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REPORT

OF

THE TWENTIETH

Annual Conference

OF THE

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION,

HELD AT

STRATFORD TOWN HALL,

HIGH STREET, STRATFORD, LONDON, E.,

*On August 5th and 6th, 1900.*

ALSO THE

PROGRAMME AND RULES OF THE S.D.F.

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

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## REPORT OF THE

# Twentieth Annual Conference of the S.D.F.

**August 5th and 6th, 1900.**



THE Twentieth Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation was held at Stratford Town Hall, London, E., on Sunday and Monday, August 5th and 6th, 1900.

The opening address was given by WILL THORNE, Deputy Mayor of West Ham, and Socialist and trade unionist candidate for the Southern portion of the division. He said :—

COMRADES,—I have been invited by the Executive Council of the Social-Democratic Federation to open this—the Twentieth Annual Conference. That invitation I willingly accept, and in doing so I wish, in the name of the Socialists and the organised workers of this borough, to give you a hearty welcome, and to say that I trust our provincial comrades will gain much information during their brief stay here. I would remind the delegates that we have none of those splendid lakes, fine parks, and stately mansions in West Ham, such as are owned by the exploiters in the West End of London. But, on the other hand, we have a few malodorous rivers and reeking slums. (Laughter.) I would just like to remind the delegates that, so far as my knowledge goes, the chamber below is the only one in the kingdom where the Red Flag of Socialism has been hoisted during the sitting of a municipal council. (Cheers.) That event occurred on Tuesday, December 11th, 1894, when a deputation of about 1,000 workmen attended to protest against Mr. A. F. Hills's "Fourpence per hour scheme" for the unemployed, which made many of the Aldermen and Councillors turn complete somersaults. (Cheers and laughter.) Since that time, and even before on some occasions, many animated debates have taken place on the principles that we are met here to-day to discuss.

For the information of our provincial comrades, I may say that we have in this borough three branches of the Social-Democratic Federation and two of the Independent Labour Party, all of which have done noble work. The first one opened was the Canning Town branch, in 1884, and I think I am safe in saying, although I do so with regret, that I am the only member now of that branch who joined it at its formation. The population of the borough is about 320,000. The chief industries are shipbuilding, engineering, sugar-boiling, and the manufacture of chemicals and chemical manure. There are also several large docks and gasworks, besides railway works, jute factories, and soap works. Taking the whole of the workers, I should say that we have some 80 per cent. engaged in manual labour. A great number of them are casual workers, whose



average wages do not exceed 16s. per week. The wages of the regularly employed workmen will range from 20s. to £2 per week. The borough is divided into two Parliamentary divisions, North and South, and I am sorry to say that both are represented in Parliament by Tories instead of Socialists. The Northern representative is Mr. Ernest Gray, a very shrewd man; the Southern division is represented by Major Banes, a kind, genial old fellow, very broad-minded on many local questions, but still a Tory.

The Municipal Council is made up, so far as I can gauge, of 9 Liberals, 13 Tories, 2 Irish Nationalists, and 15 Socialists. This will no doubt come as a surprise to many, as the general impression seemed to be that the Socialists were in the majority on the Council. We never have had a majority, not even between November, 1898, and November, 1899, when we were able to do so much for the workers. At the last November election we lost two Socialist seats (not four, as reported, as the other two were not Socialists). The elections were then fought out on a new principle, namely, 12 wards instead of 4, and a new organisation came into the field, named the Municipal Alliance, with Mr. A. F. Hills, a temperance advocate and vegetarian, with plenty of cash, as its president. It is composed of teetotallers and publicans, vegetarians and butchers—(laughter)—churchmen and dissenters, Tories and Radicals, landlords and shopkeepers, tax collectors and jerry-builders—all of them uniting and sinking their fads and petty differences with the view of stemming the tide of Socialism which was threatening to sweep them away. The same organisation we shall have to fight next November. The votes cast for those who ran on the Socialist ticket were 6,469, against 7,914 for the Alliance, without counting the fight between the Tories and Nationalists. (Applause.)

I fully recognise that it has been a trying time during the past twelve months for Socialists in all parts of the country, because they have declared against imperialism and expansion, and, as Socialists, we are bound to continue that policy. The rank and file of the workers who, not long ago, were khaki mad, are now sobering down. (Cheers.) Our policy must win in the long run, because imperialism and expansion mean gold for the exploiters and low wages, long hours, wooden legs, and a pauper's grave for the workers. (Loud cheers.) The demand for expansion of trade abroad is based upon the idea that we manufacture to a larger extent than we can consume, and this in face of the fact that there are so many of our people who are workless, ragged, and hungry. Expansion of trade abroad has for its basis the contraction of the stomachs of men, women, and children. The policy of imperialism is a declaration against the people governing themselves; it means that the people cannot be trusted, that gold is of more consequence than men, that plutocracy and militarism are nobler than humanity. (Hear, hear.) The attempt to divert the attention of our people from the ills from which we suffer at home to foreign questions will fail. The possessors of the wealth of our country enjoy liberty and freedom, no matter where they may be

or wherever they may go. It has always been the hewers of wood and the carriers of water, the wealth producers, whose mission it has been, not only to struggle for freedom, but to be ever vigilant to maintain the small amount of liberty and freedom achieved, and it behoves all our comrades to give vent to the alarm we feel from the dangers threatening the entire people, and to enter our solemn and emphatic protest against the policy of imperialism. (Applause.)

On September 23, 1900, the workers from all countries who will meet together in Paris will show to the ruling and governing classes that, although they speak different languages, they are working for complete economic and political emancipation for the workers of all countries. It is very satisfactory to note that the feeling of international brotherhood between the workers of different countries is growing stronger and stronger. A few years ago the rank and file of the working classes regarded any workman of another nation as a foreigner, while some of their leaders talked largely of the hare-brained chattering and magpies of continental revolutionism. Now the workers are beginning to understand that the foreign workers and themselves are one and the same. (Cheers.) In conclusion, I would remind you that this will be your last conference in the nineteenth century. Whether we shall have a General Election this year remains to be seen, but if there is to be a General Election all the members of the Social-Democratic Federation must be ready to face the music with a stout heart. Wherever our candidates are running, with clear visions and heads erect, we may make the people understand the principles that we are fighting for. We must look neither to the right nor the left, we must make no bargains with either of the existing political parties—(loud cheers)—but work on in the future as we have worked during the past twenty years. The future may be an uphill fight; if it is, we will face it like men and women, until the principles of Social-Democracy are accepted and realised by the peoples of all countries. (Applause.)

Now, comrades, you will recognise that this is only a brief address; so do I. But I also recognise that we have a deal of business to get through, and that our time is valuable. There are many points that I have not mentioned which will be dealt with by the Conference. (Applause.)

The Conference unanimously elected Councillor Will Thorne (Canning Town) Chairman, and Dan Irving (Burnley) Deputy-Chairman. Four delegates were nominated to form the Credentials Committee, the voting being as follows: J. Spargo (Barry), 38; F. G. Jones (London), 28; J. Jones (Wigan), 19; J. Dawson (Blackburn), 17. The first three were elected.

The report of the secretary, not being ready, stood adjourned till the following day.

The yearly financial statement showed a total income from all sources of £1,131 4s. 2½d., and an expenditure of £1,027 11s. 9d. A discussion took place on the failure of a great number of the branches to keep up



their payments regularly to the Central Office, and a resolution was passed disapproving of such a course.

C. J. Kebbell (Stoke Newington) and W. Pidgeon (Walthamstow) were appointed tellers to the Conference.

The report of the Credentials Committee not being ready, the Conference proceeded with amendments to the Programme and Rules of the S.D.F. The only important amendments were those from Edinburgh, Stoke Newington and Walthamstow branches, dealing with the subscriptions of members to the organisation, and advocating their increase.

On this question, the Stoke Newington branch had given notice of urgency for the following resolution:—"That the amendments to Rule 2, vitally affecting as they do the financial position of the S.D.F., be discussed by the delegates assembled, and afterwards sent round to the branches for confirmation or rejection."

Urgency was moved by C. J. KEBBELL (Stoke Newington), seconded by H. HATFIELD (Edinburgh), and supported by H. ARTHUR (Aberdeen). It was carried by 35 votes to 8. The resolution was supported by C. J. KEBBELL (Stoke Newington), and opposed by H. QUELCH (Executive Council).

The Credentials Committee now gave in their report. The branches represented, including a few delegates who came later, were as follows:—

Herbert Burrows, Ashton-under-Lyne; H. Arthur, Aberdeen; Hunter Watts, Armley; J. Spargo, Barry; Brooks, Blackburn; Dawson, Blackburn; Kay, Bow and Bromley; Hanks, Birmingham; Marshall, Bethnal Green; Neve, Brixton; Gedge, Battersea; Stokes, Clitheroe; Wall, Chelsea and Fulham; Lockton, North Camberwell; L. Watts, Coventry; Fitzgerald and Ricket, Central; H. Majer, Canning Town; Thackeray, Clerkenwell; Garratt, Deptford; Wrampling, Edmonton; H. Hatfield, Edinburgh; Mathieson, Edinburgh; Hodson, Forest Gate; A. P. Hazell, Finchbury Park; Goodyer, Grays; Musson, Hackney; Coxon, Hanley; Mayfield, Ilkeston; Hutchins, Kensal Town; Gibson, Kentish Town; Bassell, Lincoln; Kidd, Lynn; James, North Lambeth; A. A. Watts, Mile End; Howard, Marylebone; Johnson, Northampton; Purser, Northampton; Mrs. Kidd, Norwich; Warn, Plymouth; Mrs. Warn, Plymouth; Killick, Peckham and Dulwich; Martin Judge, Plaistow; Dannenberg, Poplar; Savage, Reading; Parker, Shore-ditch; Kebbell, Stoke Newington; McGlasson, North Salford; White, Southampton; J. Morton, Stratford; Clements, Tunbridge Wells; Hasted, Tottenham; J. Jones, Wigau; Pidgeon, Walthamstow; Melkeljohn, Wood Green; Dalehow, Wimbledon; J. Kent, Oxford; Miss Robertson, Walworth; and H. Quelch, Executive. There were several irregularities in the credentials, some of which seemed to point to a want of recognition of the importance of an Annual Conference on the part of certain branches. The following branches were entitled to and claimed more than one vote:—Southampton, 2; Aberdeen, 2; Blackburn, 2; Edinburgh, 2; Reading, 2; Burnley, 3; Plymouth, 2; Bow and Bromley, 2; and Central, 2.

Discussion was now resumed on the Stoke Newington resolution, which was finally carried by 27 votes to 25. This meant that the amendments affecting the question of members' contributions would be discussed by the Conference, but their acceptance would have to be decided by the branches subsequently. Various proposals were made as to the time to be allowed for voting, as the Secretary pointed out that the further reference of the question to the branches would mean a considerable delay in the publication of the Annual Report. Eventually it was left to the Executive Council to fix the time.

H. QUELCH (Executive Council) supported the proposal to increase the contributions from members to branches. It should not be necessary to make constant appeals to outsiders in order to keep up the funds of the organisation, save for special purposes apart from ordinary expenditure. To this it was objected that in some instances it was difficult to get even the penny a week, and that the difficulty would increase if it were raised to 2d., but he contended it was quite as easy to get people to pay 2d. as 1d. per week.

J. HUNTER WATTS (Armley) said that many members already paid considerably more than 1d. a week, but they must not exclude those who could not afford more than the penny. It would shut out an enormous number. He hoped there would always remain room in the S.D.F. for the poverty-stricken proletariat.

The discussion was continued by J. Jones (Plaistow), H. Dalehow (Wimbledon), J. Spargo (Barry), J. E. McGlasson (North Salford), C. J. Kebbell (Stoke Newington), C. A. Gibson (Kentish Town), and others. The closure of the discussion having been carried by 32 votes to 23, the principle of the increase of contributions was put to the vote, and carried by 27 votes to 24. It was agreed that the delegates of the three branches sending resolutions in favour of increased subscriptions (Edinburgh, Stoke Newington, and Walthamstow) should meet and embody their various resolutions into one, which should be submitted to the branches.

After the amendments to rules had been dealt with, the Conference adjourned.

On reassembling, the election of the Executive Council for the ensuing year took place. Result of election for London portion: Elected—H. M. Hyndman, 59; H. Quelch, 59; E. Belfort Bax, 57; Herbert Burrows, 56; F. P. Cambridge, 53; Mary Gray, 53; C. F. Davis, 48; A. A. Watts, 48; F. G. Jones, 47; J. Jones, 46; W. J. Barwick, 44; Martin Judge, 42. Not elected—J. Tungate, 21; C. T. Hendin, 14; J. C. Gordon, 13; O. Bloch, 10; H. Dalehow, 10; G. Lusty, 2.

For the provincial portion of the Executive Council only seven nominations had been made. It was agreed that these nominees be duly elected, and that the branches be asked for nominations to fill the vacancies, such nominations to be afterwards voted upon by the branches.

The next item upon the agenda paper was the following resolution from the Executive Council:—"That in view of the collapse of the



Liberal Party, it is impossible for the S.D.F. to carry out at the next election the electoral policy agreed upon at the last Annual Conference, and that, in the changed condition of affairs, the Socialist vote shall be concentrated on our own candidates where they are being put forward; and in other constituencies the vote shall be given only to those candidates who have opposed the capitalist Imperial policy in South Africa, and who accept, as immediate questions for political action, the Free Maintenance of Children in all Board Schools, the Socialisation of Railways, the complete Democratisation of our political machinery, and the passing of national measures for the adequate housing of the people. Where both Liberal and Tory are supporters of the aforesaid capitalist policy, Socialists should abstain."

A slight discussion took place as to whether a resolution from the Blackburn branch, dealing with electoral policy, should be taken first, but it was carried by 38 to 7 that the agenda be proceeded with.

H. QUERCH (Executive Council) said that, ever since the last General Election, the attitude of the S.D.F. towards other political parties and the line they should take in elections had been the subject of discussion. At the last Annual Conference it was decided that, under certain circumstances, they should declare in favour of the Tory and against the Liberal Party. A question of electoral policy was not one of principle, and must always be determined by circumstances. Circumstances have changed since the last Conference, at which there was a considerable minority against the policy then decided upon. In view of that fact it had been agreed, practically, to suspend the operation of that policy until information as to the electoral strength of the S.D.F. had been obtained by the Executive. There was no reason whatever to disguise the fact that since that time there had been a strong division of opinion on the Executive on the policy adopted at the last Conference. His personal view was that the object they had in view could only be obtained by means of the policy already agreed upon. That policy must, however, be modified by change of circumstances. The war in South Africa had made a considerable change in the outlook. It had brought about a breach in the Liberal Party—the party they had felt called upon to seek to divide—but it had also made it almost impossible for anybody with democratic views to appeal for a vote on the Tory side. There was this schism in the Liberal Party. The official portion had been as Imperialistic and as jingoistic as the Government. The Socialists were now able to rally to their side a considerable number of people who had been hitherto drawn at the heels of the official Liberal Party. The Socialist position was seriously menaced by the Imperialistic position at the present time. They were sometimes asked, "Where are the anti-Imperialistic people with whom you are asking us to make this 'alliance?' " His reply was that it was not for the Socialist Party to discover them; it was for these people to come out. There was a vast number of Radical, anti-Imperialistic people with the Socialists over this war. The leader of the Liberal Party said, "I am against the war,

but I'm not going to vote against it, because so many of my followers are for it." This line gave the Socialists a splendid opportunity of showing that they were the only party that stood against Imperialism, Capitalism, and Clericalism. He never knew public opinion to fall so low as it had fallen at the present time. There was even a project on foot to declare the Queen "Empress of Great Britain and the Colonies." Well, anything was possible to-day. If it was proposed to rehabilitate the divine right of kings and queens the Liberal Party of the present day would agree to it. The Socialist Party in this country had in their keeping the work of democratic government, for outside the Socialist movement there was no democratic feeling.

It was passed by 22 votes to 20 that future speeches be limited to five minutes.

MARRIN JUDGE (Plaistow) felt they should do all they could to combat the imperialistic spirit. Outside of Socialist opinion there was a sprinkling of people who were opposed to the war, but to-day a man was afraid to say he was against the war. If the Socialists could only put an end to this system of terrorism they would be doing a good thing. It had paralysed their propagandist efforts during the last few months. The number of people who were prepared to openly oppose the war were very few indeed. The Socialists were the only people who dared to speak their minds and to stand for truth and honesty in questions of imperialism and the war in South Africa.

J. SPARGO (Barry) said they must remember that the S.D.F. was not only an anti-imperialistic party but a Socialist Party. They must be prepared to fight the sweater and the monopolist as well as the imperialist. The jingo policy would wreck itself before long, but the social revolution for which the S.D.F. was striving must still be the object to work for after Joseph Chamberlain had gone down dishonoured to the grave.

J. J. KIDD (Lynn) objected to the first four lines of the resolution, down to the word "affairs." Whether the Liberal Party had "collapsed" or not was immaterial to them.

The CHAIRMAN said that no amendments could be allowed of which notice had not been given in the ordinary course.

C. A. GIBSON (Kentish Town) wanted to move an amendment, and two or three delegates complained that their branches had not had the agenda early enough to send in amendments. C. A. Gibson said that as his branch's amendment was ruled out of order he should oppose the resolution. Some of them were of opinion that there could be no alliance of any sort with any section of the Liberal Party. (Applause.) It seemed to him that some members of the Conference were trying to lead them into a political ambush. People who wanted peace in South Africa do not want peace in industrial England. In the propaganda of Social-Democracy they were always preaching against Imperialism.

J. JONES (Plaistow) said he was in favour of supporting people who were against the war. The man who in these times boldly declared



himself against the war was showing that he had some backbone. A number of politicians in this country had risked their lives by protesting; if they had merely wanted to keep their seats they would have supported the Government. On the other hand, many were willing to accept the S.D.F.'s municipal and social programme, but had not got pluck enough to oppose the Government's policy in South Africa. The Socialists had people in West Ham who were with them on social and municipal affairs, who dressed themselves in khaki and sought custom on the strength of their support of the war. In South West Ham many people supported them generally who would not join their organisation, but they were as much against militarism as they were, and would, if they were shown the way, help to return Will Thorne at the next election. He did not want to form alliances with political parties, but he did want to form an alliance with his fellow workers who quite agreed with him.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) agreed with the principle of the resolution, but thought some of its provisions too stringent. The resolution ought to be modified somewhat, because whilst seeming to work with the Radicals, it meant that they were prepared to work with them only if the Radicals were prepared to support the whole Socialist programme.

The discussion was continued by J. E. McGLASSON (North Salford) and H. JOHNSON (Northampton).

HERBERT BURROWS (Ashton-under-Lyne) said he was as much against the former policy of supporting Tory candidates as he had ever been. After much discussion the Executive found they could join hands on this resolution. It represented the minimum that they could put out to the constituencies. The old irreconcilable policy of the S.D.F. had not "paid," and the days of three-cornered fights were passed. As the S.D.F. were in favour of parliamentary action, some definite line must be taken. It was felt by the Executive that by this resolution they should drag in a considerable number of people from outside. He would not support a policy of voting for an anti-imperialist merely; they must take anti-imperialism and other things as well. The man who opposed them on the items mentioned in the resolution would never be of any use to Socialism at all. They could not be absolutely logical on every issue, and they could only do the next best thing possible.

H. M. HYNDMAN said there had been no change of opinion on his part. He wanted the Socialist vote to go Tory till the Liberals left them free to fight seats.

H. QUELCH (Executive Council) said, in reply, that a definite change of circumstances had induced him to take up a changed attitude. They were concerned not so much with candidates or programmes as with parties. They had always known that the Liberal Party was a capitalist party, but the declaration of the Liberal leading lights in favour of Imperialism meant not merely the collapse of Liberal government, but the death of the old Liberalism entirely.

The Executive Council resolution was carried by 55 votes to 5. The following resolution from the Clitheroe Branch was ruled out of

order in view of the passing of the Executive's resolution:—"That the Liberal Executive be requested, wherever the S.D.F. decide to fight an election, to give us an open fight with the Tories, and, failing their willingness to do so, the Executive of the S.D.F. instruct all Socialists to vote Tory at the next General Election."

J. DAWSON (Blackburn Central) formally moved the next resolution:—"That in view of the near approach of the general elections, this Conference of the S.D.F. thinks it necessary that a National Conference of all Socialist bodies should be called with a view to adopt one general policy and one practical programme for the coming General Election."

H. M. HYNDMAN said they had had enough of such conferences. Every time they tried to work or confer with trade unionists, Fabians, and co-operators who do not know their own minds, they did themselves a great deal of mischief. They had agreed upon a policy which was definite. Did they want anybody to confirm it?

The question was further discussed by C. PURSER (Northampton), F. HARKS (Birmingham), and H. QUELCH (Executive Council), and the resolution was rejected by 28 votes to 19.

The Conference then adjourned till the following morning.

On re-assembling on the Monday, Will Thorne again occupied the chair.

The annual report, now being ready, was read by the SECRETARY (H. W. Lee):—

During the past twelve months the Social-Democratic Federation has passed through a wave of popular jingoism calculated to test the strongest and most deeply rooted Socialist organisation. That the S.D.F. has come out of it so well as it undoubtedly has done, and is again going forward as vigorously as ever now that the jingo fever is abating, speaks volumes for the enthusiasm and tenacity of those who have borne aloft the Red Flag of Social-Democracy when it appeared to be almost entirely overshadowed by the Union Jack.

Seventeen new branches have been formed since the last Annual Conference, at the following places:—Kingsland, Silvertown, Tottenham, and Upton Park (London and suburbs); Blackpool, Brighton, Erith, Hastings, Lynn (re-formed), Manchester Central, Sheffield (re-formed), and Wolverhampton, in the provinces; and Blantyre, Dundee, Falkirk, Hamilton, and Kircaldy, in Scotland. The number is less than it has been for several years, but it is accounted for by the fact that, during at least six months of the South African war not a single new branch of the S.D.F. was formed. The revulsion against the blatant jingoism which has been keeping back Socialist and democratic progress is evidenced by the formation of nine new branches in the past few weeks.

Your present Executive Council has held 24 ordinary and five special meetings since their election at Manchester. The attendances of the London members has been as follows:—W. J. Barwick, 19; E. Belfort Bax, 16; Herbert Burrows (ill three months), 21; F. P. Cambridge, 17;



C. F. Davis, 17; Mary Gray, 23; H. M. Hyndman (twice absent on S.D.F. business), 21; T. Jarvis (resigned), 15; F. G. Jones, 21; Martin Judge, 19; G. Lansbury (recently elected), 6; H. Quelch, 28; H. R. Taylor (lapsed through bad attendance), 12; A. A. Watts (recently elected), 2.

The organisation of the Socialist vote and the political policy which is to direct it for the advancement of the Social-Democratic movement in this country have occupied the attention of your Annual Conferences for the past two or three years. These are questions on which the whole of the members of the S.D.F. ought to make up their minds. No question of principle is involved in it. The Socialist vote is the only weapon available for use at the present time. We have, therefore, to use it in whatever manner will strike our enemies the hardest blow. In considering the policy which shall guide that vote we have to bear in mind certain facts. Their clear recognition will assist us in forming a correct judgment. The facts are, briefly (a), that, there being no second ballot in this country, any independent candidate is handicapped by his candidature being regarded as hopeless by the mass of electors; (b) that the bulk of those even who favour the independent candidate will vote for one or other of the party candidates on that account; (c) that every attempt to fight a three-cornered fight only confirms the public in this view; (d) that, thus, owing to the obsolete political conditions obtaining in this country and maintained by the shrewdness of the dominant classes and the ignorance and supineness of the working classes, the capitalist parties between them ensure absolute political control for the classes whom they represent; (e) that, under such conditions, that party whose members may individually profess to be socialistically inclined for the purpose of catching votes in advanced constituencies, with no intention of translating such profession of principle into legislative fact, is our more dangerous enemy; (f) that recent events have accelerated the disintegration of that party; (g) and that the Socialists, being practically the only active advanced force in the country, should endeavour to control the few democratic elements still remaining in that party.

At the last Annual Conference the following resolution was carried by 51 votes to 31:—

"That in the opinion of this Conference the organised vote of the Social-Democratic Party in Great Britain should be directed solidly to the extinction of Liberal candidates by the votes being cast steadily on the Tory side up to and through the General Election. This Conference, therefore, instructs the Executive to take such steps as may be necessary to give effect to this opinion, and to organise the vote throughout all the branches of the Social-Democratic Federation, so that it may be used against every Liberal candidate except in instances where the candidate belongs to the extreme Radical Left, and is prepared to work with the Social-Democratic Federation for the realisation of immediately practical measures."

Subsequently the following addition was passed by 42 votes to 16:—

"That this Conference urges that steps be at once taken to get from the branches of the S.D.F. a return of the number of members in each branch entitled to vote at the next Parliamentary elections. Meanwhile the operation of the former resolution be suspended until that return shall have been made."

In accordance with those instructions, the Executive Council requested the branches to furnish them with the necessary information, and followed up that request by three questions: (a) the actual number of members of each branch on the register; (b) the approximate strength of the Socialist vote in each division, and the grounds upon which such return would be made; and (c) the number of votes each branch could influence to vote Tory at the General Election if that policy were decided upon, and the grounds upon which such return would be based. So few branches, however, took the trouble to send in the required information that the whole matter has been left in abeyance. It is regrettable that the branches of the S.D.F. have, with a few exceptions, shown so little interest in a question of such manifest importance. The views of your Executive Council on the question of electoral policy for the next General Elections are contained in the resolution which is on the Annual Conference agenda, and which they have submitted for the consideration of the branches.

At the time of our last Annual Conference, the danger of a war with the Dutch Republics of South Africa seemed passed for the moment. We stated in our last report, referring to the trouble which was brewing, that no one could tell what course the jingo Colonial Secretary, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, would think fit to pursue when once he was free from Parliamentary criticism and from the influence of his colleagues in the Cabinet. That which we had anticipated soon took place. No sooner had Parliament risen than steps were at once taken to render war with the Transvaal and Orange Free State "inevitable," to use that blessed word which seems to have taken the place of Mesopotamia. The S.D.F. had already held its meeting of protest against any hostilities against the Dutch Republics, and it is safe to say that, had all those opposed to the infamous war in South Africa declared boldly against it when it was first threatened, the whole of the lives lost on both sides, the misery and anguish occasioned, and the millions wasted—all this, as well as the moral degradation of the English people which the khaki fever has brought about, might have been avoided. Throughout this miserable campaign, not only of the rifle and the cannon, but of falsehood and calumny, the S.D.F. has held anti-war meetings wherever it has been possible to obtain halls for that purpose, and it is something to be able to say that, notwithstanding organised attempts to break up these meetings, in no single case has an anti-war meeting held under the auspices of the S.D.F. been broken up. In January your Executive Council issued a manifesto on the war in South Africa, 300,000 copies of which were distributed by comrades and friends. That these manifestoes were well circulated was shown by the numerous letters of praise and abuse which were received at our Central Office. A selection of the letters of our opponents was published for



some weeks in *Justice*, and nice, cultivated literary productions some of them were.

In February last an important Congress on Labour Representation was held at the Memorial Hall in London. The Congress was composed of representatives from the trade unions and Socialist organisations. Your Executive Council sent as delegates of the S.D.F. Martin Judge, James Macdonald, L.T.C., H. Quelch and H. R. Taylor. Your delegates gave in a full report of the proceedings to the Executive, which report was afterwards sent to all the branches. At that Congress your delegates were instructed to move a resolution laying down a basis for the formation of a working-class party. This they did in the following terms:

"The representatives of the working-class movement in the House of Commons shall form there a distinct party, based upon the recognition of the class war, and having for its ultimate object the socialisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The party shall formulate its own policy for promoting practical legislative measures in the interests of labour, and shall be prepared to co-operate with any party that will support such measures, or will assist in opposing measures of an opposite character."

This resolution was defeated mainly owing to the action of the I.L.P. delegates, who refused to support at that Congress the principles for the advocacy of which they are supposed to exist, and which have been voted by previous Trades Union Congresses.

Arising out of the action of the I.L.P. delegates at the Labour Representation Congress, the following correspondence passed between the S.D.F. and I.L.P.:

I.L.P. Office, 53, Fleet Street, E.C.

March 2, 1900.

H. W. Lee, Secretary S.D.F.

DEAR COMRADE,—May I call your attention to certain remarks on page 4 of this week's issue of *Justice* anent the conduct of the I.L.P. representatives at the Labour Representation Conference. The words referred to are:

"That resolution afforded the chiefs of the I.L.P. an opportunity for a display of that treachery to which we have unfortunately by this time become accustomed."

I think you will agree with me that such attacks do not promote those friendly and harmonious relations between the two bodies which we desire to see established. I am not aware how far the article in *Justice* expresses the official attitude of the S.D.F. towards the I.L.P. delegates, and I should be glad to hear from you in time for our next N.A.C. meeting, which takes place on the 26th inst.—Yours fraternally,

JOHN PENNY.

To this letter the following reply was sent by order of the Executive Council of the S.D.F.:

S.D.F. Office, 3, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, E.C.,

March 14th, 1900.

John Penny, Secretary I.L.P.

DEAR COMRADE,—In reply to your letter of March 2nd, I am directed by our Executive Council to send you the following resolution passed by them at their last meeting:—

"This meeting of the Executive Council of the S.D.F., having had their attention drawn by the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. to the passage quoted from *Justice* of March 3rd, accepts that statement as fully expressing their view of the conduct of the I.L.P. delegates at the Labour Representation Congress, and confirms it as an Executive Council."—Yours fraternally,

H. W. Lee, Secretary.

It must be remembered that your Executive Council did not volunteer any expression of opinion on the conduct of the I.L.P. delegates at the Labour Representation Congress. The statement of their opinion was sent in response to a request from the N.A.C. of the I.L.P., which left your Executive no alternative but to reply in the manner in which they answered. Afterwards a statement appeared in the *Clarion* and the *Labour Leader* that, in consequence of that reply, the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. declined to hold further communication with the Executive Council of the S.D.F., though such decision, if arrived at, has never been communicated to the S.D.F.

Nothing further, of course, has transpired with regard to the fusion of the two organisations. The correspondence between the I.L.P. and S.D.F. published in last year's report showed that the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. would have nothing further to do with fusion, but were suggesting the federation of all Socialist bodies in its stead. When this proposal came before our last Annual Conference, next business was voted by 47 votes to 7.

The first attempt at organising a great National Labour Festival at the Crystal Palace on the First of May was exceedingly successful when we consider the difficulties which presented themselves to the "First of May Committee." The decision of the railway companies not to run excursion trains to the Crystal Palace caused the collapse of the various provincial parties which were being formed. However, nearly 14,000 people passed the turnstiles of the Crystal Palace last First of May, and doubtless that number will be greatly exceeded on May Day, 1901.

The great International Socialist Congress of 1900 will take place in Paris in six or seven weeks' time, and those branches which can send delegates, but have not yet decided to do so, should make up their minds with as little delay as possible. We want the S.D.F. delegation to be as large a one as can be got together. The S.D.F. was commissioned by the French Committee to translate and issue the invitations for this country, and most of them were sent out by Will Thorne, the chairman of this Conference, who kindly undertook that task.

At the New Year's meeting held at the Club and Institute Union,



London, last January, a marble tablet was unveiled in the hall to the memory of our late comrade, W. G. Pearson. Comrade Fawcett, a member of the Lincoln branch, and boat owner of that city, has had a newly-constructed sailing boat named the "W. G. Pearson."

Last autumn some prosecutions were instituted by the officials of the Parks Committee of the London County Council against some of our London members for selling literature in the parks and open spaces under the Council's bye-laws without the sanction of the Parks Committee. It is quite true that a bye-law requiring the permission of the Parks Committee for the sale of literature in the Parks exists, but since the London County Council took over the control of the Parks and open spaces from the old Metropolitan Board of Works, literature had been sold without any objection being made by the L.C.C. officials. The summonses were taken out during the Council's recess, when no meeting of the Parks Committee would be held for a few weeks, which made our position all the more difficult, as there was no one to appeal to, save the very officials who suddenly became intent on enforcing a bye-law which had been allowed to lapse completely. After obtaining adjournments of the summonses for several weeks, they were at last withdrawn by the Solicitor's Department of the L.C.C., and ultimately permission was granted to the London branches of the S.D.F. to sell literature in the parks and open spaces under the jurisdiction of the L.C.C.

Considering the mad outburst of furious jingoism, prevalent more or less during the past seven or eight months, but now happily on the wane, we expected to do very badly at the municipal elections last November. For that reason there was a less number of candidates than usual put forward. Despite the unfavourable conditions under which our candidates ran, only two seats were lost in West Ham, where our comrades had to face a combination of professed friends and avowed enemies. On the other hand we gained seats with Tom Hurley at Blackburn, A. C. Paton at Greenock, and J. W. Milstead at Tunbridge Wells, this being the third time that the electors of the latter town have sent their annual contribution of a member of the S.D.F. to the Town Council. As regards other local elections, comrade Thompson kept his seat as Rochdale borough auditor, beating his Tory and Liberal opponents; comrades Goodwin and Hird retained their seats on the Grays and Colne School Boards respectively; the Norwich S.D.F. and I.L.P. gained a victory by the election of comrade Roberts to the Norwich School Board; and our Walthamstow branch returned comrade Bird to their School Board.

As there has not been sufficient money in the Political Secretary's Wages Fund to warrant the permanent appointment of anyone in place of Joseph Chatterton, your Executive Council decided that it would be well to use a portion of that fund for organising work during the present season. Consequently they are subsidising the wages of the Scottish organiser, W. Gee, to the extent of 10s. per week, as they were empowered to do by the vote of the Edinburgh Conference in 1898. They also sent out comrade J. Jones, formerly of Wigan, on a short propagandist tour in

Lancashire, from which he has just returned. The London Central Council, too, are employing George Hewitt for a portion of his time in metropolitan organising work.

It is no new state of things for the S.D.F. to be short of funds. But there are times when the paucity of funds is felt more than at others. The present time is one of them. Opportunities of rousing public attention on important issues have often to be passed by for want of money to defray the bare necessary expenses of an agitation. Apart altogether from the war in South Africa, there is the famine in India, where deaths may be counted rather by millions than by thousands. Public meetings should have been held and manifestoes distributed setting forth the causes of the terrible devastation of our great Eastern dependency which we rule by the sword. Then there is the situation in China, and its effect on the Lancashire cotton trade; the commencement of the collapse of that trade boom which has made thousands of workers lose sight of the position of their class in a transient plenitude of that work which they seem to love so much—all these are matters on which the S.D.F. should possess the means of flooding the industrial districts with manifestoes and handbills.

For the purpose of doing something towards remedying this lack of funds which cripples our work in every direction, it is proposed to hold a Bazaar and Fancy Fair at St. Martin's Town Hall on Boxing Day, December 26th, and the following day. The proposal was originally made by the London Central Council for its local funds, but it was afterwards thought desirable to make the Bazaar a national affair and to appeal to members and friends in all parts of the country for assistance in ensuring its financial success. The £1,000 for the S.D.F., which is the object of the Bazaar, is a big effort, but it can be done if each and every member will set himself and herself to work between now and Christmas to do whatever can be done in the many and various directions in which it is possible to help.

Full particulars concerning the Bazaar are being sent out to the branches by our comrade Herbert Arthur, who has undertaken the duties of Secretary to the Bazaar Committee; and it only requires the hearty co-operation of our comrades throughout the S.D.F. to secure for our organisation the funds to carry on a vigorous propaganda for the celebration of the opening of the twentieth century.

A few questions were asked and a short discussion took place on the report, which was then passed.

DAN IRVING (Burnley) opened the discussion on the following resolution from the Blackburn branch: "That this Conference of the S.D.F., whilst endorsing the general policy and attitude of *Justice* on the war, regrets that its columns have been allowed to be used for stirring up race prejudice and antagonism, and that such anti-Semitic articles and notices which have appeared in *Justice*, being contrary to the opinions of the members of the S.D.F. and the principles of Social-Democracy, should therefore not be allowed in *Justice*." He would not say that the charge made against *Justice* was in the main true, but it was the fact that



a large number of the Jewish members of the S.D.F. had taken that view of the paragraphs which had appeared in the paper. It was well to have the question discussed, so as to do away with the impression that there was any desire to stir up racial animosity.

H. QUELCH (Executive Council) denied absolutely that the columns of *Justice* had ever been allowed to be used for stirring up race hatred and antagonism. Those who made that charge should submit proofs, and say, "These are your deliberate attempts to stir up race prejudices." A. BROOKS (Blackburn Central) endorsed what Quelch said that there had been no intention of creating race prejudice, but some Jewish comrades had taken it in that light, and he thought every care should be taken to avoid such misunderstanding.

J. FINN, a Jewish comrade, having received the permission of the Conference to address them, said he would be the last person to accuse comrades Quelch and Hyndman of wishing to stir up race prejudice, but their sentiments could be construed as raising race hatred. They played into the hands of the anti-Semites. People on the Continent might condemn capitalist exploitation, but, instead of seeing that it was due to the system, they blamed the Jews. The effect of the articles in *Justice* would be felt when they put up a Socialist candidate in the East End of London.

J. SPARGO (Barry) said there had been a tendency in some of the things which had appeared in *Justice* to create an anti-Semitic feeling by such phrases as "a gang of Jew capitalists." But he did not think the tone of the resolution was justified. All they had to do was to make it clear that they had nothing to do with people who endeavoured to stir up race hatred.

HERBERT BURROWS (Ashton-under-Lyne) said nobody believed that *Justice* had tried to stir up race hatred or to play into the hands of the anti-Semites, but certain phrases had been misconstrued. He wanted Quelch to make it clear, so that it could go outside the Conference that Socialists had nothing in common with the anti-Semites.

H. QUELCH (Executive Council) replied as editor of *Justice*. If certain capitalist Jews, for their own purposes, tried to make out that what had been said in *Justice* was anti-Semitic, he could not help it. The war was being held up to people as an object for patriotism; they had explained that the war was being carried on in the interests of an international financial gang, most of whom were Jews. They had said nothing against the Jew capitalist that they were not prepared to say against the British capitalist, but apparently if a man was a Jew nothing must be said against him.

Urgency having been passed, the Blackburn resolution was withdrawn and a committee consisting of Burrows, Finn, Quelch and Spargo were appointed to draft a resolution dealing with the matter. The following resolution was afterwards presented and passed unanimously:—"That this Conference of the S.D.F. regrets that any impression should have gained ground that *Justice* by its articles or the S.D.F. is in any way

anti-Semitic, and declares that the Social-Democratic movement in this country is thoroughly in line with the Social-Democracy of the world in its determined opposition to all international capitalism, to all anti-Semitic parties, and national antagonisms without distinction of race or creed."

The following resolution from the Peckham branch was rejected by 31 votes to 17: "The possibility and advisability of establishing a quarterly periodical having for its object the dissemination internationally of accurate information regarding the progress of the Socialist movement."

The next resolution was from the Edinburgh branch: "That, considering the present lack of propagandists in the movement, the Conference consider and devise some systematic method of training and educating propagandists."

This was formally moved by the two Edinburgh delegates, comrades MATHIESON and HATELIE. The resolution was carried by 36 votes to 7. It was then pointed out that the Conference had passed a resolution to consider the question, and the deputy-chairman (Dan Irving) suggested that the Leith resolution on the same matter be taken. This resolution ran: "That the Conference instruct the Executive Council to draw up a syllabus of the books necessary for the guidance of pupils, and that a column of *Justice* be devoted to the carrying on of a correspondence class, with the appointment by the Executive Council of a capable man to take up the work."

The Chairman pointed out that it would take a great deal of time to formulate a scheme at the Conference, and suggested that the whole matter be referred to the Executive Council. This was carried by 44 votes to 1.

The following resolution from Stoke Newington was rejected by 31 votes to 15 after a slight discussion:—"That, in view of the wide area covered by the S.D.F., it is impossible for one organiser to satisfactorily cover the whole. This Conference, therefore, instructs the Executive Council to divide the area up into districts, one organiser to be appointed to each. To each district a subsidy of 10s. per week shall be paid from the Political Secretary's Wages Fund, or, should that be abolished, from the funds of the Central Office, towards the district organiser's wages, the balance to be raised by the branches within the district. No organiser to be appointed until the Executive Council have been satisfied that the balance of the organiser's wages will be forthcoming, and at present the number of districts to be subsidised shall not exceed four. The Executive Council to have the right to summarily dispenze with the services of any organiser should his wages not be regularly forthcoming."

Rather late in the morning WILL THORNE announced that he would have to leave the chair to continue his ordinary trade union work.

Before the Chairman left the room H. QUELCH said he should like, on



behalf of the Conference, to express the satisfaction which was felt in reference to Councillor Thorne being adopted Parliamentary candidate for South West Ham. He was sure the Conference would do all in its power to secure his return. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: I thank you for your kind words, I know that so far as our local comrades are concerned they will do everything in their power to put me at the top of the poll. We shall undoubtedly have a hard fight, because I know that many of our fellow workmen in the trade union movement are bitterly opposed to my running as a candidate. They say, "You are all right in a local council chamber, but you are no politician." Well, I admit that, but I know what I am fighting for. I am not a very eloquent speaker, but if I do get returned they will probably know I am there. (Loud applause.)

The Leith branch had placed the following resolution upon the Conference agenda paper: "That this Conference take steps in the appointment of a new editor for our organ *Justice*." Protests were made by some of the delegates against the resolution, which they considered implied censure on the present editorship of *Justice* without any definite criticisms being made, and without the branch taking the trouble to be represented at the Conference. The CHAIRMAN expressed his intention to rule the question out of order, but H. QUELCH (Executive Council) pressed that the sense of the Conference might be taken upon it, and that they might express their opinions as to whether resolutions of this kind, which amounted to attacks of a personal character without any reasons being given, should in future be allowed upon the agenda paper.

Correspondence from the Executive Council and the Leith and Edinburgh branches on the subject was read, and finally the Conference unanimously negatived the resolution, and instructed the Executive Council to in future permit no such resolutions to appear upon the agenda paper of any Annual Conference.

The discussion on the "Consolidation of International Relations" was opened by H. M. HYNDMAN. Though small in numbers the Social-Democratic Party in this country was greater than they really knew. They were the representatives of the largest single political party in Europe. That fact was incontrovertible, and consequently they should act, not simply as the Social-Democratic Party, but the English Social-Democratic portion of that party throughout the world. At the present time they had no means of voicing international opinion, and no means by which Social-Democrats in various countries could help one another. Twenty or thirty years ago they had an international committee, which issued leaflets and manifestoes on all great international questions. That was when the party was weak, but now that they had become much stronger they were without such a committee. He brought forward the following resolution recommended by the Executive Council for consideration at the approaching Paris International Congress:—

'That this, the Twentieth Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation, in view of the rapidly-increasing growth and vigour of

the Social-Democratic Party in all civilised countries, urges upon the delegates assembled at the great International Congress in Paris the appointment of an International Committee to maintain the continuity of International Socialist comradeship and propaganda from Congress to Congress, to issue manifestoes and pamphlets on subjects of international interest from time to time, and to aid in the complete organisation of the workers of all countries in order to obtain complete control as an international industrial commonwealth over the powers of mankind for wealth production and all the enjoyment of life."

J. HUNTER WATTS (Armley), in seconding the resolution, questioned whether they utilised to the full the opportunities which already existed. He thought that Socialists should endeavour, by blending themselves more closely with the trade union movement, to avail themselves of that amount of international organisation which they had acquired.

HERBERT BURROWS said he entirely disagreed with the previous speaker, for when the trade unionists became Socialists they would hear nothing more about their trade unionism. What Hyndman suggested was absolutely necessary to bind together the Socialist community throughout the world.

E. BELFORT BAX suggested that the resolution should go forward to the International Congress as the resolution of the Annual Conference of the S.D.F.

After some further discussion the resolution was carried *nem. con.*

As the afternoon was drawing to a close, it was agreed that the question of the place for the holding of the next Annual Conference be taken. The following towns were nominated and voted upon:—Birmingham 23, Tunbridge Wells 8, Blackburn 7, Reading 4, Glasgow 3, Hanley 3, Marylebone 2, and Plymouth 2. On a second vote being taken, 35 delegates voted in favour of Birmingham and 11 in favour of Tunbridge Wells. The result of the voting was greeted with applause.

The following telegrams were read by the CHAIRMAN:—

"The Social-Democratic Labour Party of Holland sends best wishes to Conference and expresses admiration for gallant stand against imperialism. —HENRI POLAK, President."

"South Salford Social-Democrats send greetings from Disley annual picnic; enjoying ourselves amidst downpour of rain. Letter for *Justice* follows. Reply paid.—SUTTON, White Horse Hotel, Disley."

The reading of the telegrams was warmly received and suitable replies were cabled.

H. QUELCH then delivered an address on the advantages and disadvantages of a citizen army, and pointed out that the Swiss system was undoubtedly the best system of military organisation which existed at present. It might be asked why they, as Socialists, should trouble about such a matter seeing that they were in favour of international peace. Well, they had to recognise that they were a practical political party



At the present time they were living under a system which rested on a basis of force, and consequently they were brought face to face with the question of military organisation. During the past twelve months they had heard a great deal of pro-militarism and had been threatened with the introduction of the conscript system. Undoubtedly there would be a very strong feeling against such a system, but to his mind there were things worse than conscription, and jingoism was one of them. With the best intentions in the world, universal disarmament was out of the question. At the present time the people who shouted most for wars were not going to do any of the fighting. The majority of the hooligans who attempted to break up the peace meetings had never shouldered a rifle, and, what was more, never intended to. Now his proposal was that every man should be armed—and every woman, too, he should say. The effect of a standing army, whether conscript or voluntary, was that it put an instrument in the hands of the governing classes, not for the purpose of resisting invasion, not for the purpose of foreign aggression, but for the purpose of keeping down the people. A small body of well armed and trained men used by the governing classes was enough to keep down the people, but if all were armed that would be impossible. If the people who held advanced ideas were as well armed as the reactionary element which now formed their volunteer force, they would be on an equality with them, and it would be absolutely impossible for a governing minority to keep down the majority. It was for them to say that if there was to be a reorganisation of the military system or any steps taken in the direction of conscription, certain men should not be chosen to form that military organisation, but universal armament should take place. That would place every man on a perfect equality, and when they were in the majority they would be able to use the power of the majority. It might be contended that they should rather advocate universal disarmament now than universal armament; that as opponents of war and believers in international peace and solidarity, they were rather inconsistent in advocating that every man should be a soldier. In answer to that he might point out that we had to deal with things as they were and not with things as we would like them to be. When Socialism was established war would disappear as a matter of course. But at the present time the nations were actually at war with one another, and the nation which under present circumstances disarmed would be entirely at the mercy of the great military despotisms. Did anyone doubt that it was the assumed weakness of the Transvaal which tempted Jameson and his fellow conspirators to make that foolish and criminal raid, which had been the beginning of so much wrong and suffering? But besides this war between nations there was the war between classes, and with the main body of the people unarmed and untrained in the use of arms, the capitalist class would not be slow to organise bands of armed men to keep the rest of the people in subjection, as had already been done in America with the Pinkertons. The only way in which such a danger could be guarded against under present conditions was by the arming of every citizen, so that every citizen should be a soldier, and every soldier should be a citizen

so that every man would be capable of fighting for his country or his liberty, but there would be no standing army at all.

H. M. HYNDMAN opened the next discussion on "The Coming Cataclysm in India." He explained that the Executive thought it would be well to take the matter into serious consideration, because the Social-Democratic Federation was the only body in the country that had devoted any serious attention to the famine that existed there, and also because it bore very seriously upon the Social-Democratic position. The men who went out to dominate the Indians, when they came back to England almost without exception joined the reactionary forces, and acted with them. Every year they were taking out of India for the support of the upper and middle classes an amount equal to thirty millions sterling reckoned in gold. They were told that one of the objects of expansion of the British Empire was to increase trade. Well, there were 250 millions of people under British rule in India, and if they calculated what they took from Britain in the way of trade they would find that it did not amount to more than one shilling per head. The reason was this—that they had a perfect right to trade with India, but if they entirely impoverished the people who should be their customers it was impossible for them to buy. Even from an *£*s. d. point of view, the present policy in India was ruinous, but if they looked at it in another way they would find it was one of the most horrible examples of oppression recorded in history. He said deliberately from that platform that the horrible atrocities which were recorded in early Indian history were not worse than those which they, a God-fearing, decent, respectable English people—were doing that day in India. The result of British rule was something terrific, and matters were made worse by opponents of the system not being able to get a hearing on the subject. As a matter of fact, Lord Salisbury knew that what he said was correct, and over and over again he (Lord Salisbury) had spoken about "the bleeding of India." The present famine was one of the worst ever known in the history of the world. In all the records of humanity, there had never been a famine approaching that one in horror. If it came by accident they could not grumble, but in one district alone 40,000 pools, which had been built by Indians for the irrigation of the land, had been allowed to fall into desuetude. The famine in India was a manufactured famine—manufactured by the very same class which dominated the workers here. One hundred millions of people were now suffering from starvation owing to the famine, and how did it come about? They were told that India was taxed lightly, but whereas under native administration not more than one-sixth of the produce was taken as land tax, in the Central Provinces we took as much as half of the total produce. If the taxation was used to make provision against scarcity or for useful public works, there might be some reason for it. But it was used for nothing of the sort. It was brought over here for home charges and pensions. This state of things could not continue. The trade of Lancashire was being affected by the fact that the people of India could not buy. He concluded his speech with a vigorous appeal on behalf of the natives of India.



R. ROFREY, J. JONES and H. QUELCH took part in the discussion which followed, the latter pointing out that the condition of the 250 millions of people in India did not attract so much attention as the attempt to crush a population of 300,000 in South Africa.

E. BELFORT BAX read a paper on the "Settlement in South Africa."

J. K. VAN DER VEER, representative of the Social-Democratic daily *Het Volk*, took part in the discussion which followed, and tendered to the Conference the fraternal greetings of their comrades from Holland. He congratulated the S.D.F. on their determined stand against the imperialist policy in this country. The Dutch Government had also their imperialist policy in Java. At Atcheen the Dutch had been vainly trying to crush the natives for years past. The representative, Van Kol, had protested against this policy in the Dutch Parliament, and he hoped the English workers would shortly send Hyndman to do the same in the English House of Commons. In Holland they had three Socialist M.P.'s, and several representatives on local councils.

HERBERT BURROWS suggested that they should pass a vote of congratulation to their Dutch comrades on their progress in Holland, and one of thanks to the West Ham comrades for their cordial reception of the delegates to the Annual Conference. He hoped that the next time they came to West Ham their chairman would be able to write M.P. after his name.

The votes were carried with acclamation.

H. M. HYNDMAN, at the conclusion of the Conference, said they were going from this to a far greater gathering, to the greatest International Socialist Congress which had ever been held. The greater their work and responsibility, the greater the triumph to be achieved.

The CHAIRMAN, in his closing remarks, urged them to work with redoubled force for the Socialist movement, and the meeting closed with three cheers for International Social-Democracy.



## PROGRAMME AND RULES

OF THE

# SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION.

(As revised at the Annual Conference held at Stratford, August 5th and 6th, 1900.)

### OBJECT.

THE Socialisation of the Means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange, to be controlled by a Democratic State in the interests of the entire community, and the complete Emancipation of Labour from the Domination of Capitalism and Landlordism, with the establishment of Social and Economic Equality between the Sexes.

### PROGRAMME.

- I.—All Organisers or Administrators to be elected by Equal Direct Adult Suffrage, and to be maintained by the Community.
- II.—Legislation by the People in such wise that no project of Law shall become binding till accepted by the majority of the People.
- III.—The abolition of Standing Armies, and the establishment of National Citizen Forces; the People to decide on Peace or War.
- IV.—All Education to be Compulsory, Secular, Industrial, and Free.
- V.—The Administration of Justice to be Free to all.
- VI.—The Means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange to be declared and treated as Collective or Common Property.
- VII.—The Production and Distribution of Wealth to be regulated by the Community in the common interests of all its Members.
- VIII.—The establishment of International Courts of Arbitration.

### PALLIATIVES.

To palliate the evils of our existing society the Social-Democratic Federation urges the following measures for immediate adoption:—

### NATIONAL.

Free, Secular, and Technical Education, compulsory upon all classes, together with Free Maintenance for the children in all State Schools.  
No child to be employed in any trade or occupation until 16 years of age, and heavy penalties to be inflicted on employers infringing this law.



Eight hours or less to be the Normal Working Day, or not more than Forty Eight Hours per Week, to be fixed in all trades and industries by Legislative Enactment. Imprisonment to be inflicted on employers for any infringement of this law.

Cumulative Taxation upon all incomes exceeding £300 a year.

State Appropriation of Railways and Canals.

The extension of the Post Office Banks so that they shall absorb all private institutions that derive a profit from operations in money or credit.

Repudiation of the National Debt.

Nationalisation of the Land, and the organisation of labour in agriculture and industry under State or Municipal control on co-operative principles.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of all State Churches.

The Establishment of Adequate Pensions for the Aged and Infirm Workers. Every person attaining the age of fifty to be kept by the Community, work being optional after that age.

Abolition of the present Workhouse System, and the Provision of Useful Work for the Unemployed. State Control of the Lifeboat Service.

#### MUNICIPAL.

The Compulsory Construction by Public Bodies of Healthy Dwellings for the People, such dwellings to be let at rents to cover the cost of construction and maintenance alone.

Public Ownership and Control of Gas, Electric Light, and Water Supplies; the organisation of Tramway and Omnibus Services and similar monopolies in the interests of the entire community.

The Establishment of Municipal Hospitals and Dispensaries, Cemeteries and Crematoriums. Public Control of the Food and Coal Supply.

As means for the peaceable attainment of these objects the Social-Democratic Federation advocates:—

Payment of Members of Parliament and of all local bodies. Payment of Official Expenses of Elections out of the Public Funds. Adult Suffrage. Triennial Parliaments. Proportional Representation. Second Ballot. Initiative and Referendum. Canvassing to be made illegal. Abolition of the Monarchy and the House of Lords. Extension of the Powers of County, Town, District, and Parish Councils. Legislative Independence for all Parts of the Empire.

#### RULES.

1. Any person who accepts in writing, on the form provided for that purpose, the Programme, Rules, and General Policy of the Social-Democratic Federation, may become, subject to approval, a member of a branch of the organisation. No member shall be allowed to belong to more than one branch.

2. The minimum subscription of a member shall be one penny a week to the branch; each branch shall contribute not less than one quarter of such subscription to the Propaganda Fund, to be paid monthly. Any member more than 13 weeks in arrears shall be struck off the roll of membership, unless a satisfactory explanation be given, and shall not be allowed to join any other branch while those arrears remain unpaid. The subscriptions of members on strike or out of employment or during

sickness may be reduced or suspended. Branches must be notified in all cases before subscriptions can be either reduced or suspended.

3. If a number of persons, not less than six, apply to the General Council for leave to open a branch of the Federation, the Council shall at once inquire into the circumstances, and, if satisfied, authorise the formation of such branch.

4. In opening new branches of the S.D.F. the branch so doing shall be called upon by the General or Executive Council, when application for permission to form a branch is made, to place a trustworthy comrade in position as secretary of the new branch for six months, or for a shorter period, if he or she should find one of the members of the new branch capable of filling that post.

5. Branches shall elect their own officers, and draw up such rules as they deem proper for their own management, provided that they are in accord with the principles of the Federation. Branches shall report progress to the General Council at least once a quarter.

6. Where several branches exist in the same town or district they may form themselves into Local Central Committees, consisting of delegates from the various branches, for local business, such delegates to be elected proportionally, the proportion to be decided by the local branches.

7. There shall be an Annual Conference of the members of the Federation. The Annual Conference shall appoint time and place of the next Annual Conference, which in every year shall be held within at least thirteen months of the preceding Conference.

8. Every branch shall be entitled to send to the Annual Conference one delegate, and every branch numbering over 50 members may send two delegates, and for every additional 50 members one additional delegate to the number of 200 members. Above that number one additional delegate to every 100 paying members. The expenses of the delegates shall be defrayed by the branch that sends them. Only delegates shall be entitled to vote, and no discussion shall be allowed on any matter upon which the branches have had an opportunity of instructing their delegates. Branches outside the town where the Conference is held, which are entitled to send more than one delegate, may, if they be unable to pay the expenses of the full number of delegates to which they are entitled, record their full number of votes through their one delegate. In all cases where delegates claim more than one vote, the votes shall be allowed on the average number of members for which the branch has paid dues during the preceding year. No member shall be eligible as delegate who has not been a member of the S.D.F. for at least twelve months.

9. The Annual Conference shall decide the general policy for the ensuing year, and make rules and regulations for carrying out the objects of the S.D.F. All resolutions affecting the management of the organisation, which have been round to the branches and passed by the General Council, shall be placed on the agenda for the succeeding Conference, to be reaffirmed or rejected, and, if reaffirmed, to be embodied in the rules.



10. Notice must be given in *Justice* of the date and place of each Conference at least two months before such Conference.

11. Branches which have not been in existence more than six months before the date of the Conference cannot vote by their delegates without permission of the majority of the other delegates.

12. Notice of intended amendments to the Programme, Rules, and General Policy must be sent to the General Secretary at least two months before the Annual Conference, such amendments to be sent round to the branches. If thought necessary, the branches may then send amendments to those at first sent round at least one month previous to the Conference. The first list of amendments, together with the amendments thereto, shall then be sent to the branches at least fourteen days before the Annual Conference.

13. It shall be for the General Council to summon as many Extraordinary Conferences in the course of the year as they deem fit.

14. The General Council shall constitute the central body, and shall be composed exclusively of delegates appointed by the branches of the Federation. No one shall be eligible as delegate who has not been a member for at least six months; and no one can act as delegate for more than one branch. Every branch shall be entitled to send to the General Council one delegate, and every branch that has been in existence six months and numbers over 100 members may send two delegates, and for every additional 500 members one additional delegate. A branch shall have power to recall its delegate at any time by appointing another delegate. A branch may elect any member as its delegate, whether such comrade be a member of that branch or not, but not more than three members of one branch may sit for other branches. The delegates shall vote as empowered by the branches on all questions specified by the Agenda Paper, and those unable to attend shall forward their instructions, their votes to be recorded as if present. Questions not on the Agenda Paper may be discussed and voted upon if urgency be voted by a three-fourths majority, but shall be sent round to the branches for confirmation or rejection. The Secretary shall, as soon as possible, after each meeting of the General Council, draw up and send round to all the branches a statement of the resolutions passed at such meeting, and an Agenda Paper of the business of the following meeting. The General Council shall meet once every three months, the place of each meeting to be decided upon by the previous meeting; but the Executive Council, or a tenth of the total branches of the organisation, shall have the power to call a special meeting of the General Council. Branches not financially able to send delegates to the quarterly Council meetings shall be allowed to have their votes recorded if sent by a properly accredited letter. Fifteen members present shall form a quorum. The chairman shall be elected by a majority of those present. The officers of the General Council shall be appointed by the General Council, and shall consist of the following—viz., General Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Political Secretary, Treasurer, Auditors, and Lecture Secretary. At the expiration of the

term of office of all paid officials, the branches shall be asked for nominations for the post.

15. There shall be an Executive Council nominated only by the branches, and elected by the Annual Conference, which shall be held responsible to and report to each meeting of the General Council. This Executive shall be composed of twenty-four members, twelve of whom shall be provincial members and members of different branches. Seven members shall form a quorum. The twelve provincial members of the Executive Council shall have supplied to them before each meeting an agenda of all business to be considered at such meeting. Provincial members unable to attend the Council meetings personally shall have the right to record their votes by letter. No member shall be elected on the Executive Council who has been a member of the S.D.F. for less than twelve months. The Executive Council shall in no way go against the Constitution and General Policy of the S.D.F. as laid down by the Annual Conference. The Executive Council shall attend to the carrying out of all resolutions and decisions passed by the General Council. The Secretary of the General Council shall also be secretary of the Executive Council. Notices of all meetings of the Executive Council shall be given in *Justice*.

16. The Executive Council may take a poll of the organisation at any time, or at the request of not less than six branches signing a requisition containing the matter upon which they desire that the poll should be taken. The result of such poll shall have the same effect as a resolution of the Annual Conference.

17. FINANCE.—All dues, donations, and subscriptions shall be receivable by the Secretary, who shall be empowered to give receipts for the same, and to authorise the acknowledgment thereof in *Justice* or elsewhere. No payments shall be made except by direction of the General or Executive Council, save in cases of emergency, when payments may be made by the Treasurer on his obtaining the sanction of at least two members of the Finance Committee, such payment not to exceed £5.

18. COMMITTEES.—The Executive Council shall appoint and define the duties and powers of the following committees: Finance, Literary, Parliamentary, and International. All committees shall present a report of their work during their term of office to the Annual Conference. Members of these committees need not be members of the Executive Council, but no member of the Social-Democratic Federation shall be on more than two of these committees.

19. DUTIES OF OFFICERS.—The Secretary shall conduct all correspondence as directed by the General and Executive Councils, keep minutes of all proceedings of the General and Executive Councils, and of general meetings of the Federation, and submit to the Executive Council all letters received and copies of all letters written by him. The Treasurer shall keep the accounts of the Federation, and a balance-sheet shall be submitted to the General Council and sent to all branches once a quarter.

20. No branch shall be allowed to keep the collection made at any



open-air meeting at which the lecturer has been supplied by the Lecture Secretary, but should, if in difficulties, apply to the General Council for a grant.

21. In case of any dispute between any branch and the General Council, a Committee of Examination shall be formed consisting of nine members of the Federation appointed by the General Council, to examine into and report to the General Council on such dispute. Should it then be deemed necessary the General Council shall thereupon appoint a member of the Federation, not a member of the Council, as its arbitrator, and the branch shall appoint another member of the Federation as its arbitrator, and these two shall have the power to hear such dispute and to appoint an umpire, who must also be a member of the Federation, whose decision shall be final and binding.

22. A Board of Examination shall be formed, which shall meet as determined by the Executive Council, whose duty shall be to examine and question candidates for the central lecture list on the principles of Social-Democracy.

23. No member of the S.D.F. shall be placed on the central lecture list except on the recommendation of the branch to which such member belongs, or of the local district council. No member shall be permitted to accept fees for lecturing other than those recognised by or received through the Central or Executive authority.

24. All members of the S.D.F., before being run as parliamentary candidates, shall be required to pass an examination in Socialist economics.

25. The General Council has power to dissolve any branch or expel any member of the Federation, provided that not less than two-thirds of the General Council, acting on instructions from the branches they represent, deem the action of such branch or member to be opposed to the interests and principles of the Federation.

26. Before a member of the S.D.F. is nominated for election to any legislative or administrative body, he or she shall sign a declaration of willingness to remain under the guidance of his or her branch, and to withdraw from such body should not less than two-thirds of the branch decide upon it at a special meeting called for that purpose, of which not less than 21 days' notice shall be given both to the member concerned, and members of the branch. Where more than one branch is concerned, not less than two-thirds of the members of the branches concerned, before being nominated, every member must place in the hands of the General Secretary a letter resigning any public position to which he or she might be elected, such letter of resignation to be undated, and to be addressed to the Chairman or other official of the public body for which the member is nominated. Such resignation shall not be enforced until 21 days after the special branch meeting has been held in order to give the member whose conduct is impugned time to appeal to the General Council.

27. The Council or branches may vote donations or make levies in aid of objects deemed helpful to the cause of labour.

28. Each member shall pay one penny per month to the Parliamentary Election Fund.

29. Each branch shall be levied at least 2s. 6d. per year to be paid to the Central Premises Fund for defraying the expenses of the Central Hall.

30. Each branch shall pay to Political Secretary's Wages Fund the sum of 3d. per week for every twenty-five or part of twenty-five members.

31. The names of all the members of the Executive Council shall be signed to every official document passed by the Executive Council, not necessarily for publication.

32. All regulations shall remain in force until amended or rescinded at an Annual or Extraordinary Conference.

33. Anything not provided for in the present rules shall be supplied by special regulations from the General Council, subject to the revision of the Annual Conference.

#### GENERAL POLICY.

1. No member shall take any public action in municipal or other local elections without obtaining the consent of the branch to which such member belongs.

2. No member shall take any public Parliamentary political action without obtaining the consent of the Executive Council.

3. No member or branch shall publicly support any candidate at any political election unless they first obtain the consent of the Executive Council.

4. No member shall stand as a candidate for any Vestry, Guardians, School Board, Municipal, or other local elections of a political or semi-political character unless such member does so as a definitely-avowed Social-Democrat with the consent of the branch to which such member belongs.

5. No member shall stand as a candidate for any Parliamentary election unless such member does so as a definitely-avowed Social-Democratic candidate, with the consent of the Executive Council.

6. No branch shall run any person as a candidate for any election who has not been a financial member for at least twelve months.\*

7. Should any member be returned at any of the above-mentioned elections for which such member shall stand as a definitely-avowed Social-Democratic candidate, such member will be held subject to the branch to which he or she belongs for general guidance with regard to local action, and to the General and Executive Councils for general guidance with regard to parliamentary action. Candidates for all elections shall be compelled to sign a resignation form.

8. The General Council are empowered under Rule 24 to suspend or expel by a two-thirds majority any member or branch of the S.D.F. wilfully infringing any of the above regulations.

All communications for the Social-Democratic Federation should be addressed to the Secretary, 3, Bolt Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

\* N.B.—This clause in its present form was passed on the understanding that, in the case of a recognised Socialist body joining the S.D.F., the General and Executive Council is empowered to suspend the rule.



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