species of capital, it increases by division, and leaves the distributor richer. The institutions of a country are valuable only in proportion as they tend to promote the general welfare. . . The practical end of all our institutions must be devoted to the melioration and perfection of the moral, physical and intellectual state of the poorest and most numerous class of society; and then our political millennium will be at hand. Let us not despair of its attainment; for human society is not retrograding. The doctrine of human degeneration, and its afflicting consequence, increasing misery, is contradictory to reason, and in opposition to facts. Man is progressive, and human perfectability is not a chimera; but that perfectability cannot be attained until the great mass of our population is morally and politically free.”

OUR HISTORY 4

Charles Southwell: Socialism Made Easy - 1840

Charles Southwell was a follower of Robert Owen and a freethought lecturer. Abandoning his first job as a piano tuner, he set up a radical bookshop and a rational school in Westminster in the early 1830's. After fighting in the British Legion in the Spanish Civil War of 1835, he returned to London to take of the position of London missionary for the Owenite Rational Society. After posts in Birmingham and Bristol, he attacked Owen at the Owenite congress in Manchester in 1841 and, launching his own journal the 'Oracle or Reason' he started collaborating with the secularist G J Holyoake. After a spell in prison, he established the 'Paragon Hall and Coffee House' in Charlotte St in Fitzrovia, followed by the 'Philosophical



Protestant Association' in Blackfriars. In 1849, he planned to emigrate to America, but did not get beyond Liverpool. After spells as a lecturer in Lancashire, and back in London at St George's Hall near Elephant and Castle, in 1855 he emigrated to Melbourne in Australia, where he stood as a chartist candidate for the legislative council. . He ended his varied career as editor of an independent radical journal in Auckland, New Zealand. He was an impressive speaker but poor political organizer, and never lasted in a job more than a few months, quarrelling with colleagues. He wrote numerous pamphlets, most of which were attacks on Christianity. However he also wrote popular pamphlets promoting Owenite socialism. "Socialism made Easy: a plan or exposition of Mr Owen's views" was published in 1840.

"Under the social system the machinery of government would be simplicity itself; poverty would be banished, the world's wealth would belong to all, jealousy and its attendant evils would be unknown; by the application of machinery and the powers of nature, wealth would be so abundant that all might freely partake; avarice, the parent of many crimes, would cease to torment the human race; persecution for opinion's sake would be unheard of, as no set of men would be paid for the advocacy of any particular opinions whatever. All should have equal rights to express their opinions respecting the Incomprehensible Power which moves the atom and controls the universe and to worship that Power under any form or in any manner agreeable to their consciences, not interfering with the equal rights of others."

OUR HISTORY 5

Bronterre O'Brien: Introduction to Buonarroti's history of Babeuf's conspiracy for equality. 1836. Speech at National Reform League Commemoration of Life of Robespierre -1859

Bronterre O'Brien was the leader of the jacobin tendency within the chartist movement. Starting a long career as a radical journalist on Henry Hetherington's Poor Mans

Guardian in the 1830's, he edited or contributed to a number of journals through the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's, including Bronterre's National Reformer, Fergus O'Connor's Northern Star, Peter McDouall's Chartist and Republican journal and the National Reformer. A powerful speaker though a poor organizer whose political career was bedeviled by disputes with other chartist leaders, he moved from a jacobin position to a more socialistic perspective – his National Reform League, founded in the 1850's managed to struggle on as a small Soho based group after his death in 1864 , with a group of O'Brienities setting up an Eclectic Institute that was to provide some of the key members of the First International and the Land and Labour League of the 1860's and 1870's and Hyndman's Democratic Federation in the early 1880's. In 1849 and 1850 he published a series of articles on the Rise, Progress and Phases of Human Slavery, though these were not published in book form until 1885 by Martin Boon of the Land and Labour League.



O'Brien's hero was Robespierre. The introduction to his first book – a translation of Buonarroti's history of Babeuf's conspiracy, focuses more on Robespierre than on Babeuf. He was to return to his hero in the Life and Character of Maximilian Robespierre in 1837, a speech to his National Reform League at a commemoration of Robespierre's birth in 1853, and was to publish Robespierre's Last Discourse in 1859. The first extract is taken from the book on Babeuf the second from the speech.

“Robespierre was a true friend to humanity; that he was the oppressed man's consolation and the oppressor's scourge; that he devoted himself to the emancipation of his fellow citizens with a zeal and degree of success never witnessed before in the world; that he had a vast plan of regeneration in preparation for France, by which the poor would be for ever delivered from the rich, and the reign of morals, of fraternity

of relations, and real happiness established on earth."

"Robespierre was the only legislator who had the moral courage and honesty to demand complete manhood suffrage. . . Robespierre was the great moderator of opinion in his day – the great enlightener and purifier of the public conscience. . . In celebrating the memory of this great man, you act wisely as well as justly. You therefore raise up a protection for all future reformers."

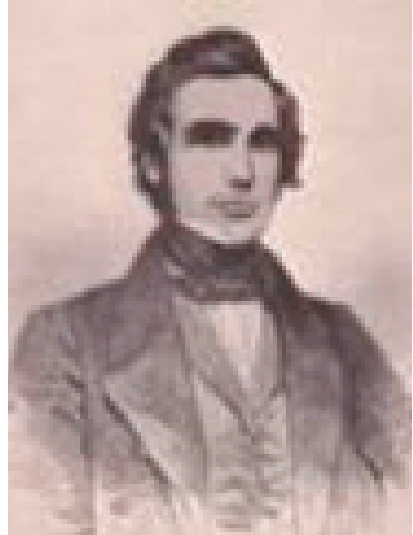
OUR HISTORY 6

William Lovett: Social and Political Morality - 1853

William Lovett was one of the leaders of the chartist movement. Co-author with William Collins of *Chartism: A New Organisation of the People* (1840), he published in 1876 his autobiography - *Life and Struggles of William Lovett in Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge and Freedom*. A leading member of the London Working Mens Association, he was an opponent of the 'physical force' chartists led by Fergus O'Connor and collaborated with middle class suffrage movements such as Joseph Sturge's Complete Suffrage Union. He was for many years secretary of the National Association for the Political and Social Improvement of the People, which ran a lecture hall in Holborn. Owner of a book shop in Tottenham Court Road, he was an internationalist setting up the Democratic Friends of all Nations and was a friend of exiled republicans including Mazzini. Like Mazzini, he was also an educationalist and wrote a text book on anatomy. This extract is taken from his main theoretical work – *Social and Political Morality*, which owes much to the writings of John Stuart Mill and George Combe, but which also has some similarity to Mazzini's work on the Duties of Man.

"Man has within him the capacities of the philosopher, and the propensities of the savage; and whether he shall be one or the other will depend on the position he is placed in, and the means taken to develop the good and control the evil. If he is allowed to grow up, uncared for, in the midst of ignorant and vicious companions, his mental

powers will be impressed with their imperfect notions, superstitions, prejudices and vices; and difficult then will be the task of eradicating them, and of implanting instead thereof correct knowledge and just principles.



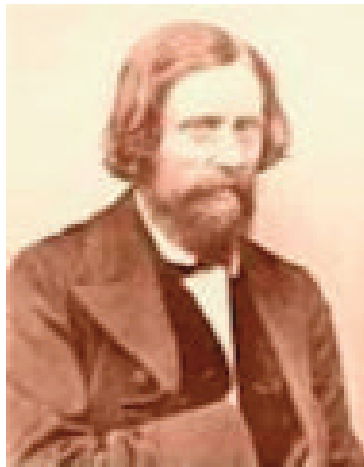
If, therefore, man would have his brother man a being qualified to unite with him, in forming and supporting wise laws, and just institutions – to co-operate with him, physically and intellectually, for the welfare of society – and to labour earnestly with him to remove the numerous social and moral evils which now retard his progress, and mar his happiness; he must begin his labours by promoting the intellectual and moral improvement of the young.

He must seek to impress their youthful minds with a knowledge of the various means of comfort and happiness they are surrounded with – of the mental and moral qualities they must endeavour to possess, in order to turn these great blessings to the advantages of themselves and their brethren – and of the various moral duties that will be required of them, socially and politically, in order that peace, abundance and happiness may bless their native land.”

OUR HISTORY 7

William Linton: English Republic -1851

William Linton was a chartist, poet and wood-engraver. He was editor of a number of journals, including co-editor with Holyoake of Cause of the People in 1848. The English Republic was published from 1851 to 1855, and included essays on republicanism which expanded on the ideas set out in Mazzini's *Duties of Man*. The journal also served as the mouthpiece of the European Central Democratic Committee, a republican international solidarity group set up in London by Mazzini, the German exile, Arnold Ruge, the French Ledru-Rollin (interior minister in the 1848 revolutionary government) and the Pole Arnold Darasz. In 1854, Linton moved the publication of the journal to Brantwood in Cumberland, where he was joined by a group of republicans from Gloucester including the chartist journalist, W E Adams, the author of 'Memoirs of a Social Atom'. Linton married the novelist Elizabeth Lynn. In 1866, he emigrated to the United States, where he lived till his death in 1897. Linton wrote a large number of works on engraving as well as poetry, a biography of Thomas Paine, a volume of recollections of Mazzini and other European republicans, and in 1895, his memoirs entitled 'Three years and ten'. An edition of the republican essays was published in England in 1891. There is a biography of Linton - Radical Artisan by F B Smith (Manchester University Press 1973)



"We believe in equality, liberty and fraternity; in the equal ground of human right, on which alone true freedom can be based – the freedom which is not the unlimited sway of the stronger, but the opportunity of healthy growth to the utmost of natural capability, for the weakest as well as the mightiest, in order that the fullest perfection of each may be obtained toward a brotherly combination of strengths, for the surer and greater progress of the whole world."

"We believe in the perfectibility of the human race; that is to say- in its powers of continual improvement. And we believe that this improvement may be systematised and insured and immensely accelerated by men acting in concert – in association – feely organising themselves under the Government of the wisest and most virtuous among them."

"We believe that the business of Government is to do what neither the individual nor the city can efficiently do; to maintain throughout the nation the harmony of equal rights, which includes provision that the best means of growth at the nation's command shall be furnished to all the individuals of the nation. It is therefore the province of Government to guard the land, which is common property, from the encroachment of individuals; to take care that none hold it without paying a fair rent for it to the State... to maintain the right to labour by lending the credit of the State to all who need it, so insuring to every one employment at a fair remuneration, and to provide the highest possible education for every one of the nation's children."

"We believe that the right to rule resides only in a majority: their rule only being limited by the right of the individual. Society and individuality are mutually sacred and inviolable."

OUR HISTORY 8

Edmond Beales: Speech to the Reform League - 1865

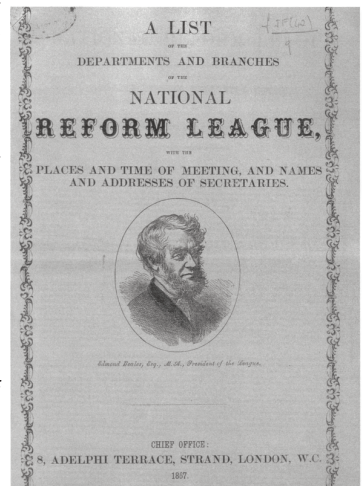
Edmond Beales was a radical barrister who is remembered as President of the Reform League, which between 1865 to 1867 campaigned for further parliamentary reform, a campaign which led to the second Reform Act. The Reform League's main activists were trade union leaders, many of whom were also active in the First International – for example George Howell who was at one time both secretary of the Reform League and of the International, and Benjamin Lucraft, later a member of the

London Schools Board.

Beales had a long history of involvement in radical causes – he supported the Emancipation Society during the American Civil War, the Jamaica committee which protested against the British treatment of black Jamaicans, the Workmen's Garibaldi committee, the International League of Peace and Liberty and the Workman's Peace committee which advocated arbitration in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. He was a supporter of Polish independence from the 1830's to the 1860's. As a supporter of cooperation between middle and working class radicals, he was a rival to Mark who blocked his membership of the International.

Beales was an organiser rather than a theorist. A number of his speeches were however published. The following extract is from a speech to a meeting of the Reform League in May 1865.

"I say, then, that this League, which seeks, through the medium of manhood suffrage and the ballot to bring also within that pale (of the constitution) the working classes and thousands of others now most unreasonably, immorally, and unconstitutionally excluded, seeks nothing but what is right and just both in principle and in law, is founded upon and is imbued with the true spirit of the constitution, and has for its object, in the removal of class and political disability, the acquisition of the best and surest guarantee of peace and stability, the freedom and welfare of the State, the best and surest preservative against discord, violence and, and revolution. If there be those who would undermine the whole fabric of the constitution, who would sap the foundations of all law, who would tear society to pieces by setting class against class, who would, in the insanity of their prejudices, peril the existence of our institutions, it is those who are striving, as regards the franchise, in the narrowest and most inso-



lent spirit of oligarchical domination, to exclude from the benefit of those institutions the great majority of our people.”

OUR HISTORY 9

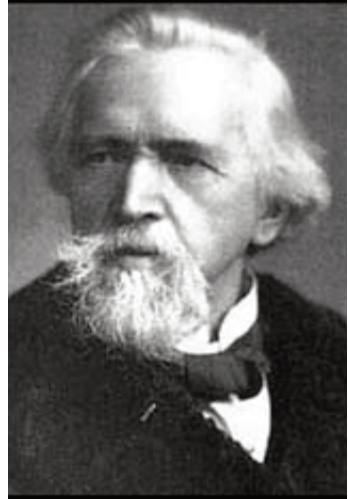
George Jacob Holyoake: Working Class Representation - 1868

G J Holyoake had a extensive political and journalistic career, from his involvement in Robert Owen's Association of All Classes of All Nations in 1837 until his death in 1906.

While his main political activity centred on the secular movement and later on the consumer cooperative movement, he also edited a series of journals as well as being involved in a wide range of national and international radical causes. A critical of Owen's community building schemes, he collaborated with Charles Southwell on the 'Oracle of Reason', which rivalled Owen's 'New Moral World', before founding his own journal

'The Movement' in 1845. A radical critic of Christianity he was jailed for blasphemy for a speech at Cheltenham in 1842. From 1846 to 1861 he was to edit 'The Reasoner' one of the longest lasting radical journals.

Operating in effect as the leader of the secularist movement, until succeeded by Charles Bradlaugh in the 1860's, he was also active in the chartist movement, and participated in the National Parliamentary and Financial Reform Association. A friend of both Mazzini and Louis Blanc, he was involved in Orsini's attempt to assassinate Napoleon III, testing the bombs Orsini was to use. However from the late 1850's he



focused on domestic franchise reform, supporting a franchise based not on class but on educational qualifications. First attempting to stand as a parliamentary candidate in 1857, after involvement in the Reform League and the 1867 Reform Act, he became a supporter of the Gladstonian liberal party. His final years were devoted mainly to the cooperative movement, of which he published a history in 1875. In 1892 he published his autobiography – *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*. This extract is taken from his 1868 pamphlet – *Working Class Representation*.

“The aristocratical classes, who governed before 1832, did not like to meet the middle-class as equals in Parliament; and the middle class of 1868, will not take cordially to the companionship of working men there. We are equal before the polling booth now, but there is a long fight before us – requiring judgement as well as persistence to win it, Today we only have three living forces in the nation, on whom we can rely for order and progress – which I take to be the sum of Democratic success – Mr Gladstone's passion for intellect and conscience – Mr Bright's passion for justice – Mr Mill's passion for truth. It is our business to secure Representatives, who will support them in their great aims. We do not shrink from the struggle for freedom and equality. . . . We know that the conditions of Democracy are difficult but the consequences are worth the cost. We know that those can never lose who never hesitate in this contest.”

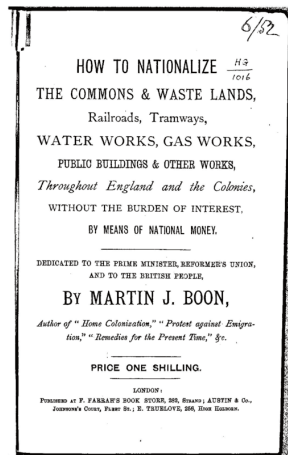
OUR HISTORY 10

Land and Labour League: Manifesto - 1869

The League was formed in October 1869 by a group of radical trade unionists who were members of the London based General Council of the International Working Mens Association - the First International. The secretaries were Martin J Boon and John Weston and the treasurer was the naturalised German tailor and friend of Marx, J G Eccarius. The League was formed following the International's discussion of the

land question at the Basle conference and was set up to advocate the full nationalisation of land in contrast with the more moderate objectives of the Land Tenure Reform association established by John Stuart Mill. Patrick Hennessey, an Irish trade unionist, was president of the League, whose executive also included republicans Charles Bradlaugh and George Odger.

Although the League was shortlived, petering out in 1873, it was effective in radicalising the Land Tenure Reform Association, who adopted a policy of taxing the unearned increment on land value under pressure from the League. The League was for a brief time the centre of the working class republican network in London, with its own paper 'The Republican'. In 1871, when the First International split over Marx's attitude to the French commune, Boon and Weston established a Universal Republican League with other non Marxian members of the IWMA including the French exile, La Lubez. Odger edited his own republican journal, Odger's Monthly. Hennessey set up the Metropolitan Home Rule Association and helped form the East End based Labour Protection League. Martin Boon, having written a pamphlet opposing emigration, emigrated to South Africa, where he wrote a pamphlet on railway nationalisation, and idiosyncratic histories of the Orange Free State and South Africa, the latter being in fact a personal memoir which included the only contemporary history of the Land and Labour League.



"After mature consideration the Council agreed to the following:

1. *Nationalisation of the Land*
2. *Home Colonisation*
3. *National, Secular, Gratuitous and Compulsory Education*
4. *Suppression of Private Banks of Issue. The State only to issue Paper Money*
5. *A direct and progressive Property Tax, in lieu of all other Taxes*

6. Liquidation of the National Debt.
7. Abolition of the Standing Army.
8. Reduction of the Number of Hours of Labour.
9. Equal Electoral Rights, with Payment of Members.

You are swindled out of the fruits of your toil by land laws, money laws and all sorts of laws. Out of the paltry pittance that is left you, you have to pay the interest of a debt that was incurred to keep your predecessors in subjection.; you have to maintain a standing army that serves no purpose in your generation, and you are systematically overworked when employed, and underfed at all times. Nothing but a series of such radical reforms as indicated on our programme will ever lift you out of the sough of despond in which you are at present sunk. The difficulty can be overcome by unity of purpose and action. We are many; our opponents are few. Then working men and women of all creeds and occupations claim your rights as with one voice, and rally round, and unite your forces under the banner of the 'LAND AND LABOUR LEAGUE' to conquer your own emancipation!"

OUR HISTORY 11

Thomas Smith: Manifesto of the Nottingham IWMA - 1872

Thomas Smith was secretary of the Nottingham branch of the First International. He was a close colleague of John Hales, secretary of the First International's General Council, who established the English Federation of the International. Smith and Hales both opposed the authoritarian control Marx exercised over the International, and Hales was sacked from his secretarial post for associating with a dissident branch in America. Smith was to chair the first conference of English branches held in his home city of Nottingham in July 1872. The English Federation had its own journal in W H Riley's International Herald, which survived until October 1873. The English federalists also attempted to use the IWMA as the basis for a new political party - Hales was to stand

unsuccessfully for parliament on several occasions.

Smith wrote a series of letters on the Paris commune to the *Nottingham Daily Express* between March and July 1872, which were subsequently published as a pamphlet. These were an expansion of the manifesto. After the collapse of the International, Smith was to collaborate with John de Morgan in the establishment of the National Republican Brotherhood. Hales continued his involvement in the international movement, and together with George Eccarius, attended the Geneva anarchist conference in 1873.



” This Society will advocate and promote the principles of the political and social revolution, as being the only principles that will advance the welfare of society as a whole, as being principles on which alone just and equal government is based, and to which all civilisation tends These principles we hold to be:

First, Politically, the rights of conscience, freedom of mind – the unlimited right of the individual to proclaim his or her convictions on all subjects; and socially, the right of every child to the fullest development of all its powers, mental and moral, possible – the duty of society to provide the means of education for all, so that all may have within their reach the means of the best education that the age can confer.

Second, Politically, personal freedom for all – the abolition of bondage in all its forms and everywhere: and socially, the emancipation of women – the equality of all classes and sexes, the abolition of all political and social privileges between men and women and between class and class.

Thirdly, Politically, the emancipation of land – the right of the people to the soil, and the abolition of privileged political land cases: and socially, the emancipation of labour – and the advocacy of measures that shall make capital the servant of labour, and not labour the servant of capital.

Fourthly, Politically, the right of self-government – of national sovereignty by universal suffrage, the right of the nation, and the nation only, to rule, as the source of all power, and the destruction of class rule and dominance: and socially, the unity of humanity, of all mankind – the end of the dominance of race over race and nation over nation.

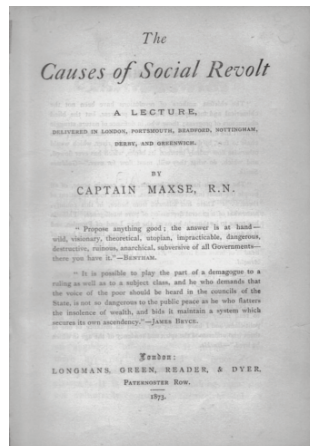
Fifthly, Politically, the protection of the rights of minorities by the principle of federalism and by decentralisation of power – so as to take away the temptation of the central government to trample on the rights of its opponents: and socially, the union of the nations to be a federal bond – so as to protect the rights of the weaker races and nations.”.

OUR HISTORY 12

Frederick Maxse: The Causes of Social Revolt - 1873

Frederick Maxse was a radical liberal. He retired from the Royal Navy in 1867. He was a friend of Joseph Chamberlain and John Morley and tried unsuccessfully to get elected to parliament in 1868 and 1874. He became a radical because “ I was brought up to the tune of Rule Britannia and Britons never shall be slaves.. When I came to live on shore.., I found that a large number of Britons were slaves, slaves to artificial oppressive circumstances, for the maintenance of which the governing classes stood, in my eyes, responsible, and upon the discovery of this I determined that if during the whole of my life I could carry but a single handful of earth towards the foundation of a better state of society, that handful I would carry.”

Maxse was active in a number of radical causes – the Charity Organisation Society, John Stuart Mill's Land Tenure Reform Association, Chamberlain's National Education League and the Eastern Question Association founded to campaign against the Bulgarian atrocities in 1876. He also founded the Electoral Reform Association to campaign for equalisation of parliamentary constituencies to ensure that the Government did actually represent the majority of voters – one of the original chartist six points.



His 1873 pamphlet set out the full radical programme, which was to be the basis of Chamberlain's radical programme of 1885: 1) compulsory, gratuitous secular education; 2) land tenure reform; 3) the substitution of direct for indirect taxation; 4) Electoral representative reform.

"We hold that a large portion of human misery is preventable. We do not advocate change for the sake of change, but we advocate what we believe to be wise change, for the purpose of remedying avoidable evil. We do not anticipate as a result of this change that mankind will straightway enter upon the millennium. . . It is not that we want anarchy – but order, for to the man with a high sense of order, and with a high sense of justice, the present state of society, though its ruin is cloaked with a superficial prosperity, is one of anarchy. It is not that we desire to demolish authority, but to establish it. Authority however founded on reason, not authority founded on superstition and class prejudice. Reason is the product of thought. If we are not governed by thought, we shall be governed by ignorance, and ignorance means injustice and suffering. The penalty of not thinking appears to be that we must kill one another, either directly or indirectly. Hence foreign wars and social misery."

OUR HISTORY 13

Joseph Cowen: Speech in Newcastle - 1874

Joseph Cowen was a radical Liberal and republican. Son of Joseph Cowen, senior, MP for Newcastle and newspaper owner, he befriended republican exiles such as Garibaldi, Mazzini, Louis Blanc, Ledru Rollin, Kossuth, Herzen and Bakunin, who all stayed at the Cowen residence at Blaydon Hall, and sponsored a number of Newcastle based reform organisations including the Newcastle Foreign Affairs Committee, the Northern Reform Union and a republican club. He organised a foreign legion to support Garibaldi and funded the Polish exiles. In 1871 he worked with Sir Charles Dilke's republican campaign. He recruited the chartist Harney, who had been living in Jersey, to edit local journals – the *Northern Tribune* and the *Republican Record*. He also took control of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle*. Edited by W E Adams, contributors included Holyoake, George Howell, Harney, Kropotkin and Lloyd Jones.

In 1874, he stood for parliament on a radical Liberal platform. In parliament he focused his attention on criticising Disraeli's policy in the Near East and in supporting the Irish nationalists. He was critical of the Liberal caucus which was centred on the National Liberal Federation, and attacked Gladstone's coercion as much as attacked Disraeli. By the early 1880's he was regarded by Engels and others as the potential leader of a new radical party. He subsidised the London based working class Radical magazine. His connections with London radicalism brought him in to contact with Henry Hyndman and Cowen in fact chaired the first meeting of Hyndman's Democratic Federation. However, Cowen while working with the Newcastle socialists, did not take a leading role in the Social Democratic Federation at national level, although he provided financial support to their journal



Justice – he was more of an independent than a party man. He retired from parliament in 1886, though continued with local journalism and speeches until his death in 1900 - towards the end of his life, moving to a more pro-imperialist position.

This extract is from a speech on political principles in his first election campaign in 1874.

"There are three principles which lie at the foot of any political professions I have ever made. The first principle is this – that all men, whatever their walk or grade in life may be, ought to be equal before the law... I mean to say that whether a man is plebeian or patrician, whether a member of the aristocracy or hard working artisan who lives in a hovel or a cottage, whatever his material condition, so far as the law of the land is concerned all men ought to be on an equality... The next is complete religious equality... The State ought not to bring its power, and prestige, and other privileges that belong to it, and use them in favour of any one religious body... The third principle is that the Government of the country should be conducted so as to confer the greatest good upon the greatest number. By that I mean that in all the ramifications of our governmental machinery, there ought to be a regard for the interests of the majority of the inhabitants of the State, and not for any mere section of them".

OUR HISTORY 14

John Sketchley: The Principles of Social Democracy - 1879

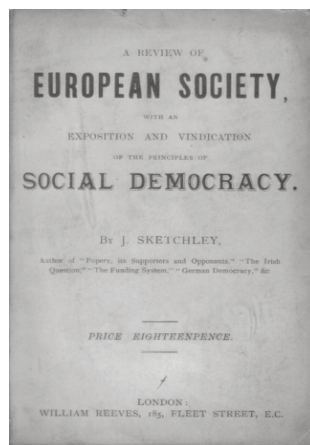
John Sketchley was active in the chartist movement in South Leicestershire. He was a supporter of republican refugees after 1848 and an associate of W J Linton. He also contributed to W H Riley's International Herald in 1870-71. He was a critique of Catholicism and had been excommunicated in 1859 for writing Popery. Its supporters and opponents. In 1875 he established a Birmingham Republican Association, which in 1879 became the Midland Social Democratic Association and promoted its mani-

festos in the London based journal, *Republican*. In the same year, he published a pamphlet setting out *The Principles of Social Democracy*. This included sections on the sovereignty of the people, education, the nationalisation of land, the nationalisation of the currency and the organisation of credit, the nationalisation of the instruments of labour and the nation's budget. Part of the pamphlet is clearly derived from the writings of the earlier Birmingham currency reformer Thomas Attwood.

In 1884, Sketchley published a fuller *Review of European Society*, with an introduction by William Morris. This was a detailed economic study of England, Europe, and the United States as well as an analysis of the European Revolutions of 1848-9 and the 1871 Paris commune. Sketchley joined the Social Democratic Federation and became secretary of its Birmingham branch. He was in fact employed by the SDF in 1883 as a propagandist in South Staffordshire during a strike of ironworkers and participated in a 'mission' to the West Bromwich miners in the following year. He then joined the Socialist League, initiating a short-lived Birmingham branch and became a contributor to *Commonweal*. He wrote a number of other pamphlets, including pamphlets on the Irish question and German democracy and *The Workman's Question: Why He is Poor*, published in 1890 in Hull to where he had moved. He continued to speak at SDF meetings and is recorded as speaking in Dewsbury as late as 1901 and published a pamphlet on *The Crimes of Governments* in 1902.

"The grand principle of social democracy is the brotherhood of the human race. All privileges arising from class distinctions, so called titles of honour and dignity, must be abolished. All that tends to create envy, hatred, or prejudice between peoples must be removed, and be replaced by whatever is best calculated to promote peace and concord.

"Standing armies, which are everywhere a danger to liberty and a terrible burden on industry; which are an



emanation of barbarism, and are maintained only in the interest of despotism, must be swept away, to be replaced by a citizen force for the purposes of defence. These are the fundamental principles of social democracy, the grand formula, liberty, equality, fraternity.”

OUR HISTORY 15

Henry George: The Land Question - 1881

Henry George was an American journalist, social reformer and economist. He is remembered mainly for his book *Progress and Poverty*, published in 1880, which argued for the introduction of a tax on land value to replace all other taxes. Coming from a radical Christian rather than Marxist position, his interest in economic reform derived from observing the contrast between wealth and social misery in New York. Though refusing to be identified with socialism, his work had a fundamental influence on the revival of British socialism in the early 1880's. In 1879, George had met the Irish land reformer, Michael Davitt in New York. George then wrote a pamphlet on the Irish Land question, and in 1881 undertook a tour of Ireland to promote his ideas. Accompanied by the Eton schoolmaster, J L Joynes, who later became one of the founding members of Henry Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, George was arrested as a Fenian sympathiser under the Prevention of Crimes Act. While the charge was dismissed, the incident gave George and his ideas considerable publicity.

While George never supported the land nationalisation policy of the marxian Land and Labour League, his campaign led to the establishment of the English and Scottish Land Restoration Leagues and to the Highland Land Reform League established by the radical MP. Dr G B Clark. His arguments were taken up by socialists within the early Independent Labour Party, including the secretary Tom Mann, the christian socialists Frederick Verinder and Stewart Headlam and progressives on the new London Country Council such as Sidney Webb. In 1899, the LCC promoted a parliamentary

bill for taxation of land values, while land taxation was a key element of the Liberals successful campaign in the 1906 general election. George went on to write a series of economic books and to stand, unsuccessfully, as an independent candidate for the Mayoralty of New York. The Henry George Foundation in Britain still campaigns for land value tax and has considerable, even growing, support within the Liberal and Labour parties. George also influenced the socialist movement in both Europe and the British colonies, especially Australia.



The following extract is taken from George's pamphlet, the Land Question, published in Sydney, Brisbane and London in 1881, which was a revision of his earlier pamphlet on the Irish Land Question.

“Private property in land blocks the way of advancing civilisation. The two cannot long co-exist. Either private property in and must be abolished, or, as it has happened again and again in the history of mankind, civilisation must again turn back in anarchy and bloodshed. . . . The Irish land question is not a local question. It is a universal question. It involves the great question of the distribution of wealth. . . . It cannot be settled by half-way measures. It can only be settled by the acknowledgement of equal rights to land. What I urge the men of Ireland to do is to proclaim without limitation or evasion, that the land of NATURAL RIGHT, is the common property of the whole people and to propose practical measures which will recognise this right in great Britain as well as in Ireland. . . . Not a republic of landlords and peasants: not a republic of millionaires and tramps; not a republic in which some are masters and some serve. But a republic of equal citizens, where competition becomes co-operation, and the independence of all gives true independence to each; where moral progress goes hand-in-hand with intellectual progress, and material progress elevates and enfranchises even the poorest and weakest and lowliest.”

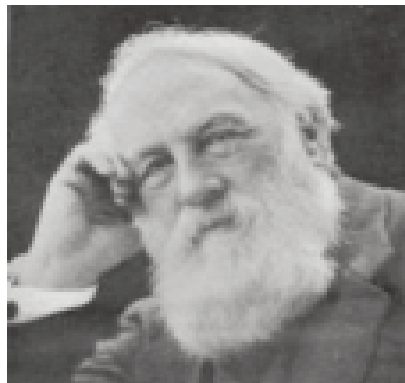
OUR HISTORY 16

Henry Hyndman: England for All -1881

Henry Hyndman was a Tory radical who having met socialist refugees in the campaign over the eastern question in the mid 1870's and having read a French translation of Marx's *Das Kapital*, established in 1881, the Democratic Federation as a grouping of metropolitan radicals including former chartists, O'Brienites and land reformers. Hyndman presented copies of a pamphlet *England for All – The Textbook of Democracy*, to those attending the inaugural meeting. In 1883, the Federation published a distinctly socialist manifesto – *Socialism Made Plain*; Hyndman published a more detailed explanation of Marx's views in the *Historical Basis of Socialism in England*, and the organisation changed its name to the Social Democratic Federation and launched a journal *Justice*, subtitled 'The Organ of Social Democracy.' The SDF became the first Marxist political organisation in England, and Hyndman was joined by leading radicals including William Morris, Ernest Belfort Bax, John Burns and Henry Champion, though Morris and Belfort Bax, dissatisfied with Hyndman's authoritarianism, were to leave in 1885 to form the Socialist League. Hyndman continued to lead the SDF, and its successor body, the British Socialist Party, adopting an imperialist and pro-war stance, until his death in 1921.

“In every direction, the policy of democracy is clear and well-defined. Freedom, social reorganisation, thorough unity at home, justice, self-government and consideration for our colonies and dependencies, and a warm friendship and ready assistance for the oppressed peoples abroad – such is the work we are called upon to begin and carry out. . . . The current of events will help on the cause of the people. Within the past generation greater changes have been wrought than in centuries of human existence before. For the first time in the history of mankind the whole earth is at our feet. Railways, telegraphs, steam communications, have just begun to exercise an influence. Education and intercourse are breaking down the barriers of ages. The men who do the work are learning from one another how it is that the poor and

miserable, the unfortunate and weak, suffer and fall by the wayside. In our own country, which has led the way to the new stage of social development, all can see that the lot of the many is sad, whilst the few are rich and luxurious far beyond what is beneficial even to them. Our action in redress of these inequalities and better ordering of our affairs will guide and encourage the world. We perhaps, alone among the peoples can carry out with peace, order and contentment those changes which continental revolutionists have sought through anarchy and bloodshed."



OUR HISTORY 17

Frederic Harrison: Speech for the Anti-Aggression League -1882

Frederic Harrison was a leading member of the positivists, a group of intellectuals who adopted the philosophy of August Comte. Harrison, an Oxford academic and barrister, who after lecturing at the Working Men's College set up by the Christian socialist, F D Maurice, acted as legal adviser to the trade unions from the late 1860's, and was a member of the 1867 Royal Commission on Trade Unions, together with the carpenter's union leader, Robert Applegarth. A regular contributor to George Potter's trade unionist journal *The Beehive*, and to W H Riley's *Commonwealth*, which promoted Marx's International working Men's Association (the First International), Harrison supported Polish and Italian independence, the federalists in the American civil war, the reformers in the Jamaica committee of 1866, was a vice president of the Reform League and contributed to the 1867 volume – *Questions for a Reformed Parliament*. In 1871, he vigorously defended the Paris commune in a series of articles in the *Fortnightly Review*, calling for social change and social reorganisation 'The status quo is impos-

sible. The alternative is Communism or Positivism.’ Harrison campaigned against imperialist atrocities from the 1860’s, through the Afghan war, the occupation of Egypt under the Gladstone government in 1882 and the Boer war. In 1882 he joined the Anti-Aggression League and the following extract is taken from a speech to a working class meeting which the League published as a pamphlet and was later included in Harrison’s essays on National and Social Problems, published in 1908.



“This great issue of our age – the replacing of the old international policy of war, aggression and rivalry by the new international policy that has yet to be of peace, forbearance, and mutual tolerance – especially concerns the great labouring class of our community, and its best hope lies in their help. You have nothing to gain and everything to lose by this policy of national aggrandisement. Your first interest is peace, for the horrors of war fall first and heaviest on you. You are the bulk of the people who suffer most and first in times of national distress. You are not dazzled by the prizes and honours of an adventurous campaign. These new markets which our great merchants are ever seeking to ‘open up’ only derange the labour market at home, bringing violent gambling in the employment of capital. . . . This civilisation which our official and our capitalist classes are ever eager to discharge wholesale upon some foreign people who seem very much to object to it; this civilisation which they seem to think can be shot like the cargo in a ship, and not seldom like the charge in a cannon, is no interest of yours and no work of yours. . . . This continual stimulus to the aggressive instincts of the nation is a continual stimulus to the power of the military classes, and to all the retrograde elements in our political life. . . . The policy of the people is bound to be a peace policy in the long run, for it is only by peace that the condition of the people can possibly be raised, and it is only by a settled habit of peace that we can learn the habit of social justice, and the true solution of all our social problems.”

OUR HISTORY 18

Gavin Clark: A Plea for the Nationalisation of Land - 1882

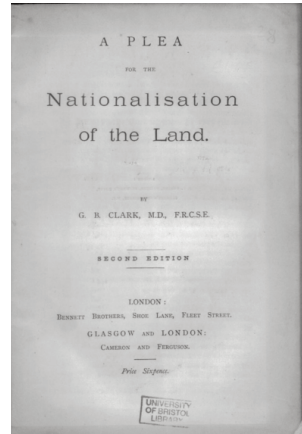
Gavin Clark was a Glasgow doctor and temperance campaigner who while working for the Independent Order of Good Templars as their South London organiser, in 1872 joined the British section of the First International and helped organise the Nottingham congress with John Hales and Thomas Smith. In 1876, he was active in the campaign against the Bulgarian massacres, and also helped organise the National Federation of Liberal Organisations. Clark was briefly a member of the Democratic Federation and then joined the Fabian Society. He lectured Liberal associations on land reform and in 1881 visited Ireland at the invitation of the Irish Land League. In 1882, he chaired a meeting in London to support the campaign of the Scottish Highland crofters for restoration of their land rights. This led to the establishment of the London Highland Law Reform Association. In 1883 he was adopted as a crofters parliamentary candidate for Caithness and won the seat from the sitting Liberal, holding it to 1900.

Having helped get the 1886 Crofters Act adopted, Clark then focused on Scottish Home Rule, promoting a Home Rule Bill in parliament and being elected as a Home Rule candidate in 1892. A friend of Keir Hardie, he helped found the Scottish Labour Party, becoming one of its vice presidents, Cunningham Grahame being president, and was later to finance the Scottish Labour Party's paper, *Forward*, edited by Tom Johnston.

Clark's other great cause in the 1880's and 1890's was support for the independent Boer republics. He was secretary of the London based Transvaal Independence committee, and in this capacity published a number of pamphlets attacking British policy. By 1885 he was the Transvaal republic's official representative, which nearly lost him his parliamentary seat. As Clark was not paid for this role he could argue he was not actually a paid agent of a foreign enemy. His parliamentary defeat in 1900 in the middle of the Boer war was perhaps inevitable given his continued public support for the Boers.

He continued campaigning for highland land reform until 1914, when he transferred his energies to setting up war hospitals in Belgium and Serbia. He died in 1930.

“The resumption of land by the State would be fraught with the greatest possible blessings to all, and the least possible injury to any. The soil would be cultivated to the highest pitch of perfection, and our country again become the garden of Europe, wages would be higher, as there would be more work for all, the supply of food would be increased and its cost lessened. It would cause a gradual diminution of the heavy weight of taxation that cripples industry and heavily handicaps our productions in the markets of the world, as the annuities would gradually terminate and the land rent pass into the exchequer of the State; the increased increments of value would also go to the State, and would ultimately be able to pay off our National Debt, and defray all our national and local expenses from the income derived from land. Commerce would then be free from the indirect taxation that now fetters it, having real free trade, it would expand by leaps and bounds, and its beneficent influence in promoting peace on earth and goodwill among nations be greatly increased and extended. A large proportion of our crime and pauperism would soon disappear. The moral and physical degeneration caused by overcrowding would cease. Our fever dens would give place to comfortable homes, and the mass of the people would be elevated to a higher and better position – physically intellectually and morally. Our agricultural population free from capricious eviction and all the evils of landlord domination and tyranny would throw off their servility and obsequiousness, and regain the old spirit of frank independence.”



OUR HISTORY 19

John Carruthers: Communal and Commercial Economy - 1883

John Carruthers was an engineer. Born in Inverness, his father was editor of the Inverness Chronicle. He travelled the world building railways in Canada, the United States, Latin America, Mauritius, Egypt and India. In 1871 he was appointed chief engineer to the Government of New Zealand. He was a friend of William Morris, following Morris into the Society for the Protection of Ancient buildings, then the Democratic Federation, the Socialist League and the Hammersmith Socialist Society. Communal and Commercial Economy was his main work and contribution to socialist economic policy, presenting a contrast to the Marxist position presented by Hyndman. The Hammersmith Socialist Society published two of his lectures, on Socialism and Radicalism and on the Political Economy of Socialism. He was the main economic thinker within the Socialist League and a major influence on Morris. After his death, an unfinished volume of his Economic Studies were published by his friends.

"In a commune, men would not allow the population to increase with undue rapidity; they would select men of ability as managers; they would labour with due energy; the general system of management would differ from the present only as a republican differs from an autocratic form of government, and would present no difficulty or complexity; and finally, the personal freedom of all would be maintained and increased. While being thus not inferior to commercialism in any point, it is infinitely superior in many; it would raise the working classes from a state differing little from slavery to absolute freedom; it would permit the capitalist to obey a higher moral code than is now possible, and in a few years would increase almost without limit the wealth of the world.... "



“The system must be abolished at once, or at least, the acts of the statesman must be avowedly and clearly directed towards its early abolishment. We must not wait until factories are burning and capitalists are being shot... Whether or not there is a danger, or rather hope, that the working classes are on the eve of asserting their rights, it is the duty of every honest statesman to remove, if he can, a wrong that is a disgrace to our civilisation and the only hindrance to an almost boundless increase of human happiness.”

OUR HISTORY 20

William Morris: Art and Socialism - 1884

William Morris should need little introduction to Chartist readers. Poet and craftsman, he had been involved in the radical wing of the Liberal Party in the late 1870's, first through the Eastern Question Association which campaigned on the issue of the Bulgarian atrocities in support of Gladstone from 1876, and then as treasurer of the new National Liberal League, a shortlived attempt to unite middle class and working class radicalism initiated by Henry Broadhurst and James Bright. Disillusioned with the radical party and the work of the first three working class Liberal MPs, Thomas Burt, Alexander MacDonald and Broadhurst, Morris resigned from the NLL and joined the Democratic Federation set up by Henry Hyndman.

Art and Socialism was Morris's first political lecture. He then went on to write his utopian novel – *News from Nowhere*, and then co-author with Hyndman, a *Summary of the Principles of Socialism*, for the Democratic Federation. Morris then led a split in the Social Democratic Federation, as the organisation had now become, to found, with Ernest Belfort Bax and other dissidents, the Socialist League and to establish the *Commonweal* journal. When Morris lost control of the Socialist League to an anarchist grouping, he then set up the Hammersmith Socialist Society, which operated lectures and propaganda from his house, Kelmscott, in Hammersmith.

“ No one who is willing to work should ever fear want of such employment as would earn for him all due necessaries of mind and body.

First, honourable and fitting work: which should involve him a chance of gaining capacity for his work by due education; also, as the work must be worth doing and pleasant to do, it will be found necessary to this end that his position be so assured to him that he cannot be compelled to do useless work, or work in which he cannot take pleasure,



The second necessity is decency of surroundings, including a) good lodging; b) ample space; c) general order and beauty.

The third necessity is leisure. You will understand that in using that word I imply firstly that all men must work for some portion of the day. And secondly that they have a positive right to claim a respite from work: the leisure they have a right to claim, must be ample enough to allow them full rest of mind and body: a man must have time for serious individual thought, for imagination – for dreaming even – or the race of men will inevitably worsen.....

And how can we of the middle classes, we the capitalists, and our hangers on, help them? By renouncing our class, and on all occasions when antagonism rises up between the classes casting in our lot with the victims: with those who are condemned at the best to lack of education, refinement, leisure, pleasure and renown; and at worst to a life lower than that of the most brutal of savages – in order that the system of competitive commerce may endure.”

OUR HISTORY 21

Edward Carpenter: England's Ideal - 1884

Edward Carpenter was a Cambridge University graduate in theology. Having joined a republican club run by the radical academic and MP, Henry Fawcett, and influenced by the American poet, Walt Whitman, Carpenter resigned from clerical orders and settled on a farm near Sheffield. Here he wrote an extended Whitmanesque poem, *Towards Democracy*. Following Thoreau and Ruskin, he published a series of essays advocating 'the simple life' and attacking the idle rich, including *England's Ideal*, and joined Thomas Davidson's Fellowship of the New Life.. He also helped in 1886 to establish a socialist society in Sheffield.

Carpenter did not join any of the national socialist groups, though he did provide them with some financial support. He wrote a series of books promoting sexual freedom, including the right to homosexuality. He was also a supporter of the campaign against the Boer war, the unemployment agitation and the suffragist movement. He advocated a form of guild socialism in his Non-Governmental Society. He advocated a form of anarchist-communism based on personal freedom and voluntary co-operation. He also wrote works on industrial organisation, *Towards Industrial Freedom*, and international government – *The Healing of Nations*.

"The canker of effete gentility has eaten into the heart of this nation. Justice and Honesty have got themselves melted away into a miowling and watery philanthropy. As for you working men and working women – in whom now, if anywhere, the hope of England lies – I appeal to you at any rate to cease from this ideal, I appeal to you to cease your part in



this gentility business – to cease respecting people because they wear fine clothes and ornaments, and because they live in grand houses. We have had ducking and forelock-pulling enough. It is time for you to assert the dignity of human labour.”

“The rebirth of England cannot come without sacrifices from you, too. You will often have to incur the charge of disrespect; you will have to risk and loose situations; you will have to bear ridicule, and perhaps, arms; Anarchists, Socialists, Communists, you will hear yourselves called. But what would you have ? It is no good preaching Democracy with your mouths, if you are going to stand all the while and prop with your shoulders the rotten timbers of feudalism – of which, riddled as they have been during three centuries by the maggots of Usury, we need to say no worse than that it is time they should fall.”

“As long as you continue to send men to Parliament because they ride in carriages – so long as you are false to your natural instincts, and to your own great destinies. Be arrogant rather than humble, rash rather than stupidly contented; but best of all, be firm, helpful towards each other, forgetful of differences, scrupulously honest in yourselves, and charitable even to your enemies, but determined that nothing shall move you from the purpose you have set before you – the righteous distribution in society of the fruits of your own and other men’s labour, the return of Honesty as the sole possible basis of national life and national safety and the redemption of England from the curse which rests upon her.”

OUR HISTORY 22

Michael Davitt: Leaves from a Prison Diary - 1885

Davitt is mainly remembered for his leadership of the Irish National Land League in the 1880’s and the organisation of the agrarian campaign that became known as the land war. A member of the fenian Irish Republican Brotherhood in his youth, Davitt

became the leader of the radical wing of the Irish nationalist movement and a vigorous opponent of Charles Parnell, publishing a radical and nationalist journal – the Labour World between 1886 and 1890. Of all the Irish nationalist leaders, Davitt, who worked closely with the American land reformer Henry George and his followers, was most active in the English radical and labour movement. He was not only a socialist, but an internationalist. As a member of parliament at Westminster from 1893, he cooperated with both radical and socialist English, Welsh and Scottish MPs. Davitt was also an active supporter of home rule in South Africa and other colonies. He undertook trips to Australasia and America, both to promote Irish nationalism, and to understand the colonial experience. He wrote a substantive book on the Boer perspective in the Boer war and also wrote a book on his Australasian tour, which includes a study of early labour colonies. More surprisingly, he wrote a study on the persecution of Jews in the pogroms in Russia, which also advocated the objects of the Zionist movement. A theorist as well as an activist, Davitt published the first socialist analysis of Irish nationalism *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*, which influenced the later writings of James Connolly. This extract is taken from his first book – *Leaves from a Prison Diary*- subtitled *Lectures to a solitary audience*, most of which was written in Portland jail in 1881.

“With growing intelligence on the part of the people we may fairly expect a wider comprehension of public interests, and a consequent extension of the area of State control; and it is, therefore, in earnest painstaking effort to advance popular education, that we may bring the workers of all countries to see in what direction their highest interests may be most safely and surely sought;; in equally earnest and painstaking effort to organise and direct popular power, that the popular will may find most clear and emphatic expression;... it is the path illumined by the star of Hope. If we pursue it faithfully for a single generation even,



those who come after us, realising the advantages of co-operative association seen in the possession by the State of a vast body of common property held and directed for the common welfare, will wonder that we could have hesitated at all in doing that the very mention of which now excites the smile of derision."

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Joseph Chamberlain: The Radical Programme - 1885

This programme published as a book in 1885, was originally published as a series of articles in the Fortnightly Review from mid 1883. The articles were published anonymously, though the book was prefaced by Joseph Chamberlain, with all articles approved by him and the book was rightly perceived as Chamberlain's unauthorised programme and attempt to capture Gladstone's Liberal party for the radical cause. Chamberlain promoted the new programme at a series of public meetings, starting with a working-men's demonstration in Birmingham Town Hall. His most controversial argument was that property owed a 'ransom' for continued enjoyment of its advantages

"Every man was born into the world with natural rights...private ownership has taken the place of these communal rights." The Liberal leader Hartington told Queen Victoria that Chamberlain's proposals 'almost amounted to socialism'. Only a year later, Chamberlain was to split from the Gladstonians over the issue of Home Rule which he opposed to form the Liberal Unionist party which was to ally with the Conservative party with Chamberlain becoming colonial minister in Salisbury's unionist coalition government. This split was to weaken the radical cause within the parliamentary Liberal party, with the grassroots based National Liberal Federation previously led by Chamberlain becoming increasingly aligned with the party establishment. Some urban Liberals such as the Chelsea MP Charles Dilke, Henry Labouchere and Charles Bradlaugh, both Northampton MPs and NLF leaders such as Robert Spence Watson

of Newcastle were however to support more progressive causes through the 1890's, though their impact was fairly marginal.

The radical programme was written under Chamberlain's co-ordination partly as a challenge to Gladstone but also partly as a response to extra parliamentary pressures including the campaigns for national secular education, increasing locally led municipal socialism, in both of which Chamberlain had been personally involved, and the land reform proposals promoted by Henry George and Alfred Russell Wallace. The proposal for the programme emerged from discussions between Chamberlain and John Morley, the positivist leaning former editor of the Fortnightly Review who was Gladstone's biographer and most loyal follower and later Minister in a number of Liberal cabinets.. Although published anonymously, the articles and book were actually drafted by a group of Chamberlain's associates, including T H Escott, editor of the Fortnightly review who wrote the introductory sections and part of the chapter on local government, Morley who wrote on religious equality, Frank Harris who wrote on the housing of the poor in towns, Jesse Collings on the agricultural labourer, Francis Adams of the National Education League on education and taxation and George Fottrel, a Dublin solicitor who wrote on a proposal for national councils in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The programme of over 250 pages was the most comprehensive set of radical reforms emerging from within the Liberal party, and though not involving any contributors with a basis in the labour movement such as the Lib-Lab MPs Henry Broadhurst, Joseph Arch, Thomas Burt, George Howell and Randal Cremer, would have been a more effective counter to the growing independent Labour agitation if Chamberlain had not split the radical camp over Home Rule.



"The Reform Acts of 1885 have set the seal on the great change which the Reform

Act of 1832 inaugurated. The government of the people by the people has been at last effectively secured. . . . At last the majority of the nation will be represented by a majority in the house of Commons, and ideas and wants and claims which have been hitherto ignored in legislation will find a voice in Parliament, and will compel the attention of statesmen. Radicalism, which has been the creed of the most advanced numerous section of the Liberal party outside the house of Commons will henceforth be a powerful factor inside the walls of the popular Chamber.

The stage of agitation has passed and the time for action has come. There is need therefore .. to compile a definite and practical Programme for the radical Party. It is a mistake to suppose that the objects of the advanced Liberals are simply destructive, for although the ground has to be cleared in many places, the new necessities of the time can only be fully met by constructive legislation, new conceptions of public duty, new developments of social enterprise, new estimates of the natural obligations of the members of the community to one another, have come into view, and demand consideration."

Chamberlain however was to continue his interest in labour questions, and in 1892, published in the Nineteenth Century his own labour manifesto. Which included limits on working hours, early closing of shops, arbitration of trades disputes, compensation for industrial injuries, old age pensions, housing powers for councils, including the power to give mortgages to working people, as well as control of 'pauper immigration'. This generated responses from John Burns, Henry Champion, Sam Woods, Keir Hardie and Thomas Burt, which were printed in the following issue of the Nineteenth Century.

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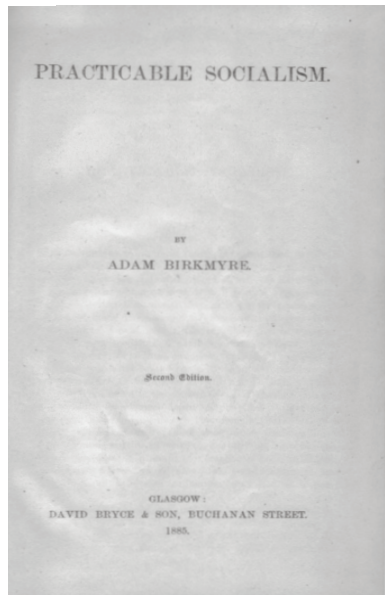
Adam Birkmyre: Practicable Socialism - 1885

Adam Birkmyre was a Glasgow businessman. He was Director of a family firm – the

Gourock Ropework Company, in Kilmalcolm near Glasgow, which owned a local jute mill. His company also bought the mills built by Robert Owen and Robert Dale at New Lanark. Birkmyre corresponded with Robert Blatchford and William Morris. He does not appear to have been an active member of the Social Democratic Federation or the Socialist League and his only mention in histories of the early Scottish Labour movement is that he lent Keir Hardie money to build a house at the beginning of his political career, a loan which took Keir Hardie several years to pay back. Birkmyre lived in the family mansion and is remembered as a local philanthropist who donated a park, library and church steeple to the local community. Responsible for the company's overseas operations, he emigrated to South Africa and died in 1906. *Practicable Socialism* appears to have been his only published work.

“How long men will continue to tinker and patch at an inherently rotten system it is impossible to say, but every attempt they make to remedy its defects will strike out a spark to light them further on their way. . . . When Socialism becomes better understood, when its aims are seen not only to be beneficent but perfectly possible of accomplishment, it will attract all good men and women to its side. Even now. . . . some of the rising and most popular statesmen of the day seem on the verge of this great question, apparently not far off from entertaining upon the path which leads to that which is the object of Socialism, the reconstruction and regeneration of society “

“State organisation in the modern sense, is but in its infancy. The nation is only beginning to learn how to manage its affairs in social matters. There is nothing to hinder its education in this respect passing from the present elementary stage to a higher and more perfect form, in which



the defects incidental to state departments would become thoroughly understood and thoroughly safeguarded, leaving their great merits free room for action. ..Co-operative state management would become a well-defined science, and would naturally lead to an organisation of society which would supplant the present system of fierce competition and selfish class interest, and which, animated by the determination to secure the welfare of all and developed on humane and scientific principles, would, in time, realise the best aspirations of humanity and bring to pass the poet's dream that

*“ Men shall be brothers yet,
And a'that”*

OUR HISTORY 25

Ernest Belfort Bax: The Religion of Socialism - 1886

Belfort Bax was the first English Marxist. Journalist and philosopher, he studied both Comte and the German Hegelians, he mixed with both the English positivists and revolutionary exiles such as the anarchist Kropotkin, before meeting Hyndman. Having expounded the writings of Marx in an article on Modern Socialism in the journal *Modern Thought* in 1879, he joined Hyndman in 1881 in establishing the Democratic Federation. Bax collaborated more with William Morris and in fact joined the Socialist League with Morris, jointly writing its Manifesto and also publishing a history of socialism – *Socialism its Growth and Outcome*, originally published as a series of articles in *Commonweal*, the League's journal. When the League was taken over by anarchists, Bax resigned and rejoined the Social Democrat Federation.

Bax was a prolific author. He wrote several books and philosophy as well as numerous articles in *Justice* and *Commonweal*. Most of his essays appeared in book form of which *The Religion of Socialism* was the first. Later volumes included *The Ethics of Socialism*, *Outlooks from a New Standpoint*, *Essays on Socialism Old and New* and

Outspoken Essays on Social Subjects. He wrote three books on German early modern history, including a book on the anabaptists, and three books on the French revolution and commune. He also polemicalised with the revisionist Bernstein and debated with Kautsky in the *Neue Zeit*, in fact being the only English socialist who could compete intellectually with the continental socialist theoreticians. He is also remembered for having taken a strong and in fact misogynistic position against the womens suffrage movement as well as taking a nationalistic and in fact militaristic position on the outbreak of war in 1914, joining Hyndman's National Socialist Party in 1916.



“The truth discovered by Marx, that the basal factor determining the constitution of society is its material and economic condition, must be for the Socialist, the key to the reconstruction of history. . . . Socialism is not a theory ‘won from the void and formless infinite’ of utopian sentiment and good intentions, very beautiful but impractical, . . . but it is a plain deduction from the facts of history. . . The living form of Socialism has been long perfecting itself within the chrysalis of civilization. The process completed, nothing will prevent the dried hull from bursting asunder and the new being from issuing forth in its fairness and freedom.”

“ Socialism is the great modern protest against unreality, against the delusive shams which now masquerade as verities. It has this at last, if nothing else, in common with primitive Christianity. Early Christianity affirmed that principle of absolute morality, of individualism, of the mystical relation of the soul to the supernatural, as the basis of religion, which represented the real intellectual tendencies and aspirations of the period. . . Similarly, Socialists to-day affirm the principle of human solidarity trough the triumph of the cause of labour, ie the real interest of the modern world against the bourgeois civilisation that professes to represent an economic individu-

alism which has ceased to be ; and against its ethical and speculative counterpart, the introspection and supernaturalism, which have also ceased to be as living realities.”

“The bourgeois moralist is never tired of preaching the reform of the individual character as the first condition of human happiness, ignoring the fact that science knows of no such thing as an individual character, apart from social surroundings. . . . Socialism breaks through these shams, in protesting that no amount of determination on the part of the individual to regenerate himself, however successful he may be in cultivating the correct ethical trim, will of itself affect in aught the welfare of society.”

OUR HISTORY 26

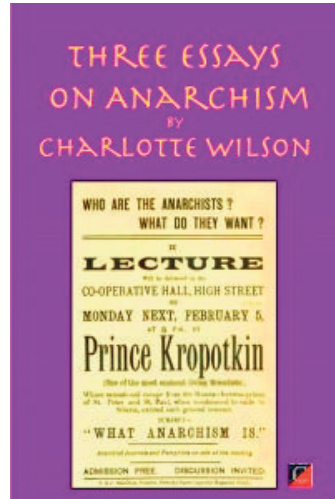
Charlotte Wilson: What Socialism Is - 1886

Charlotte Wilson was a member of the executive committee of the Fabian Society. One of the first women to go to Cambridge university, she was married to a stockbroker and lived in Hampstead. In 1884, she formed a study group, the Hampstead Historical Society, which met at her house to discuss Marx and Proudhon. She contributed articles on anarchism to both Justice and to Henry Seymour's paper the Anarchist. The extract below is taken from a tract published by the Fabians, Tract 4, before the Fabians, under the influence of Shaw and Webb, committed themselves to collectivism. Charlotte Wilson then became a close collaborator of Peter Kropotkin, who settled in England in 1886. Whereas Henry Seymour was an individualist, Wilson and Kropotkin were anarcho-communists. Wilson published and edited Freedom, an anarchist journal which is still published today. She remained active in the Fabian Society, establishing the Fabian Womens group in 1908. She left the Fabians in 1914 and, retiring from political activity, died in New York in 1944.

“Anarchism is a theory of human development, which lays no less stress than Collectivism upon the economic or materialistic aspect of social relations; but whilst granting the immediate cause of existing evils is economic, Anarchists believe that the solution of the social problem can only be wrought out from the equal consideration of the whole experience at our command, individual as well as social, internal as well as external....”

“Anarchists believe the existing organisation of the State only necessary in the interests of monopoly, and they aim at the simultaneous overthrow of both monopoly and State. They hold the centralised administration of productive processes’ a mere reflection of the present middle-class government by representation upon the vague conception of the future. They look rather for voluntary productive and distributive associations utilising a common capital, loosely federated trade and district communities practicing eventually free communism in production and consumption. They believe that in an industrial community in which wealth is necessarily a social, not an industrial, product, the claims of which any individual can fairly put forward to a share in such wealth are: firstly, that he needs it; secondly that he has contributed towards it to the best of his ability thirdly, that he has thrown as much of his own personality into its creation that he can best utilise it.”

“Anarchism is not a Utopia, but a faith based upon the scientific observation of social phenomena. In it the individualist revolt against authority, handed down to us through radicalism and the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and the Socialist revolt against private ownership and the means of production, which is the foundation of Collectivism, find their common issue.”



OUR HISTORY 27

Joseph Lane: An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto - 1887

Joseph Lane was the most prominent advocate of libertarian socialism within the Socialist League. He was a veteran of the London working class radical movement, being a member of the Marylebone radical club, the Homerton social democratic club and then secretary of the Stratford radical and dialectical club. Lane had been active in a number of earlier radical campaigns – the Land Tenure Reform Association founded by John Stuart Mill, Charles Dilke's republican campaign to be MP for Chelsea, the Manhood Suffrage League and the Rose Street Social Democratic club in Soho. He then set up the Labour Emancipation League, one of whose activities was a campaign to re-establish the First International. Joining Morris's Socialist League, Lane led the faction which opposed parliamentary participation. The Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto was published by the Socialist League in 1887. Lane resigned from the Socialist League in 1889 and died in 1920.

“Human society can only be organised upon the basis of one or the other of the two principles of authority or of liberty. From these two principles are derived two political systems, equally broad and far reaching, though diametrically opposite in their effects, that of the one being the happiness, and of the other the misery of mankind.

The object of socialism is to constitute a Society founded on labour and science, on liberty, equality and solidarity of all human beings. It is consequently a mortal foe to all oppressors, of whatsoever kind, of all speculators and exploiters. . . . We revolutionary socialists desire to organise ourselves We are waging a battle of labour against capital. . . . We pursue a war of freedom against authority. . . . We champion the cause of the producers as arrayed against that of the non-producers. We fight the battle of equality against privilege.

Social wealth has a threefold source: the forces of nature, the instruments of labour

and labour itself. Private property cannot be regarded as legitimate from any point of view. In the proprietary system the majority of men are condemned to work for the sustenance and enjoyment of a handful of masters and parasites. Forcibly held down in this hell of capitalist and proprietorial production, it would seem as though the working classes are powerless to break their fetters, but the proletariat has at length become alive to its own condition, it is sensible that within it, exists the elements of a new society, that its deliverance shall be the price of its victory over the bourgeoisie and that this class destroyed, the classes will be abolished altogether, and the object of the revolution attained. We desire to reach the object – the triumph of the revolution without stopping at any middle paths which are mere compromises putting off victory and prolonging slavery.”

An Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto



Joseph Lane

OUR HISTORY 28

Annie Besant: Radicalism and Socialism - 1887

Annie Besant was, co-leader of the secularist movement with Charles Bradlaugh. Separated from her husband, a rural clergyman, she was vice-chairman of the national Secular Society and editor of the National Reformer and campaigned for birth control and republicanism. Between 1883 and 1888, she edited her own journal *Our Corner*, in which a number of essays on republicanism and socialism were published. She then established a new journal, *The Link*, with the campaigning journalist, W T Stead. Her declaration in favour of socialism had a major impact on the secular and republican movements, leading to a famous debate with Bradlaugh who continued to op-

pose socialism.

Besant joined the Fabian Society and contributed an essay on Industry and Socialism to Fabian Essays in 1889. A supporter of the match girls strike at Bryant and May in 1889, she was also elected, together with the Christian socialist, Stewart Headlam, as a member of the London Schools Board. However in 1890, she decided to devote most of her energies to the mystical religious philosophy of theosophy and withdrew from the socialist movement. In 1893, she moved to India, where as well as her continued role in the theosophy movement, she became a leading light in the Indian nationalist movement, becoming president of the Indian Nationalist Conference. She wrote a number of books in India, and sponsored a Commonwealth of India Bill introduced into parliament in 1925 by her old friend, George Lansbury.

“Among the various features of public life in England at the present time there is none which appears to me to be more regrettable, or more fruitful of evil consequences in the near future, than the antagonism between Radicalism and Socialism – or rather between Radicals and Socialists – which is so strongly marked on the platform and in the press. . . . The position that I desire to advance is that Socialism is the outcome, the legitimate and necessary outcome, of Radicalism; that the main current of Radical legislation, despite little eddies and backwaters, sets toward Socialism. . . . It means the substitution, as method, of co-operation for competition in every department of human life; it means the substitution, as aim, of the common good for the personal profit of the individual; it means the placing of the production and distribution of wealth, as well as of all public affairs in which men and women are associated, under the control of bodies elected by and responsible to those who are concerned in them, whether as workers or as citizens, instead of leaving them, as so many of them now are, under individual



authority.”

“Socialism is no wild scheme, no Utopia impossible of realisation. It is a carefully reasoned scheme of production, distribution, and administration, which it is contended is better than the monopoly system of today. It would put an end to the war of classes, for it would substitute a community of workers for the present gradations of social rank. It would bid all healthy adults work, but it would also give to each leisure to enjoy. And since of all the political parties it is the Radicals only who claim liberty and equality for all, who admit no hereditary rights, who demand from all discharge of social duty, who base society on justice, not on privilege, who look to reason as guide, and not to authority, therefore it is to them that the Socialists must naturally turn for alliance, seeking to march with them against the common foe.”

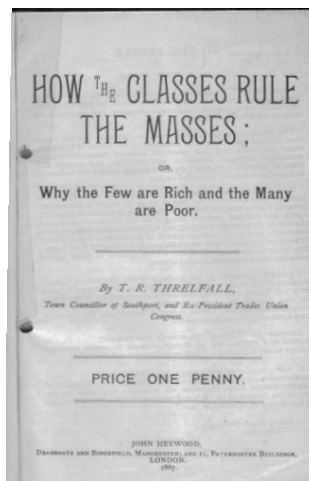
OUR HISTORY 29

T R Threlfall: How the Classes Rule the Masses - 1887

T R Threlfall was a compositor and secretary of the trades council in Southport, Lancashire as well as being a local councillor. In 1885 as chairman of the Trades Union Congress, he proposed that the congress set up a Labour electoral committee to promote labour representation on local councils and in parliament. While there were already a number of Lib-Lab MPs, Threlfall's initiative was independent of the TUC parliamentary committee, chaired since 1875 by Henry Broadhurst, who had just become an under-secretary in the Home Office in Gladstone's government. In putting forward the proposal, Threlfall argued that “there is a stronger moral activity amongst the masses, a greater restlessness under social wrongs, a more searching desire to get to the primary causes of our troubles and a louder cry for domestic reforms than has ever been heard before.” The Labour Electoral Committee, which soon became known as the Labour Electoral Association, and with an executive committee including trade unionist Lib-Lab MPs, William Abraham, better known as Mabon, and John Wilson, helped to get trade unionists onto town councils but was less suc-

cessful in parliamentary contests. In 1887, in a pamphlet *How the Classes Rule the Masses*, Threlfall argued that the LEA should be a distinct Labour Party with a proper programme, a proposal supported by Keir Hardie, and the following year he argued for establishing associations throughout the country, being opposed by the Lib-Lab MP Charles Fenwick. The organisation focused on trying to get trade unionists nominated as Liberal candidates with considerable success in Sheffield and Durham, but, as far as parliamentary seats were concerned, was rarely successful in winning over the local Liberal party leadership or 'caucus'. Its key criteria was that the candidate be supported by the local trades council. Independent socialist or labour candidates, such as John Burns at Nottingham in 1885, were not supported. In the 1888 Mid Larnark by-election, Threlfall persuaded the Liberal party to offer Keir Hardie another candidacy, to avoid a contest, but Keir Hardie refused to withdraw and was defeated.

The LEA soon lost any independence it had from the Liberal party. With the increasing socialist influence within local trades councils, the advocacy of labour candidates was taken up by the Independent Labour Party founded by Keir Hardie in 1893. Threlfall however continued to defend the LEA against the ILP. In an 1894 article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the Political Future of Labour, Threlfall emphasised the importance of working class candidates and questioned how a 'socialist' party would necessarily represent working people – "If a Socialist party is necessary, by all means let one be formed, and let it include all who believe in its tenets, whether rich or poor, employer or workman; but endless confusion and ultimate injury must ensue by classing Socialist capitalists, lawyers, journalists and professors in a 'Labour Party'. The LEA had itself adopted the position that it would only support candidates who were trade unionists. With increasing polarisation between the Lib-Labs and the ILP, the LEA dissolved itself in 1896. Threlfall and the LEA nevertheless had a significant role in the transition from Lib-



Labism to independent socialist representation. With the collapse of the LEA, Threlfall moved to the right and in 1909 wrote a pamphlet for the Anti-Socialist Union opposing the nationalisation of the railways. He also wrote a history of the Liverpool regiment and a series of romantic imperialistic novels including *The Sword of Allah: A Romance of the Harem*. The following extract is taken from his 1887 pamphlet:

“The mission of a labour party would be one of hope to the masses: to oppose the selfishness of class by the patriotism of the people; and to see that the springs of industry were uncontrolled by class-made laws. Knowing the many hardships of the labouring poor, and having no other interest to serve but those of the people, they would turn legislation into practical channels, and while seeking no revenge, and treasuring the past only for its lessons, they would seek to fashion the future, and the toiling multitude may partake more plentifully of the fruits of labour and fully realise the nobility and blessedness of toil. Let the masses ORGANISE ! ORGANISE ! ORGANISE ! As the working classes form the vast majority of the State the remedy for many of their evils is in their own hands.”

OUR HISTORY 30

Henry Champion: The New Labour Party - 1888

Champion was a former army officer who after involvement in land nationalisation advocacy became organiser for the Social Democratic Federation. He was one of the socialist leaders put on trial for involvement in the Trafalgar Square riots in 1886. He published his own journals, *Commonsense* and the *Labour Elector* and was for a time editor of the *Nineteenth Century*. He was involved with T R Threlfall in the Labour Electoral Association but soon broke with Threlfall when the Metropolitan London branch of the LEA which Champion controlled decided to support Keir Hardie's independent candidature in the 1888 mid Lanark by-election against the national LEA which supported the Liberal candidate. Following the split, Champion used the Labour

Elector to promote an independent labour party. He was active in supporting the 1889 dock strike and published a pamphlet on the strike. Unsuccessful in his own candidature in Aberdeen in 1892, and losing influence in the Labour movement through his exclusion from the leadership of the Independent Labour Party founded in 1893, where his autocratic approach was resented, he emigrated to Australia, where he was active in a range of socialist and labour organisations and founded a new journal – the Champion.

In June and July 1887, Champion gave a series of talks on socialism in the west end of London at the St James Hall restaurant in Piccadilly, which were subsequently published as pamphlets.. The lectures covered Wrongs that Require Remedies, Remedies that are no Remedies, the Theories of Socialism, and Social-Democracy in Practice. The lectures were chaired by the Russian revolutionary, Sergei Stepniak, and attended by Bernard Shaw and Stewart Headlam among a large 'educated audience'. In 1888, Champion published an article in the Nineteenth Century on The New Labour Party, from which the following extract is taken.

"It appears that the times are ripe, and a field is open, for the action of a Party which places the rights of labour before everything else, and while it aims ultimately to secure to the worker the full fruits of his toil, pursues the immediate amelioration of the conditions of his life by a practical policy based on sound economics, and requiring for its speedy triumph only the action of legitimate forces to hand. The first condition of its success is fulfilled by the general admission that there is urgent need for improvement in the lot of the working class. The sympathy is at present mostly confined to the extreme form of privation, but it is already being followed by a conviction that the sensational horrors are merely outward symptoms of a deeply-rooted disease..."



What is now required is to lay the finger on the actual cause why wages are so low, hours of work long and employment scarce... The answer may be given in one word – competition. The possessors of wealth are enabled, by the competition of the workers, to procure the means of life at the least possible cost; the workers, having no means of living save by the barter of their labour, are compelled in the competition for permission to live at all, to underbid one another until the wage is the least that will support life, and the day's work the longest the human frame will endure.

The Labour Party sets before itself the task of furthering the interests of the working class by securing the legislative restriction of competition through the compulsory reduction of the hours of labour....”

OUR HISTORY 31

Fabian Society Manifesto drafted by George Bernard Shaw - 1884

“The Fabians are associated for the purpose of spreading the following opinions held by them and discussing their practical consequences.

That under existing circumstances wealth cannot be enjoyed without dishonour, or foregone without misery.

That it is the duty of each member of the State to provide for his or her wants by his or her own labour.

That a life interest in the Land and Capital of the nation is the birthright of every individual born within its confines; and that access to this birthright should not depend upon the will of any private person other than the person seeking it.

That the most striking result of our present system of farming out the national Land and Capital to private individuals has been the division of Society into hostile classes with large appetites and no dinners at one extreme and large dinners and no appetites at the other.

That the practice of entrusting the Land of the nation to private persons in the

hope that they will make the best of it has been discredited by the consistency with which they have made the worst of it ; and that the Nationalisation of of the Land in some form is a public duty.

That the pretensions of capitalism to encourage Invention, and to distribute its benefits in the fairest way attainable, have been discredited by the experience of the nineteenth century.

That, under the existing system of leaving the National Industry to organise itself, Competition has the effect of rendering adulteration, dishonest dealing and inhumanity compulsory.

That since competition among producers admittedly secures to the public the most satisfactory products, the State should compete with all its might in every department of production.

That such restraints upon Free Competition as the penalties for infringing the Postal monopoly, and the withdrawal of the workhouse and prison labour from the markets, should be abolished.

That no branch of Industry should be carried on at a profit by the central administration.

That the Public Revenue should be raised by a direct Tax; and that the central administration should have no legal power to hold back for the replenishment of the Public Treasury any portion of the proceeds of the Industries administered by them.

That the State should compete with private individuals – especially with parents- in providing happy homes for children, so that every child may have a refuge from the tyranny or neglect of its natural conditions,

That Men no longer need special political privileges to protect them against Women; and that the sexes should henceforth enjoy equal political rights.

That no individual should enjoy any Privilege in consideration of services rendered to the State by his



or her parents or other relations.

That the State should secure a liberal education and an equal share in the National Industry to each of its units.

That the established Government has no more right to call itself the State than the smoke of London to call itself the weather.

That we had rather face a Civil War than such another century of suffering as the present one has seen”

OUR HISTORY 32

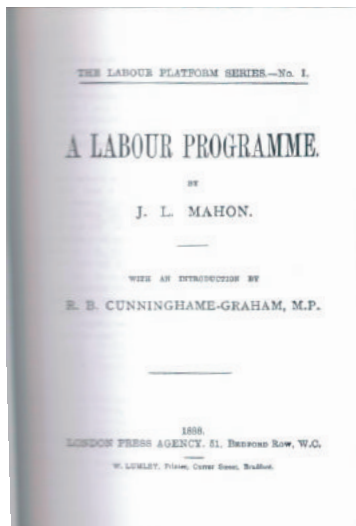
John Lincoln Mahon: A Labour Programme - 1888

John Mahon was an engineer of Irish origin who worked in Scotland and the North of England. In 1884, together with the Austrian socialist émigré, Andreas Scheu, he founded the Scottish Land and labour league, which affiliated to the Social Democratic Federation. However in December he left the SDF to join Morris's Socialist league and served on the SL's executive council, for some time as secretary.

The SL's leading propagandist in the midland and the north of England, he denounced both colonial imperialism and parliamentarianism. Together with fellow engineers, James McDonald, later secretary of the London Trades Council and Tom Mann, he established the North of England socialist Federation, as a united socialist body, with the aim of showing to the squabbling London based factions, of how socialists of different opinions could work together. By 1887, he was supporting socialist participation in political organisations. This was opposed by Morris and defeated at a Socialist League conference. Mahon left the Socialist league to form the Labour Emancipation League. After campaigning in Scotland with Scheu, James McDonald and Henry Champion, he rejoined the SDF in 1888 and helped to establish the Scottish Labour Party. He participated in the ILP foundation conference in Bradford in 1893, though he was unsuccessful in his attempt to commit the ILP to an explicit socialist programme. After 1893, he dropped out of politics though wrote occasional

articles for the socialist press, His son John a Mahon, was a leading figure in the Communist Party and the first biographer of the communist leader Harry Pollitt.

John Lincoln Mahon still lacks a biography, though he features in the biographies and autobiographies of most early socialist leaders. The fullest study is in the entry in the Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals volume 3, part 2 (Harvester 1988).. There is also a useful section in Stanley Pierson's Marxism and the Origins of British socialism, (Ithaca 1973), which, incidently, is one of the best books on early English socialism.



“The evil of competition has always been apparent. Our forefathers put in practice an endless number of laws and regulations for keeping it within bounds. But they acted unsystematically – in a piecemeal, arbitrary and unscientific fashion – which led to such a general entanglement and deadlock as to block all progress.”

“This at least is certain – that the emancipation of labour can only be achieved by the conscious deliberate effort of the workers themselves. Political means are sufficient to effect this, and those means are already within the grasp of the people. Whatever the effects of the franchise, registration and election laws may be, there is still the lamentable fact that the people do not make full use of the powers they have. The privileged class are ever on the alert to maintain and consolidate their power; the masses are slow, sluggish and indifferent to exercise their political rights in their own interest. It is this apathy of the people, rather than any want of political power, that keeps them in subjection.”

OUR HISTORY 33

Charles Dilke: A Radical Programme - 1890

Charles Dilke was elected Liberal MP for Chelsea in 1867. In 1871 he achieved notoriety by supporting the Paris commune, advocating republicanism and attacking the Civil List – the state funding of Queen Victoria and her family. In 1880, Dilke, who had in 1869 written a classic account of the colonies, Greater Britain, became under-secretary of state in the foreign office in Gladstone's second government. In 1882, he joined the cabinet as Secretary to the Local Government Board. In this role, he chaired the Royal Commission on Working Class Housing, whose membership, somewhat ironically given Dilke's republican views, included the Prince of Wales, as well as Cardinal Manning and Lord Shaftesbury. Dilke was for many years a close ally of Joseph Chamberlain, with whom he collaborated on the Radical Programme of 1885. However, Dilke's political future in the Liberal Party was brought to an end by being cited in a divorce case. Chamberlain left the Liberal Party over Home Rule in 1886, and the radical cause within the Liberal Party was weakened, with Dilke losing his seat in the 1886 election. While Dilke was returned to parliament in 1892, the Liberal radicals were then led by the journalist and imperial critic, Henry Labouchere. Dilke moved away from the individualist traditions of the Gladstonian Liberals, to support state intervention. He collaborated with the early leaders of the Independent Labour Party and was at one stage seen as a possible leader of a new Labour Radical party. The 1890 programme is a statement of this new position. Dilke died in 1911. His wife, Emelia, formerly married to Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College, became a supporter of womens suffrage and women trade unionists and from 1889 to 1904 was a member of the Trades Union Congress.

"We are at present in a transition stage. There are, happily, few people in Great Britain who are sufficiently inexperienced to imagine that an ideal condition of society could at once and without danger be brought into existence by legislative means. On the other hand, there are a large number who are inclined to act upon the principle

that society should take of the realised riches of those who benefit by the advantages of civilisation such a share as the best of the wealthy class already give of their own accord for the benefit of the victims of our social system. The tendency towards graduated taxation and the tendency towards increase of State action are both marked. Formerly the State was looked upon by the masses of the people in the light of an aristocratic or of an autocratic abstraction, whereas now it daily comes to be more and more looked upon by the people as a synonym for themselves. . . . In this country political reforms have undoubtedly led to a remarkable



change in the popular way of looking at the actions and functions of the State. The very phrase 'paternal legislation' has become inapplicable to the State Socialism of Great Britain and her Colonies, for a democratic people now look upon the State not so much in the light of a father as in that of a servant of their will. It is possible to believe that we are moving steadily towards a more socialistic state of society without on that count holding Socialist opinions. It is possible to see that the whole drift of modern change is in the Socialist direction, without helping on the steps which would have to be taken to bring about a social revolution. The practical politician is concerned with the matter, because it is his duty to make the change as little harmful and as greatly beneficial as may be, both to the individual and to the State."

OUR HISTORY 34

Eleanor Marx: May Day Speech - 1890

Eleanor Marx was the youngest daughter of Karl Marx. In the 1870's she provided assistance to French and German refugees in London, helping the communist Prosper Lissagray to write his History of the Commune of 1871. She was active in supporting Helen Taylor's candidacy for the London School Board and Davitt's Irish Land League. In 1883, she met the secularist Edward Aveling, with whom she shared interest in the theatre and radical politics and formed a relationship with him, despite the fact that he was married. She later took his name. They both joined the Democratic Federation in 1883, though left in December 1884 to join the Socialist League. They jointly, she wrote in 1885 a pamphlet for the Socialist League The Factory Hell, a study of reports on the operation of the Factory Acts. In 1886, they undertook a lecture tour of the United States, on their return publishing a study of The Working Class Movement in America. The Avelings also jointly edited a number of Marx's works as well as writing a pamphlet on The Woman Question.(1886) and another on Shelley's Socialism (1888).

As well as becoming involved in the Socialist International, Eleanor became active in supporting trade union struggles and became an organiser for the National Union of Gasworkers and General Labourers in the 1889 strike and a close friend of the union's leader, Will Thorne. The Avelings established the Legal Eight Hours League and the International Labour League with the objective of establishing a Labour Party to fight parliamentary and local elections. Supported by Engels, they manoeuvred against Hyndman, but also alienated the Independent Labour Party, though Edward Aveling did attend the ILP founding conference as a representative of the Bloomsbury Socialist Society, which had split away from the semi-anarchist Socialist League. In 1896, following Engels' death, the Avelings were reconciled with Hyndman and contributed to the SDF's journal, the Social Democrat. However, on hearing Aveling had secretly married an actress, Eleanor in March 1898 committed suicide. Aveling died

of kidney disease four months later.

"We have not come to do the work of political parties, but we have come here in the cause of labour, in its own defence, to demand its own rights. I can remember when we came in handfuls of a few dozen to Hyde Park to demand an Eight Hours' Bill, but the dozens have grown to hundreds, and the hundreds to thousands, until we have this magnificent demonstration that fills the park today. We are standing face to face with another demonstration, but I am glad to see that the great masses of the people are on our side.



Those of us who have gone through all the worry of the Dock Strike, and especially the Gasworkers' Strike, and have seen the men, women and children stand round us, have had enough of strikes, and we are determined to secure an eight hours' day by legal enactment; unless we do so, it will be taken from us at the first opportunity. We will only have ourselves to blame if we do not achieve the victory which this great day could so easily give us. There is in the park this afternoon a man whom Mr. Gladstone once imprisoned— Michael Davitt; but Mr. Gladstone is now on the best of terms with him. What do you suppose is the reason for the change? Why has the Liberal Party been so suddenly converted to Home Rule? Simply because the Irish people sent 80 members to the House of Commons to support the Conservatives; in the same way we must kick these Liberal and Radical members out if they refuse to support our programme. I am speaking this afternoon not only as a Trade Unionist, but as a Socialist. Socialists believe that the eight hours' day is the first and most immediate step to be taken, and we aim at a time when there will no longer be one class supporting two others, but the unemployed both at the top and at the bottom of society will be got rid of. This is not the end but only the beginning of the struggle; it is not enough to come here to demonstrate in favour of an eight hours' day. We must not be like some Christians who sin for six days and go to church on the seventh, but we must speak for the cause daily, and make the men, and especially the women that we

meet, come into the ranks to help us.

*"Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few."*

OUR HISTORY 35

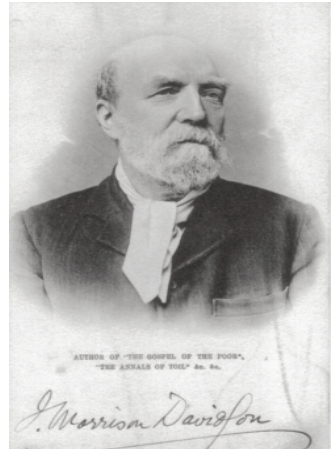
John Morrison Davidson: The Democrat's Address - 1892

Morrison Davidson was a radical lawyer and journalist. Brother of Thomas Davidson, the 'wandering scholar' who founded the Fellowship of the New Life which was the crucible out of which the Fabian Society grew, Morrison Davidson was prolific journalist who contributed to a number of advanced radical and socialist campaigns, trying to unite the two groups in a new political movement.

Morrison Davidson, a Scot, tough London based for most of his career, was a land reformer and Scottish nationalist. One of his early books, published in Glasgow and London, had the rather clumsy title - Concerning Four Precursors of Henry George and the Single Tax as also the Land Gospel according to Winstanley the Digger - the other precursors were William Ogilvie (1782), Thomas Spence (1775), Thomas Paine (1796) and Patrick Edward Dove (1850).

Morrison was an active member of a number of radical organisations, including the Edinburgh Republican Club, the London Municipal Reform Association and the Lambeth Radical Association, which supported Irish republicanism. He was active in the campaign against the Egyptian war as well as opposing the proposal to put a statue of the Prince Imperial, the son of the exiled Napoleon III who died fighting for

Britain in the Zulu war, in Westminster Abbey. Morrison Davidson attended an early meeting of Hyndman's Democratic Federation, though he claims he walked out together with Andreas Scheu when Hyndman refused to discuss abolition of the monarchy. He was secretary to the Peoples League for the Abolition of the House of Lords and edited the Democrat, a land reform journal. In 1885 he stood unsuccessfully for parliament in Greenock on behalf of the Scottish Land Restoration League.



Morrison Davidson published in a number of journals – the Daily Chronicle, the Star, the Weekly Times and Echo and Reynolds Newspaper. He published these articles in a series of volumes – Politics for the People (in 1892), Let There be Light (1895), The Old Order and the New – From Individualism to Collectivism. Many of his pamphlets and letters were written from the United Democratic Club in Chancery Lane. He also wrote a popular history of radicalism from the Romans to the land reform campaigns of the 1880's and the founding of the socialist societies in the 1880's and 1890's. – Annals of Toil, and a book of biographies of Eminent Radicals in and out of Parliament, as well as books on Scottish and Irish nationalism, a critique of the Church of England and The Gospel of the Poor- Christ of the Commune. He defined his political position as ' Opportunist Liberal Republican Communist Anarchist Christian.'

“FELLOW- DEMOCRATS – You are now in the midst of a very grave political crisis. For centuries aristocratic force and fraud have robbed you and your forefathers of the two most elementary Rights of Man – the Right to the Suffrage and the Right to the Soil. At last your time has come. It is your duty- your duty to yourselves and to posterity – to form a New Party in the state: The People's Party. It will be the business of this New Party persistently and fearlessly to strike at Privilege and Monopoly in every form.

Experience has shown that the two historic parties, the Liberals and the Tories, are about equally your enemies when in office. The mimic warfare which they wage with each other is only meant to divert electoral pit and gallery from the conspiracy of grab to which both Liberal and Tory are sworn. The interests of princes, peers, parsons, publicans and plutocrats with their hydra-headed parasites are really one and indivisible.

The 'long firm' of Rentmonger, Interestmonger and Profitmonger is the common enemy for whose suppression it is the duty of every honest toiler with hand or brain energetically to strive.

The first goal is the United States of Britain – the BRITISH REPUBLIC –Federal, Social and Democratic.

The second is the Federation of the English-speaking Race.

The third is the PARLIAMENT OF MAN, THE DFERATION OF THE WORLD”

OUR HISTORY 36

Andreas Scheu: What's to be Done? Agitate! Educate! Organise! -1892

Andreas Scheu was an Austrian social democrat and furniture maker who fled from Vienna to London in 1874. He had been a member of the First International and a delegate to the Eisenach congress of the German Social Democratic Party. Arrested in 1870 on a charge of treason, and sentenced to five years penal servitude, he was released under an amnesty in 1871. In London, Scheu became a friend of the anarchist Johan Most. In 1875, Scheu moved to Glasgow and propagated left-wing socialism in radical clubs and trade unions. Returning to London in 1885 he met William Morris at a meeting of the Democratic Federation, and began a feud with Henry Hyndman, attacking his jingoism and 'personal presidency' that led to the split which established the Socialist League. Scheu returned to Scotland and together with John Lincoln Mahon founded the Scottish Land and Labour League.

Scheu was on the original council of the Socialist League and helped Morris write the League's manifesto. He contributed to *Commonweal*. His pamphlet, *What's to be Done*, was originally published in *Commonweal* in 1885, but published by Morris's Hammersmith Socialist Society in 1892. With the collapse of the Socialist League in 1889-90, Scheu, together with Belfort Bax and the Avelings, rejoined the Social Democratic Federation, and wrote articles for *Justice*, under the pseudonym 'Andrew Joy'. He represented the interests Dr Jaeger's Sanitary Woolen System Company in Britain, Bernard Shaw being one of his main customers, and later the Munich based Lowenbrau beer company. At one time he shared a house in London with Karl and Louise Kautsky. In the early 1890's, he lectured at the Hammersmith Socialist Society, and also represented Woolwich socialists at the Second International congress in Zurich in 1893. In 1911, on a pension from Lowenbrau, he returned to Germany. Opposed to the war, he left Weimar for Switzerland and died in Zurich in 1927.



Scheu wrote his memoirs in German, which unfortunately has never been translated into English. His archives are in the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. While there is a biography of Scheu in German, the only biography in English is a 6 page entry by Joseph Baylen in volume 3 of Harvester's 1988 *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals*, from which the information in this note is taken..

"Agitate ! Arouse the indifferent, spur the sluggish, and fire the luke-warm!

Educate ! Show the causes and effects of tyranny and serfdom, of riches and poverty, of power and helplessness; discourage that which is bad. And culture that which is good in us; make ourselves and others fit for the tremendous task before us !

Organise ! Recruit and hold together in the form best fitting the ends of intellectual,

social and political warfare. All those elements of society which are destined by necessity to carry to a triumphant issue the throes and onsets of the labouring Social Revolution.

That is what is to be done.

Agitate! Educate! Organise!"

OUR HISTORY 37

Stewart Headlam: Socialism and Christianity - 1892

Stewart Headlam was one of the more prominent christian socialists of the 1880's and 1890's. Founder of the Guild of St Matthew in 1877, Headlam was also a member of the Fabian Society executive committee and a leading campaigner for land reform. A vicar in Bethnal Green in London's East End, Headlam had a troubled relationship with the official church, not least when he adopted the theatrical performers and ballet dancers of Soho as his own special flock, befriended leading secularists such as Charles Bradlaugh, agreeing to be a witness for Bradlaugh and Annie Besant in the birth control trial, and supporting Oscar Wilde in his famous trial for homosexuality and subsequent imprisonment in 1895-7.

The Guild of St Matthew campaigned for social reform and adopted a more radical stance than other Christian socialist groups, such as the Christian Social Union. It campaigned for shorter working hours, better elementary education and 'a better distribution of the wealth created by labour'. Headlam and the Guild secretary, Frederick Verinder, established the English Land Restoration League, which promoted Henry George's land taxation proposals, with propaganda distributed through a fleet of red vans. Headlam edited a journal, the Church Reformer, campaigned for democracy and equality within the church but for secular reforms as well. Headlam was one of

the group of radicals, including Annie Besant and the former chartist and First International member Benjamin Lucraft, to serve on the London School Board - in Headlam's case from 1888 until the Board's abolition in 1904. Headlam then served on the education committee of the London County Council from 1907 until his death in 1924. He argued that education should be free as should school dinners. His campaign for the Board's works staff being paid at trade union rates led the London School Board in 1890 to become the first public body in England to take that position.. As one of the 16 Anglican clergymen in the 55 member School Board, he opposed religious teaching, anathema to many of his colleagues. With the Progressive Party gaining control of the Board in 1897, Headlam led the expansion evening classes, with 80 evening institutes growing to 395, and 9,000 students increasing to 147,000. Headlam believed that 'to be a good Christian, you must be something very much like a good socialist'. His faith in social justice was uncompromising. Irascible and inflexible, he was quick to make enemies. His choice of causes sometimes seems intentionally provocative, but he nevertheless acted as a bridge between the church and the labour movement and his contribution to the education of Londoners should not be underestimated.



"I am as eager for the spiritual welfare of the people as the vicar of this parish or the bishop of this diocese. I know that it is not only the pasture but the Presence of which the people have been deprived. But when they say that because of the importance of spiritual things we should not turn our attention to these great material reforms, I wonder whether they have realised the heredity and environment of a vast mass of people; whether they have considered the evils which result, not only from extreme poverty, but from poverty side by side with wealth.; how art is now almost impossible, and lives which should be brimful of mirth and joy are stunted. Because, I take it, that once a man realises the evils of our present social state, just because he

is eager for the spiritual life of the people, he will be doing all he possibly can to put a stop to that robbery which is the main cause of poverty, and so be degrees to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Expecto vitam venture saeculi: I look for the life of the coming age”

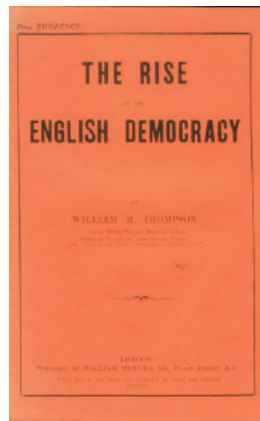
OUR HISTORY 38

W M Thompson: The Rise of English Democracy - 1892

A Londonderry born lawyer who had defended Burns, Hyndman and Champion on charges of seditious behaviour after the February 1886 Trafalgar Square demonstration, Thompson also contributed to The Radical journal founded by Morrison Davidson, Samuel Barnett and William Webster and was a member of the United Democratic Club in Chancery Lane. On the demise of the Radical, Thompson joined the staff of Reynolds Newspaper, a Sunday weekly targeted at a working class readership, which since its establishment in 1850 had been a consistent advocate of chartist principles, taking over the editorship from Edward Reynolds in 1894. Thompson was elected in 1895 as the Radical member of the London County Council for West Newington (Southwark) and stood unsuccessfully as a Radical candidate for the parliamentary seat of Limehouse in Tower Hamlets. He published a number of pamphlets and books, most of which were of a historical nature, including Democratic Readings from the Worlds Great Teachers, which was a series of extracts from Zoroaster to Mark, Spencer and Huxley previously published in Reynolds, and a pamphlet on Socialism Past , Present and Future ,the final section of which, headed ‘ The Battle for London’, gives the narrative a revolutionary socialist takeover of London in 2000. Apart from the references to the revolutionaries using electronic revolvers to shoot police and police horses, the narrative has parallels with the story of the actual October 1917 revolution in St Petersburg !

In October 1900, in an attempt to bring together radicals and socialists opposing

the Boer war, Thompson organised a democratic convention which founded a 'National Democratic League'. Thompson became president of the League, with a range of radicals and socialists as vice-presidents, including Lloyd George. Tom Mann, previously secretary of the Independent Labour Party, was appointed organising secretary. The league brought together the Social Democratic Federation, trade union branches, radical clubs and the Metropolitan Radical Federation. While some 32 branches were established in London and 40 elsewhere, the League was unable to reconcile socialist and radical aspirations and Thompson handed over the leadership of the League to John Ward of the navvies union in 1902. Thompson's attempt to use the League to separate radicals from the liberal party and merge with socialist working class organisations was however not successful, as his focus on parliamentary reform was too narrow a programme for the ILP and the trade unions. Thompson made one more attempt in 1905 to stand for parliament but in the last few years of his life – he died in 1907, he focused on his campaigning journalism and left political organisation to others.



“ By the latest return there is now a population of 40,000,000 in the kingdom and 6,000,000 electors. This is what is called ‘democratic representation’ ! It is the object of the Democratic party to abolish this fraud upon the rights of citizenship.”

“ A new Charter is necessary for this purpose:

- 1. Manhood suffrage*
- 2. Payment of members and election expenses*
- 3. Second Ballot*
- 4. Triennial Parliaments*
- 5. Abolition of the House of Lords”*

“When our charter is gained, one more Constitutional reform will remain for the Democracy to accomplish – the establishment of a republic.

“From one end of our country to the other the workers have been in a state of ferment. Great and numerous strikes have taken place. For the first time a National Strike Federation has been attempted and with gratifying evidences of success. Our relations with the workers abroad have become closer and more cordial. Slowly and painfully, the son of man has been marching to victory. Let him have trust in himself, and have faith in the future, for only through zeal and hope do the gods empty their treasures into the lap of mankind”

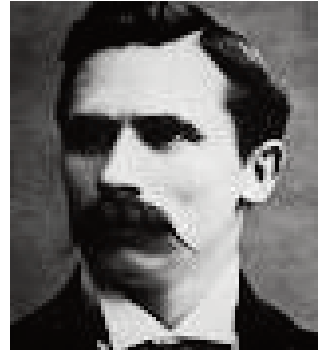
OUR HISTORY 39

Tom Mann: What the ILP is Driving At - 1894

In 1894, Tom Mann was secretary of the newly formed Independent Labour Party, of which Keir Hardie was president. He was an engineer – his foreman in his first job being Sam Mainwaring who was a friend of William Morris. He became active in the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), joined the SDF and became an advocate of the Eight Hour Day, organising the Eight-Hour League. After a stint as northern organiser for the SDF and investigative journalist for Champion's Labour Elector, he joined the strike committee for 1889 London dockers strike. By the time he took up the ILP position, he had also been secretary of the National Reform Union and a member of the Royal Commission on Labour. He also stood unsuccessfully for parliament in Colne Valley in 1895, in North Aberdeen in 1896 and in Halifax in 1897.

Mann supported the merger of the ILP and the SDF, and resigned as secretary in 1897 when the merger talks collapsed. He then served as president of the dockers union and organiser for W M Thompson's National Democratic League, which tried to bring all the radical, trade union and socialist organisations together. When this initiative failed, he left for New Zealand, before spending eight years active in the socialist and trade union movement in Australia. Returning to England in 1910 with experience of the Australian syndicalist movement and the Broken Hill strike, he es-

established the Industrial Syndicalist League and edited the Industrial Syndicalist journal. In 1917, he joined the British Socialist Party and spoke at the Leeds convention which celebrated the Russian revolution. From 1919 to 1921 he served as general secretary of the engineering union, a position he had failed to obtain on two previous occasions, retiring at 65. He then joined the newly formed Communist Party, serving as president of the communist led trade union federation, the National Minority Movement. He remained active in the trade union movement, throughout the 1920's and 1930's giving lecture tours in China, Russia and the United States and died in Leeds in 1941.



"Poverty is not due to slack trade, therefore an increase in trade will not abolish it. Neither is it due to dense population; nor is it in any material degree due to the carelessness of individuals who may be suffering from poverty, but it is due to the unrighteous distribution of wealth upheld by our orthodox politicians – by their public and private defence of a competitive system of industry for private profit making purposes. The overthrow of this competitive system and the building up in its place of a Co-operative Commonwealth is the task now before democracy."

"Its object is: The collective ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Its methods: Representation of the people in the House of Commons by men in favour of the object of the Party, and rigidly pledged to its policy; the federation of all organisations seeking to realise the object of the party by the independent representation of Labour on all legislative, governing and administrative bodies, and propaganda by means of literature and public meetings.

The programme is as follows:

Social and Industrial:

1. *Restriction, by law, of the working day to eight hours.*
2. *Abolition of overtime, piece-work, and the prohibition of the employment of children under the age of 14 years*
3. *Provision for the sick, disabled, aged, widows and orphans, the necessary funds to be obtained by a tax on unearned income*
4. *Free, unsectarian, primary, secondary and university education*
5. *Remunerative work for the unemployed*
6. *Taxation to extinction of unearned income.*
7. *The substitution of Arbitration for war, and the consequent disarmament of the nations.*

Political:

The Independent Labour Party is in favour of every proposal for extending Electoral Rights and Democratising the system of Government.”

OUR HISTORY 40

Robert Blatchford: Merrie England - 1894

Blatchford was editor of the socialist newspaper *The Clarion*. After leaving the army, and a job as a storekeeper, Blatchford became a journalist contributing to the *Manchester Sunday Chronicle* under the penname ‘Nunquam’. Writing articles on the Manchester slums drew him into socialism and he joined the Salford branch of the Social Democratic Federation. When he announced his intention to stand for parliament as an independent Labour candidate, he was forced to leave the *Chronicle*, and together with former *Chronicle* colleagues, A M Thompson, who used the penname ‘Dingle’, his brother Montagu, who used the penname ‘Mont Blog’, Edward Fay ‘The Bounder’ and William Palmer ‘Whiffy Puncto’, he set up the *Clarion* as an explicitly socialist journal.

The *Clarion* campaign for an independent socialist party and established in 1892

Manchester Independent Labour Party, though when the national ILP was founded the following year, it refused to adopt Blatchford's fourth clause – the principle that socialists should abstain if there was no Labour or socialist candidate. Blatchford increasingly distanced himself from the ILP and focused on using the Clarion as a basis for developing a national unaligned socialist movement with political, social, recreational and educational interests. Merrie England was originally published as articles in the Clarion, addressed to 'John Smith.' 20,000 copies were sold, making Blatchford the most widely read socialist writer. Clarion clubs sprang up across the country – Cinderella clubs for slum children, Clarion scouts, Clarion cycling clubs, Clarion vocal unions and glee clubs, armed with the Clarion song book, Clarion handicraft guilds, Clarion field clubs as well as an all-embracing Clarion fellowship.

Blatchford promoted socialist unity, convening a Federal Labour Parliament in Manchester in 1898, which established a General Federation of Trade and Labour Unions. Blatchford contributed to a number of unity initiatives, including Andrew Reid and Grant Allen's New Party initiative in 1895, and some Clarion groups were to merge with the SDF to create the British Socialist Party in 1909. Blatchford however increasingly focused his attention on the threat of war and became one of the leading supporters of the war, and with his co-editor A M Thompson, took a leading role in the Socialist National Defence Council, established 'to counteract the peace at any price policy of the anti-national elements of the Socialist and Labour movements in the country', a role which is interestingly omitted from the substantial biographical entry in John Saville's Dictionary of Labour Biography. In the 1924 election, Blatchford voted Conservative. He died in 1943. Clarion m

"Practical socialism is so simple that a child may understand it. It is a kind of national scheme of co-operation, managed by the State. Its programme consists, essentially, of



one demand, that the land and other instruments of production shall be the common property of the people, and shall be used and governed by the people for the people. Make the land and all the instruments of production State property; put all farms, mines, mills, ships, railways and shops under State control. As you have already put the postal and telegraphic services under State control, and Practical Socialism is accomplished.”

“Under Ideal Socialism there would be no money at all, and no wages. The industry of the country would be organised and managed by the State; goods of all kinds would be produced and distributed for use, and not for sale, in such quantities as were needed, hours of labour would be fixed, and every citizen would take back what he or she desired from the common stock. Food, clothing, lodging, fuel, transit, amusements, and all other things would be absolutely free, and the only difference between a prime minister and a collier would be the difference of rank and occupation.”

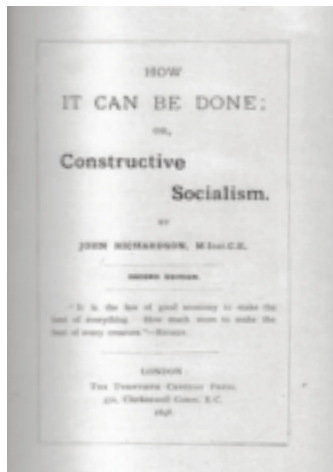
“Let us once get the people to understand and desire Socialism, and I am sure we may very safely leave them to secure it. The most useful work which Socialists can do at present is the work of education and organisation. Socialism will not come by means of a sudden coup. It will grow up naturally out of our surroundings and will develop naturally by degrees. But its growth and its development may be materially hastened.”

OUR HISTORY 41

John Richardson: How it Can be Done - 1894

John Richardson was a Lincoln based chartered mechanical engineer who was a member of the Social Democratic Federation as well as being a Justice of the Peace. He does not have an entry in the Dictionary of Labour Biography or the Dictionary of Modern British Radicals, though a portrait did feature in the March 1900 issue of the

SDF's Social Democrat and he is listed as a writer on social questions in the 1900 edition of the Labour Annual. The book – How it Can be Done – or Constructive Socialism - was written as a riposte to Blatchford's Merrie England, in which Blatchford had stated that he had not sought to answer the question as to how socialism could be accomplished. As a 'man of business', and as he puts it himself 'an intensely practical person', Richardson considered he was in a position to answer the question. His 'Plan of Campaign' was intended to complement Blatchford's 'Call to Arms.'



To my knowledge, Richardson's book is the earliest comprehensive statement of how to implement a socialist programme, complete with draft legislation. The book covers schools, technical schools and universities, state industries and how to fund them, public hospitals and orphanages, socialistic settlements, co-operation, the abolition of private property, emigration, poor law reform, prohibition of the drink traffic, the eight hour working day, municipal factories, allotments and small holdings, reform of the land laws, abolition of the standing army, currency reform (bi-metalism), provident societies and sick clubs, old age pensions as well as democratic reforms such as payment of members and abolition of the House of Lords.

Richardson was later to write two further pamphlets for the SDF – The Education Problem and Its Solution in 1906 and Work and Wealth for All in 1908. The SDF's secretary Joseph Chatterton also wrote a pamphlet on The Practicability of Social Democracy in 1896, which focused on how the American experience of trusts could be used in Britain to establish socialist enterprises.

"For a Social Reform to be successful the following conditions must be complied with -

First, it must be possible; i.e. , it must deal with human nature as it is, and not as it ought to be.

Second, it must make no violent and sudden change in the constitution of society.

Third, while the application is gradual, the effect should be immediate and certain.

Fourth, it must be permanent in its effect; and, as far as possible, automatic in its operation, when once started.

Fifth, it must be just and equitable in its action, and fair in its application.

Sixth, it must be elastic, so as to permit of indefinite expansion, modification, and perfection.”

“Above all, let every advocate of the raising of the masses and the abolition of poverty, crime, and suffering, see that in his own person, he shows such an example of self-control, moral rectitude, and diligent discharge of duty, as will inspire confidence in, and respect for, his character and creed; for it is certain that a community of men and women, honourable and highly principled, manifestly actuated only by motives of love to their fellows, and desire to advance their highest interests, would be, when properly organised, almighty for good.”

“In accomplishing any reform, infinitely more good can be done by building up that which is right, than by overthrowing that which is wrong. If a free course and fair field be granted to the good, evil will diminish of itself. The scheme is not one of destruction but of construction.”

OUR HISTORY 42

Herbert Burrows. The New Party: Principles, Hopes and Ideals - 1895

Burrows was the son of a Suffolk methodist minister and chartist, he was self taught and a pupil teacher from the age of thirteen, he became a clerk for the Inland Revenue. Studying at Cambridge with William Clarke, though not competing a degree, he established a Unitarian church. On moving to London in 1877, he joined a radical club

in Tower Hamlets and participated in the founding of the Metropolitan Radical Federation, though he may have been a socialist as early as 1870. He was a supporter of Bradlaugh's Land League, in which he worked with Edward Aveling, Stewart Headlam and Joseph Arch. He supported Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant's campaign against the blasphemy laws, joined the Social Democratic Federation in 1881, and sat for many years on their executive. In 1888, he worked closely with Annie Besant to support the matchgirls strike at the Bryant and May factory in Tower Hamlets, and became treasurer of the strike committee.



Burrows was one of the South Place Ethical societies appointed lecturers, together with JA Hobson and J M Robertson. He was also, with Besant, an active theosophist and wrote a guide to theosophy. Burrows was no sectarian. In 1894, he was one of the founders of the Rainbow Circle, a radical socialist discussion group, which involved Ramsay Macdonald, Hobson, William Clarke and the Liberal Herbert Samuel. In the first year, Burrows lectured on 'trade unionism as a revolt against the Manchester school; in the second on 'the position of the socialist societies', in the third on 'democracy' focusing on electoral reform, and in the fourth year on 'should there be special protection for children, young persons and women?'. In later years, he covered Rousseau, anarchism, the political and economic status of women, local government and the theory of the general strike. His last lecture in 1915 was on 'Labour and the War - Now and After'. Burrows was also a member of the London School Board with Besant and Headlam. He retired from the Inland Revenue in 1907 so he could focus on his various political activities, including supporting the Womens Trade Union League and the Peace and Arbitration Committee as well as managing three schools for the London School Board. He continued lecturing for ethical societies until 1917.

Burrows was a lecturer rather than a writer. In 1908, together with Hobson, he edited the works of his old friend, William Clarke. His contribution to Andrew Reid's book on the New Party in 1895 appears to be his most substantive work. The radical leaning Liberal journalist Andrew Reid Liberal, together with the Canadian writer, Grant Allen, brought together some 30 radicals and socialists, in attempt to promote a 'New Party and National Union of Socialist' coming the SDF, the ILP, the Clarion, an independent radicals. Contributors included Blatchford, Keir Hardie and Fred Hammill of the ILP, A R Wallace and Margaret McMillan, with Walter Crane contributing a frontispiece. Burrows was given the task of setting out the principles for a 'New Party'. Though the book included a statement of objectives and an invitation to readers to apply to Andrew Reid to join the new party, the initiative did not progress and there is no record of any membership or meetings of any new organisation.

"In this transition age one thing is clear – the old parties are doomed. In no sense whatever were they founded on any definite coherent principle of human life; and now that that life is being stirred, if vaguely, yet deeply, by conscious aspirations and by newer hopes, the political and social constitutions by which a portion of the nation has enslaved the bulk of the people, must inevitably give way to the broader and nobler ideals which are surely being evolved by the gradual growth of the social conscience. The old Toryism is dead, and the new Toryism will die, for, stripped of its false colours of spurious democracy, it is still the party of privilege, and privilege can have no place in the humanity of the future. The old Liberalism of Manchester and her prophets, whose creed was the buying of human labour in the cheapest market, and the selling of its product in the dearest, is now the scorn of every righteous man. The newer political Radicalism, whose basis is 'equality before the law', but whose outcome is a rampant individualism, with competition for its god and worldly failure for its devil, misses altogether the ethical bond of human brotherhood, which is the only true mainspring of human life, and so it will never solve the human problem. The newest party of all – they whose hearts are touched by the sorrows of en, but whose heads have not yet grasped the full significance of social economics, who are

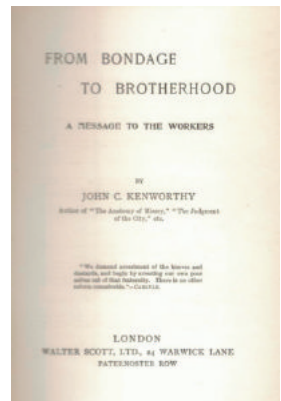
standing with one foot in the old world and the other in the new, striving to reconcile the individualism of yesterday with the collectivism of tomorrow – an impossible task- can only wait at the gate of the new social Eden.

Each and all of these must give place to the new Democracy, who by slow and painful evolution through toil and tribulation, will presently find their way to the Promised Land of a grander national life.“

OUR HISTORY 43

J C Kenworthy: From Bondage to Brotherhood - 1894

Kenworthy was a Christian communist anarchist and the leading English proponent of the views of Leo Tolstoy. Born in Liverpool and influenced by his reading of Ruskin, a university graduate and poet who worked at the Mansfield House settlement in Canning Town in East London, he became secretary of the Land Colonisation Society . He was a regular contributor to the Anarchist Freedom. He then joined the Brotherhood movement, established by the Georgist congregationalist minister John Bruce Wallace. Wallace had established non-doctrinaire Brotherhood churches in Southgate, Forest Gate and Walthamstow in Northeast London, which , according to their entry in the 1896 Socialist Annual, sought ‘to apply the principles of the Sermon on the Mount literally and fully to individual and social conduct, which they interpret into action by efforts to found industries and businesses on what may be described as Socialist Co-operative lines’ . In 1894, Kenworthy established a Brotherhood Church in West Croydon, together with a co-operative store and a communal Brotherhood house. s well as publishing two volumes of poetry, he published *The Anatomy of Misery* is a series of lectures on Christian economics first published in



1893, *The Christian Revolt* (1893), *From Bondage to Brotherhood – A Message to the Workers* (1894) and *Tolstoy : His Life and Works* (1902). His work is covered in Bevir's: *The Making of British Socialism*, reviewed in *Chartist* 255.

“Cease from following after those who dangle before you new Laws, new Acts of Parliament, who ask you to do nothing but – vote ! The Law has been framed by oppressors: neglect it, let it die. In place of it, by the power of Brotherhood, will come up the true Democratic means of Government – unfettered Public Opinion, which is the Will of the People. Keep away from lawyers, judges; on your parts, let the Law perish. But give heed to those who tell you that the first change needed is in your own hearts, in your own ways of looking upon life and upon each other; who can help to marshal you in industrial regiments, and show you the peaceful way to win back all whereof you have been robbed. Those who understand the power of the commercial machinery, know, past doubt, that if you workers so willed, the General Strike and General Co-operation would gain England for you in a week, and turn it into Paradise in a twelvemonth. This is fact, and no fairy tale. The winter is yet with us, but He who sends the spring to the land, prepares also a spring time for the soul of man. Groans of men, sobs of women, and cries of children are calling us. Sisters, Brothers, let us go about our work.”

OUR HISTORY 44

The Metropolitan Radical Federation - 1886

The Metropolitan Radical Federation was founded in 1886 based on the combined club federations in Chelsea, Hackney and Finsbury. It became the representative body of the 'working class left to liberal party' and rivalled the official London Liberal and Radical Union, which was formed in 1887. From its origin, it supported Irish nationalism and land reform and republicanism. In 1887, it organised a protest against Queen Victoria's Jubilee celebrations. It also campaigned on the issues of un-

employment and free speech. In 1894, the MRF established a lecture bureau 'to provide lecturers and speakers at club meetings and public demonstrations.' Its executive met on a monthly basis.



The MRF collaborated with the Social Democratic Federation and other socialist organisations. It was actually the MRF, not the SDF, which called the Trafalgar Square demonstrations in 1887, including the event which became known as 'bloody Sunday'. The MRF also actively participated in elections, with individual clubs initiating radical candidacies, sometimes ousting the 'official' Liberal Party representatives. Radical candidates stood in council and school board elections. The MRF supported the proposals in Sydney Webb's London Programme, which became the basis of the Progressives election manifesto in the 1892 London County Council elections. James Timms, the MRF secretary was elected as LCC member for Battersea, while Aeneas Smith of the MRF and the Eleusis Club, was elected for Chelsea. Both joined the progressive group together with nine Labour members.

During the 1890's some of the radical clubs, notably those in the East End, affiliated to the ILP, and later to the Labour Representation Committee and the Labour Party. The Eleusis club in Chelsea however put James Jeffrey, the MRF chair as an independent radical in the 1900 general election. The MRF and individual clubs opposed the Boer war – at a time the Fabian Society was divided on the issue. Many of London's socialists were active participants in individual clubs and in the MRF, including Herbert Burrows, Graham Wallas and John Scurr, the latter becoming a Labour MP in Tower Hamlets, having been the MRF's lecture secretary. The MRF had no leader, with the chairmanship rotating between representatives of the different radical clubs, which may explain why it receives so little coverage in most of the histories of the period. It however played a significant role in London politics. According to one observer, it

could put 50,000 people onto the streets in a few hours. As far as I am aware, if its records have survived, they do not as yet appear to be have deposited in any archive. The text of the MRF's Radical Programme 1897

OUR HISTORY 45

Metropolitan Radical Federation The Radical Programme - 1897

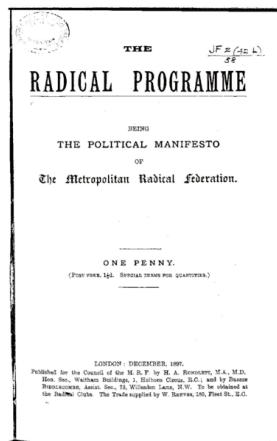
The Radical Programme was published in December 1897 as the political manifesto of the MRF approved by its Council, under the names of H A Rundlett, MRF secretary and Bessie Biddlecombe, MRF assistant secretary.

"The Liberal Party was defeated in 1895 because the confidence of the People in the Liberal leaders had been shaken. Even the almost unprecedented combination of monopolies and vested interests would have been powerless to return Lord Salisbury to power, if the mass of workers had believed the Liberal leaders to be earnestly desirous of carrying out the Radical reforms to which they were pledged."

"The Radical Programme.

(A) FOR THE FIRST RADICAL BUDGET -

1. Payment of Members and of Election Expenses
2. Abolition of the Breakfast Table Duties
3. Old Age Pensions
4. Taxation of Land Values



(B) AS SOON AS MAY BE -

5. Home Rule All Round

6. Universal Suffrage

7. Registration Reform

8. Second Ballot

(C) IF THE LORDS REJECT OR MUTILATE THESE -

9. Abolition of the House of Lords

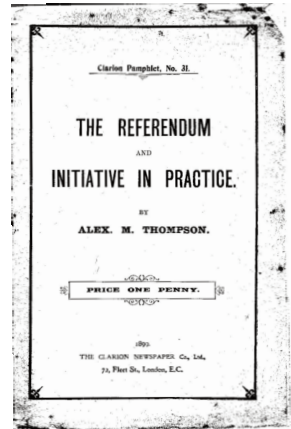
This Programme differs from the 'Newcastle Programme' mainly in the inclusion of Old Age Pensions, of Home Rule for England, Wales and Scotland (as well as for Ireland) and of the Second Ballot. It is simpler, more practical and more consistent; more easy of realisation and less easy to evade; and for this very reason, it will be less acceptable than a long list of 'pious opinions' to the Whig Lords who, in the past, have filled Liberal Cabinets and robbed Radicals of the results of electoral victory."

"We submit these proposals to the consideration of Radicals with confidence and hope, believing that upon them may be grounded an appeal to which the electorate will respond with enthusiasm. We do not set forth our Programme as the last word on Social and Political Reform. It is rather the first step; but it is a step worth the making. There is no proposal in this pamphlet which cannot easily be realised. If the Liberal 'leaders' are in earnest, and mean to abide by their pledges, they will be realised. If the present leaders are not prepared to take the lead, other men will lead the Radical Party to an assured triumph for Justice and Freedom over Privilege and Monopoly."

OUR HISTORY 46

Alex Thompson: The Referendum and initiative in Practice - 1899

Thompson was one of the main writers in Robert Blatchford's *Clarion*. He wrote under the name 'Dangle'. While Blatchford and most of the other *Clarion* writers tended to write folksy homilies, Thompson's articles generally had a more explicit political content and he led the *Clarion's* campaign for more direct forms of democracy, aimed at supplementing rather than replacing parliamentary democracy. The proposals were that major issues should be settled by popular referendum, that citizens as well as members of parliament should be able to initiate legislation and should be able to recall their representatives. Thompson had grown up in Paris and experienced the commune. In London he was close to Communard exiles and took his ideas for direct democracy from the writings of the French ex communard and socialist Jean Allemane as well as from the Swiss socialists. Thompson published a pamphlet *Hail Referendum: The Shortest Way to Democracy* in 1893, followed by *The Referendum and Initiative in Practice* in 1889 and *The Only Way to Democracy* in 1900. The principle of the referendum had widespread support within the socialist movement being supported by the SDF and endorsed by the Zurich congress of the Second International in 1893, but opposed in England by Sidney Webb. Thompson's campaign for direct democracy is well covered in Barrow and Bullock's *Democratic Ideas and the British Labour Movement* (1996). Thompson published his autobiography in 1937- *Here I Lie - Memoirs of an Old Journalist*.



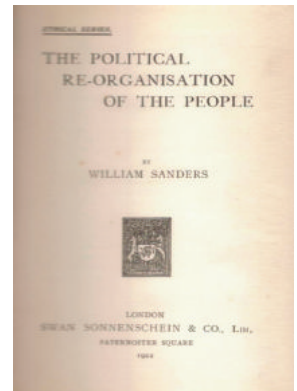
“What is wanted is neither Aristocracy, Plutocracy or Demagoguery but Democracy—the one governing system which has never been tried. The people must learn that the game of politics is not an unfathomable science, but a struggle of rival interests

in which no delegate can so well represent their needs as themselves. They must be taught that they receive and will always receive neither more nor less than that which their own understanding and courage shall command; that trust in leaders is a pillow upon which a people's wisdom and manhood go to sleep; that whatever relieves them from the necessity of thinking about their own affairs, whatever compels them to surrender to others the duty of thinking and acting for them, tends to enslave them; and that the 'great men' for whom they are accustomed to wait and pray, are not, as they imagine, a blessing to a nation, but in the long run, a cause of degradation and a curse"

OUR HISTORY 47

William Stephen Sanders: The Political Reorganisation of the People - 1902

William Sanders was a Battersea socialist and Fabian. who became secretary of the Fabian Society and later in 1929 MP for Battersea. He was secretary of John Burns' campaign committee in 1888 and leader of the Labour and progressive group on the Battersea vestry. He was originally a member of the SDF and then secretary of the London ILP. He attended the Socialist International conference of 1891 on Brussels on behalf of the Legal Eight Hours and International Labour League. He became an LCC alderman in 1904. He was also chairman of the Union of Ethical Societies. , His book on the Political Re-organisation of the People was published in 1902. He wrote a number of Fabian pamphlets including Municipalisation by Provinces (1905), which proposed a form of regional government, and The Case for a Legal Minimum Wage (1908) together with several pamphlets on Germany, Russia and the International Labour Organisation. He became secretary of the Fabian Society and stood unsuccessfully for Portsmouth in the 1906 and 1910



elections. He was MP for Battersea North from 1929 to 1931 and 1935-1940 and served as a junior minister in Macdonald's Government between 1930 and 1931. He wrote a memoir- *Early Socialist Days*, published in 1927. He should not be confused with William Saunders, the land reformer and radical member of the London County Council who became MP for Hull and Walworth and died in 1895.

“While considering it to be of vital importance to the future of democracy that the workers themselves should establish some means whereby men of their own class could be given the opportunity of taking part in the sphere of legislation and administration, it has not been forgotten that the end to be sought is not the formation of a Labour party in the narrow sense of the word ‘Labour’, but one that should broadly represent the principles of the New Democracy as a whole. In a movement working for this aim there would be room for men of all classes who were sincere in their desire to serve it. . . . There is no absence of brains among the masses; it is not the want of potential intelligence among the people that is the cause of their political inertness. It is the want of some means of thoroughly rousing latent faculties; the absence of the training of brains to think and act; and above all, the absence of efficient organisation of the roused intelligences and thinking brains that are already in existence. The masses themselves must provide the remedy for this.”

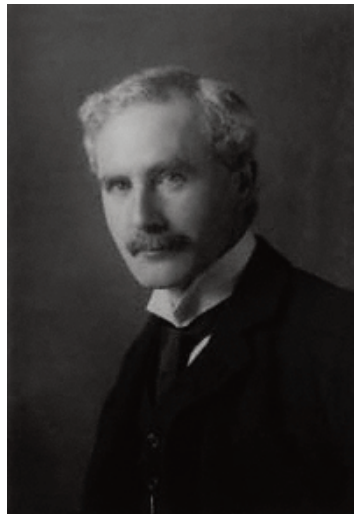
OUR HISTORY - 48

John Mackail: Socialism and Politics: A Programme 1903

Mackail was a Scottish poet who became Professor of poetry at Oxford University. He was a close friend and biographer of William Morris. Between 1903 and 1919, he was assistant secretary of the Board of Education set up under the 1902 Education Act. He wrote two other biographies and some twenty books on poetry. In 1903 he published two pamphlets for the Hammersmith Publishing Society based on lectures given respectively to the London Independent Labour Party and the William Morris

Labour Church in Leek: Socialism and Politics and the Parting of the Ways. The Programme given below was included in his Socialism and Politics pamphlet. The second pamphlet traces the narrative of Morris's disillusionment with Gladstonian liberalism.

“The object of Labour is the development of the human faculties and the production through them of whatever human life requires for use and enjoyment. Private ownership of the material and machinery of production and competitive production and private profit, are founded on injustice and sustained by force, require perpetual legislative interference to alleviate their consequences, and are inconsistent with any stable and permanent civilisation.



It follows from these principles that:

The land which is the inheritance for life of each generation of mankind, should be resumed into communal ownership.

The capitalised wealth by means of which all wealth is created, and that fresh wealth as it in turn becomes capital, should be owned and used by the community for the common good.

To the community each individual or group of individuals should contribute all reasonable work and service ; from the community each individual or group of individuals should receive all reasonable comfort, instruction, recreation and enjoyment.

These aims can only be fully achieved in a fully Socialised Commonwealth. Our ob-

ject at the present day is to work for such provisional and intermediate ends as seem best adapted to make the birth of such a commonwealth possible”

OUR HISTORY 49

Isabella Ford: Women and Socialism - 1904

Isabella Ford was a Quaker, trade unionist, women's rights campaigner and a member of the Leeds branch of the ILP. Her family was active in radical politics, and her solicitor father was a friend of John Bright and of republican exiles including Mazzini who stayed in the family house. Her brother Rawlindon Ford became leader of the Liberals on Leeds City Council. In 1885, Isabella established a Tailoresses Society, in conjunction with Emma Paterson's Womens Protective and Provident League. By the mid 1890's the Leeds Tailoresses Union had 2000 members with Ford as president. Originally active in the Women's Liberal Association, Ford joined the ILP in 1893 and served on its National Administrative Committee between 1903 and 1907. In 1904, she was the first woman to speak at a Labour Party conference, when she supported a motion that women should be given the right to vote on the same terms as men.



Ford did not support the more militant suffragists and together with her sister Emily, was a vice-president of the Leeds Women Suffrage Society, the third sister Bessie being treasurer. Isabella was on the executive of the National Union of Womens Suffrage Societies between 1907 and 1915. She was an active pacifist, founded the Leeds

Women's Peace Crusade and was on the executive of the British section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She was a supporter of the Union for Democratic Control (of foreign policy), the National Council for Civil Liberties, joined the 1917 club to support the first Russian revolution of that year and after the war worked with Friends Relief Committee. According to her biographer, June Hannam, Ford 'rejected individualism in favour of collectivism and co-operation, and located the source of women's oppression in their subordinate economic position within industry and the home as well as in their political subjection'.

"There are many people, even those on the Socialist ranks, who apparently forget, or perhaps have never quite realised, that socialism demands more than that we should merely import Socialistic institutions into our midst, such as free meals for children, municipalisation etc, and consider that they will regenerate society and turn us all into Socialists. It insists on a moral regeneration of society of the most complete and searching kind in order to make a lasting foundation for the political and social changes we many of us long to see.

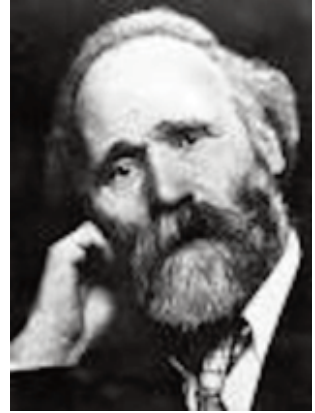
Justice is to be the foundation on which we must build, not the kind of justice we have hitherto considered as sufficient for us, and which many countries pride themselves is their watchword and standard, but a justice that demands freedom for all.

Those who are left in voiceless ignorance and darkness cannot grow up lovers of justice and liberty, for having received neither they can understand neither. . . . And the whole State can therefore only attain the puny undeveloped idea we now possess of justice and which now passes amongst us as the great goddess we imagine we worship and love. The justice of Socialism will see all things, and therefore understand all things."

OUR HISTORY 50

Keir Hardie: From Serfdom to Socialism – 1907

Keir Hardie was the first independent socialist MP elected to parliament, the first leader of the Independent Labour Party and the first chair of the parliamentary Labour Party. He was a leading member of the Socialist International and the leading British socialist of his time. A Scots miner, in 1886 he became secretary of The Ayrshire Miners Union and then of the Scottish Miners Federation. He founded a paper, the Miner, which was renamed the Labour Leader and became the official journal of the ILP. In 1886 he unsuccessfully contested the mid Lanark parliamentary seat as an Independent, being successfully returned as Labour MP for West Ham in 1892. He lost his seat in 1895, before being returned for Merthyr Tydfil in 1900. He was a vigorous opponent of the Boer war. In 1906 he was elected chairman of the newly founded Parliamentary Labour Party. Hardie was a suffragist and actively campaigned against the moves towards war in 1914.



“Socialism is much more than either a political creed or an economic dogma. It presents to the modern world a new conception of society and a new basis on which to build up the life of the individual and of the State. . . . To the Socialist the community represents a huge family organisation in which the strong should employ their gifts in promoting the weal of all, instead of using their strength for their own personal aggrandisement. In like manner the community of States which compose the world, and making full allowances for the difference of environment, of tradition and of evolution, he regards as a great comity which should be co-operating for the elevation of the race.

The economic object of Socialism is to make land and industrial capital common property, and to cease to produce for the profit of the landlord and the capitalist and

to begin to produce for the use of the community. Socialism implies the inherent equality of all human beings... Holding this to be true of all individuals, the Socialist applies it also to all races. Only by a full and unqualified recognition of this claim, can peace be restored to the world. Socialism implies brotherhood, and brotherhood implies a living recognition of the fact that the duty of the strong is not to hold the weak in subjection, but to assist them to rise higher and ever higher in the scale of humanity, and that this cannot be done by trampling upon and exploiting their weakness but by caring for them and showing them the better way”

Footnote: Source used where extract not taken from original source:

10 Land and Labour League Manifesto. From Royden Harrison Before the Socialists Routledge and Kegan Paul 1965 pgs 246-250

11 Thomas Smith IWMA Nottingham Conference Statement From The English Defence of the Commune ed Royden Harrison Merlin Press 1971 pages 241-242

20 Charlotte Wilson What Socialism Is. Fabian Society Tract 4 1886

LSE Archive of Fabian Tracts : lse.ac.uk/archives/fabian_tracts/004.pdf

27 Joseph Lane. Anti-Statist Communist Manifesto. Republished by Drowned Rat Publications 1985 with introduction by Nicolas Walter

34 Eleanor Marx May Day Speech Marxist Internet Archive

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/eleanor-marx/works/mayday.htm>

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