

Men's League for Women's Suffrage

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Monthly Paper.

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Hon. Treas.: REGD. H. POTT.
Hon. Political Sec.: J. M. MITCHELL.
June, 1912

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE MEN'S LEAGUE.

— A —

GREAT JOINT DEMONSTRATION

To Protest Against the Treatment of Political Prisoners as Ordinary Offenders.

To be held in

TRAFALGAR SQUARE,
Saturday, June 15th, at 3 o'clock.

Every Member of the League should make a point of being present.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE CONSPIRACY TRIAL.

Since the Irish patriots made a boast of their rebellion before their judges in '98 there has been no stranger trial for "conspiracy" than that which ended last month in the conviction of the militant leaders. If defiant challenge, gallant attack, and unflinching leadership can ever be what the law means by "conspiracy," the jury returned a verdict in accordance with the facts. Incomparably more significant than their verdict was the testimony to motive and the recommendation to honourable treatment with which they accompanied it. No one who has read Mrs. Pankhurst's speech will wonder at their action if he has ever heard the tones of that moving voice or felt the spell of that appealing yet commanding personality. The jury who heard it must have forgotten for a moment the vulgarity and harshness of politics and the triviality of this criminal charge. With a noble irrelevance it swept away the accidents of the occasion, and put before them the fundamental motives of duty and sympathy which were the mainsprings of the militant revolt. No finer apology for a life of disinterested service and abnegation was ever spoken in court, and it had the effect which such a personal encounter with a great spiritual force rarely fails to produce. If such a speech could have been delivered at the Bar of the House of Commons this agitation would have been spared years of misunderstanding and delay. It made so limpidly clear what most men have been slow to grasp. Men have seen only the aggressive aspect of militancy. But its real meaning has been from first to last self-sacrificing and the voluntary facing

of suffering and insult. It has been not merely a women's movement, but a passionately and profoundly womanly movement, and in nothing was it so womanly as in the conviction which underlay it that a devotion which would shrink from no test and for ever sought the most cruel tests must triumph even in the corruption and mediocrity of our contemporary political life. The standpoint is so entirely alien from that of the average man, whose notion of warfare is simply to injure his opponents, that even now it is only the minority among us that understands. But wherever this speech is read that minority will grow.

POLITICAL OFFENCES.

Ten days have passed, and we are still uncertain whether Mr. McKenna will do what Lord Coleridge omitted, and give effect to the plain intention of the jury. The jury had seen and understood something of the personality of these leaders, and it felt all the cruel absurdity of a pedantic fiction which would class them with prisoners. For Mr. McKenna they are only peculiarly troublesome political opponents. His whole conduct since March has shown that there is in his wooden and narrow personality no spark even of that conventional chivalry which dictates the honourable treatment of prisoners of war. The probability is that he will concede the substance, or most of it, and deny the form. He will, of course, allow the privileges of Rule 243a, but it will take considerable pressure to induce him to grant in name and in fact the status of the first division. The name, we imagine, matters a good deal more to the pedants of the Home Office than the fact. It would cost them more to admit that their prisoners are political offenders than to give them by a back door all the privileges which political offenders enjoy in civilised communities. The Home Office in this matter stands for a positively mediæval tradition of brutality, and it lacks the excuse of the Middle Ages. It is brutal, not with the frank cruelty of passion, but rather with the insolent stupidity of the official who refuses to admit into his system the disturbing facts of disinterested motive and high character. The British public, in its turn, is rather slow to face the fact of political offences. We have just enough liberty in this country to resent the existence of the political offender, and it costs us an effort to admit that sex domination and industrial oppression may make a case for rebellion as cogent as the cruder tyrannies of the old world. This whole attitude of self-complacency, this mechanical attitude towards the most vital stirrings of our time demands a direct challenge. It lies with the Men's League to make the demonstration in Trafalgar Square a protest which no Government can ignore. Its effect will depend on our success in massing voters. A show of hands means something if they are hands which will presently mark a ballot paper.

THE REFORM BILL.

There is no longer a doubt that a sort of Reform Bill will be introduced before the month is out, and that the Government intends to pass it. Mr. Hobhouse's announcement makes this clear. He described it, indeed, as the Plural Voting Bill, and this name serves well enough to reveal the motive behind it. The old spirit of "reform" has gone from the Liberal party. It no longer cares even to pretend that its object is any disinterested aim of emancipation. It has become a political machine, and its sole concern is to win the forty seats which it reckons it can secure by abolishing the plural voter and simplifying registration. The Bill, if it turns out to be what Mr. Asquith foreshadowed in November, will really make a bigger change in the basis of representation than Gladstone's Reform Bill of 1884; but it is the cue of these little men to minimise their own work and to smuggle their legislation through the House under a misleading alias. If they were to call it a Reform Bill, or even a Manhood Suffrage Bill, the absence of demand would be too striking, the ignoring of the women's claim too flagrant. The defeat of the Conciliation Bill has no doubt convinced Mr. Hobhouse and his colleagues that their chances of defeating the women's amendment are bright, and that the risk of a division may be safely challenged. Events will show whether that is a sound calculation. The result depends on the ability of Suffragists to convince the Liberal machine that it has more to lose by passing the Bill without emancipating women than by conceding their rights. Of all the ways of demonstrating such a risk the most direct and the most hopeful is to make it clear that at the next election a good thirty seats held to-day by Liberal anti-Suffragists will be lost to the Labour party.

SUPPORT FOR LABOUR.

The decision which the Men's League was the first to take, to concentrate its support for Labour candidates in opposing Liberal anti-Suffragists, has now been adopted with enthusiasm both by the National Union and by the Freedom League. Within a week, and without the issue of any formal appeal, the National Union was able to announce that it had in hand a sum of £1,500 towards the £20,000 fund which it hopes to raise for the purposes of this policy. A few days later the I.L.P., at its annual conference, once more warmly endorsed the policy of the Labour party—to oppose the Reform Bill if it reaches the third reading without the inclusion of women. Some of the comments on the new policy show, however, that it is not yet fully understood. It is urged that the Labour party has not yet vindicated its right to Suffragist support by deeds, and that to offer support before it has cast its vote against the Reform Bill is to "put the cart before the horse." To this objection there are two answers. In the first place, if one feels a doubt whether a body of men will quite live up to their emphatic and official pledges there are two ways of acting. One is to stand aside, doubtful and mistrusting, in a "wait and see" attitude. The other and the more practical attitude is to act in such a way that the Labour party shall have, if necessary, a new motive for doing what it has already promised to do. It has taken a bold and spontaneous resolution. It lies with Suffragists to respond by showing that it shall not be the loser by its generous policy. First, to invite the Labour members to vote against the Government, and then to assure them that they will not thereby stand to gain anything in Suffragist support, is neither an astute nor a generous policy. If support is to be given in return for such services it cannot be given too promptly. The success of such a policy depends on the careful planning and early initiation of work in the constituencies.

AN ANTI-GOVERNMENT STRATEGY.

The new policy has two aspects. It is a policy of support for Labour, but it is even more emphatically a policy of opposition to the Liberal machine. Even if the Labour party were much less deserving of support than, in fact, it is, the case for assisting it, wherever its efforts

may result in the loss of a seat held by a Liberal anti-Suffragist, would still be overwhelming. The question is one of methods. We are all agreed that no party will enfranchise women until it feels that its party interests suffer by the denial of justice. There are two ways of assailing these party interests. One is the old form of the anti-Government policy, which, unluckily, has not given adequate results, and this for the simple reason that it is difficult to persuade the average elector to cast a purely negative vote in any circumstances, and no less difficult to persuade him to vote with his mind fixed on the women's question, to the exclusion of every other. The other method is the new policy, which seeks to throw the Suffragist weight into the Labour scale wherever a Labour candidate competes with a reactionary Liberal for the democratic vote. The result, if the policy is efficiently pursued, must be to endanger a considerable number of Liberal seats. If that risk is perceived betimes the managers of the Liberal machine, who have hitherto used their influence against Women's Suffrage, must discover a new motive which will induce them to change their attitude, and to change it before the Reform Bill is carried. A real and definite danger will confront them, and they will seek to remove it. At the worst, if the policy fails in its immediate effect, it will, by eliminating the reactionary minority in the Liberal ranks, make it easier to secure in the future a united party behind a Government measure.

H. N. BRAILSFORD.

THE GREAT JOINT DEMONSTRATION.

The chief public work undertaken by the League this summer is the Demonstration on June 15 in Trafalgar Square at three o'clock. This assembly is convened in pursuance of the direction of the Annual General Meeting held on April 26, when a resolution to this effect was carried unanimously by a large and enthusiastic meeting.

One great feature of the Demonstration is that we shall be joined by the following societies, who have already signified their intention of being officially present:—The Women's Freedom League, the Women Writers' Suffrage League, the New Constitutional Society for Women's Suffrage, the Irish League for Women's Suffrage, the Men's Political Union, the Tax Resistance League. In all probability the Independent Labour Party will send speakers and banners. It is therefore likely that there will be a very impressive gathering, more especially as many societies have yet to answer our invitation. Moreover, the W.S.P.U., whose members will be in London in large numbers in view of the big meeting in the evening, will, though not officially, be very largely represented.

Many of the most famous of suffrage speakers will be on the five platforms.

Our members are urged most emphatically to make a point of being present to swell the crowd. They are reminded that the Demonstration is organised at the special request of the Annual Meeting. It is their own Demonstration, therefore, and it behoves them to assist the executive in making it a huge success.

Whatever we may think of the policy which leads to imprisonment, there is no sort of disagreement as to the absurdity of treating political window-breaking as though it were the ordinary Saturday night rowdyism. It may—nay, must—be hard in some cases to draw the line; let us grant that a hard and fast definition is impossible. But it demands a very considerable degree of wrongheadedness to see no distinction between the late Mr. Stead and a professional procurer, between Mr. Pethick Lawrence and an ordinary window-smasher.

It is highly disturbing to a normally constituted mind to find that this crystal-clear distinction has not forced itself into the Stygian gloom of judicial formalism. Wisdom demands that Mr. McKenna,

COMMITTEE NEWS.

Dr. G. B. Clark has been unanimously elected to fill a vacant place on the Executive. His wide knowledge of political matters will be of the utmost value.

BRANCH NEWS.**BATH.**

A successful meeting was held at Bath on Thursday, May 23, to inaugurate a local branch of the League. The use of the Guildhall had been refused by the Mayor (an anti), in spite of the fact that he had been clearly informed that our Society is non-militant, but thanks to the efforts of Mr. J. W. Jeurwine the meeting took place in the Assembly Room. Mr. Jeurwine himself presided, and Miss Canning, of the Church League, also spoke. The League is indebted to Mr. Jeurwine both for his spirited controversy with the Mayor of Bath in the Press, which our readers have no doubt noticed, and also for his invaluable assistance in forming the branch.

LEAMINGTON.

A most promising branch has also been started at Leamington, embracing the district of Warwick and Leamington. Mr. F. Boucher Davis has kindly consented to act as hon. secretary and a strong local Committee has also been formed. Already the Town Hall has been booked for a meeting in the autumn, and negotiations for influential speakers are now proceeding. We are glad to learn that the Branch is receiving encouraging support, and that sympathy with the cause and our own policy is steadily growing in the district.

OFFICERS.

President, Rev. Alan Williams, M.A.
Vice-Presidents, Messrs. Arnold Thornton (Headmaster, Leamington School), J. Lloyd Evans, J.P., Alfred Hill.
Committee, Messrs. Norman White, F. H. Wackrill, F. Quaintance.

WALES.

Arrangements are also being made for the formation of a Branch at Merthyr Tydvil, about which we hope to report more fully in our next issue.
H. N. SARGEANT.

REFUSALS OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The postcards which are being circulated with the present issue have been adapted from those introduced by the Tax Resistance League, and have been approved by the Executive at its last meeting. It is suggested that members should make use of them in all cases where they feel unable to respond to an appeal for a subscription, and a space is left at the bottom in which they may offer, if they choose, to remit the subscription they would have sent, after the vote is won. As a most useful alternative, may we suggest the forwarding of this subscription to the Treasurer of the Men's League, who will be most grateful for it at the present juncture? Additional copies of this card can be obtained from the Hon. Literature Secretary, 1d. per dozen, 6d. per 100.

MEN'S LEAGUE ACTIVITIES.

As our members will observe from the reports of various officers, our League is working very actively at the present time, although it is doing more in the way of spade work than of big public appearances. The applications from other societies for our speakers are so numerous that there is great difficulty in complying with them, and we shall be very pleased indeed to hear of others who will help. Mr. Sargeant is giving a great deal of attention to the branches, of which two new ones have been started this month.

It is very remarkable to see how much interest and sympathy has been evoked by the agitation on behalf of political prisoners, and the Trafalgar Square demonstration, which Mr. Mitchell is organising, promises to be one of the most successful efforts which the League has yet made.

The open-air propaganda in Hyde Park and elsewhere has been remarkably successful recently, and few things are more

upon whose clarity of vision the creature comforts of any reformers may at any moment depend, should be permitted a glimpse of what the plain man sees. It is possible that he has a sense of justice; it is conceivable that he has even a sense of humour!

POSTER PARADE.

Volunteers are wanted for a Poster Parade advertising the Demonstration. It will start from St. Stephen's House at 12 mid-day on Saturday, June 15th. Dr. Drysdale, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Sargeant and others will head the parade. We want a dozen more men. Please send names in at once.

J. MALCOLM MITCHELL.

POLITICAL PRISONERS.

The meeting held by the National Political Reform League, supported by many other societies, including the Men's League, at the London Opera House, on May 16, was remarkably successful, having regard to the unusual hour of the day. The fine house was well filled, and the speakers and audience were unanimous in their demand for the recognition of the distinction between political and other breakers of the law. The speakers were Miss Broadhurst (chair), Mr. Atherley Jones, K.C., Mr. Keir Hardie, Mr. George Lansbury, the Rev. Dr. Cobb, Miss M. Farquharson, the Rev. F. M. Green, and Mr. Lyon Bleasie; while Lord Robert Cecil wrote expressing his opinion that an inquiry ought to be opened concerning the allegations made by the Suffragist prisoners.

A resolution demanding an inquiry, and expressing strong disapproval of forcible feeding, was carried, practically unanimously.

The Men's League was represented on the platform by Dr. Drysdale and Mr. Sargeant, and at the close of the meeting the Trafalgar Square demonstration for June 15 was announced.

Deputation to the Home Secretary.

As an outcome of the above meeting a deputation, including representatives of the Men's League, waited on Mr. McKenna at the Home Office on Tuesday, May 21, when the case for the treatment of political prisoners as first-class misdemeanants was represented by Mr. Atherley Jones, followed by Miss Broadhurst, Lady Cowdray, the Rev. Dr. Cobb, the Earl Russell, Mr. Dickinson, M.P., Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., and Dr. Drysdale, the last four being members of the League. Mr. McKenna received the deputation very courteously, and expressed his wish to hear the views of the ladies. In his reply he said that the question of the women Suffragist prisoners was one of the most difficult the Government had had to deal with, and had caused them great anxiety. He explained the differences of treatment of the Suffragist prisoners by the fact that Mr. Churchill's Rule 243a expressly excepted those guilty of excessive violence from first-class privileges, and that his criterion had been that those Suffragists who had been sentenced on indictment to more than four months' imprisonment must have been considered by the judges to have been guilty of excessive violence. He had since heard from the magistrates that they had not intended their sentences to be so construed, and he had thereupon ordered that all Suffragist prisoners should have the benefit of Rule 243a, with the exception of a few who refused to obey the prison regulations. As to the recognition of political offences, he made the definite statement that in the whole course of Home Office administration there was not a single record of differentiation of treatment on the grounds of an offence being political in its origin. He pointed out the great difficulty—which all Suffragists admit—of arriving at a satisfactory basis of discrimination in such a matter. Mr. McKenna's speech was eminently conciliatory in tone, and it was satisfactory to note that he made no attempt to disclaim the powers of the Home Secretary in dealing with the punishment or treatment of prisoners. It is difficult to avoid the suspicion, however, that the absence of records of differentiation of treatment for political offences is due not to the non-existence of such differentiation, but to official wisdom in finding other ostensible grounds for it.
C. V. DRYSDALE.

satisfactory than to see the quiet and intelligent interest with which listeners will stand for hours in the park while long disquisitions on the economics of wages and employment are given by our speakers.

The Men's League also helped through Messrs. Mitchell and Phillips in propaganda work in the South Hackney by-election on behalf of the National Union and the Women's Freedom League.

We have also to thank others who have given help in other ways, and notably to Mr. Silvester Sparrow, who has given much time to office routine, and who has now been appointed Hon. Literature Secretary. Messrs. Greville Prior and Mr. G. Mower have also helped in the office.

Another very interesting event, which we hope will take place in the autumn, is the holding of a conference of the Men's International Alliance for Woman Suffrage in London. The Executive Committee of the Men's League have issued a cordial invitation to the Men's Leagues of other countries to come to London for this purpose, and we hope that our members will do all in their power to ensure a great reception for those who have followed in our footsteps.

Finally, we would appeal to our members and to all our readers to help us with funds, which are very badly needed at the present time. The open-air work and the help which we are able to give to the women's societies, though it is certainly appreciated, does not bring grist to our own mill; and every reader ought to give either service or money to help the cause forward.

C. V. D.

REFORM BILL RESOLUTION.

The Committee suggest that all branches and suffrage meetings should adopt the following resolution (slightly adapted from the form issued by the Parliamentary Joint Campaign Committee), and send copies when passed to Ministers and local M.P.'s:—

That the Branch of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage calls upon the Government to introduce a Reform Bill and carry it through all its stages during the present session, and further declares that no Bill can be accepted which does not include the Parliamentary enfranchisement of women.

MEETINGS ADDRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE MEN'S LEAGUE IN MAY.

May 1	Kilburn W.S.P.U.	Joseph Clayton
" 4	Palmer's Green W.S.P.U.	Victor Prout
" 4	Wimbledon W.S.P.U.	John Simpson
" 4	Highgate M.L.W.S.	Arthur MacKinlay
" 4	" "	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 4	" "	Wilfred Hammond
" 5	Hyde Park M.L.W.S.	Theodor Gugenheim
" 5	" M.P.U.	Reginald Pott
" 7	Muswell Hill L.S.W.S.	H. Krauss Nield
" 7	" "	Herbert Jacobs
" 7	" "	J. Arthur Price
" 8	Brighton C.L.W.S.	Rev. Claude Hinscliff
" 9	Cambridge C.L.W.S.	Rev. Claude Hinscliff
" 9	West Ham C.L.L.	Lewis W. Phillips
" 9	Wimbledon W.S.P.U.	Laurence Housman
" 9	Memorial Hall F.C.L.W.S.	Philip Snowden, M.P.
" 9	Uckfield N.U.W.S.S.	Sir John Cockburn
" 10	Adam Street W.T.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 10	Berners Street S.P.W.E.	Sir John Cockburn
" 10	Westminster Palace Hotel	Lord Lytton
" 10	Finchley W.F.L.	Dr. Drysdale
" 10	Peckham N.C.S.W.S.	Reginald Pott
" 11	Trafalgar Square W.F.L.	Dr. Drysdale
" 11	" "	Theodor Gugenheim
" 11	" "	Reginald Pott
" 11	" "	Rev. Claude Hinscliff
" 12	Hyde Park M.P.U.	Victor Prout
" 12	Hyde Park M.L.W.S.	Laurence Housman
" 12	" "	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 12	" "	Reginald Pott
" 13	London Pavilion W.S.P.U.	Laurence Housman

May 13	Tonbridge N.U.W.S.S.	Adrian Brunel
" 13	" "	William Mirlees
" 14	Canterbury W.S.P.U.	Joseph Clayton
" 14	Knightsbridge N.C.S.W.S.	Cecil Chapman, J.P.
" 14	Knightsbridge C.U.W.F.A.	H. Rolleston Stables
" 15	Chorley Wood C.L.W.S.	Rev. Claude Hinscliff
" 16	Wimbledon W.S.P.U.	H. Baillie-Weaver
" 16	Greystones, co. Wicklow, I.W.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 17	Croydon W.S.P.U.	Victor Prout
" 17	Dublin I.W.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 17	Aldeburgh N.U.W.S.S.	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 18	Dunlavin I.W.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 19	Hyde Park M.L.W.S.	Theodor Gugenheim
" 19	" "	J. E. Raphael
" 19	" "	H. E. Craufurd
" 20	Newry (Ireland) I.W.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 20	Aldershot N.U.W.S.S.	H. Rolleston Stables
" 20	London Pavilion W.S.P.U.	Rev. Hugh Chapman
" 20	Highgate L.S.W.S.	H. N. Brailsford
" 20	Caxton Hall W.F.L.	Philip Snowden, M.P.
" 21	Dublin I.W.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 21	Caxton Hall L.S.W.S.	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 21	Stratford W.S.P.U.	Rev. F. M. Green
" 21	Kensington N.C.S.W.S.	Rev. Hugh B. Chapman
" 21	Hampton W.S.P.U.	Joseph Clayton
" 22	Purley N.U.W.S.S.	Rev. Claude Hinscliff
" 22	Ealing L.S.W.S.	J. Y. Kennedy
" 22	Norwich W.S.P.U.	Rev. Hugh B. Chapman
" 22	Caxton Hall W.F.L.	Dr. G. B. Clark
" 23	Bath M.L.W.S.	J. W. Jeudwine
" 23	Paddington W.S.P.U.	Rev. F. M. Green
" 23	Hackney By-election	Lewis W. Phillips
" 23	" "	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 24	1, Mount Street W.F.L.	Laurence Housman
" 20	Radlett	Joseph Clayton
" 24	Regent's Park C.U.W.F.A.	Rev. T. A. Lacey
" 24	Horsham N.U.W.S.S.	H. Rolleston Stables
" 26	Ealing W.S.P.U.	J. Y. Kennedy
" 26	Hyde Park M.L.W.S.	Theodor Gugenheim
" 26	" "	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 26	" "	Dr. Drysdale
" 28	Searle N.U.W.S.S.	Cecil Weatherley
" 29	Watford N.U.W.S.S.	Laurence Housman
" 29	Kensington M.P.U.	H. W. Nevinson
" 29	Windsor L.S.W.S.	Reginald Pott
" 30	Steinway Hall W.S.P.U.	Rev. F. M. Green
" 30	Westbourne Grove W.T.R.L.	Laurence Housman
" 31	Muswell Hill L.S.W.S.	Dr. Drysdale
" 31	" "	J. Malcolm Mitchell
June 2	Hyde Park M.L.W.S.	Dr. Drysdale
" 2	" "	Lewis Phillips
" 2	" "	Reginald H. Pott
" 2	" "	John Simpson
" 2	" "	Theodor Gugenheim
" 2	" "	J. Malcolm Mitchell
" 2	" M.P.U.	Reginald H. Pott
" 2	Hampstead Heath C.L.W.S.	J. Malcolm Mitchell

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