

THE ANNUAL FABIAN CONFERENCE

Clifford's Inn Hall, Saturday, July 5th, 1913.

THE ANNUAL FABIAN CONFERENCE will take place on Saturday, July 5th, at Clifford's Inn Hall, Fleet Street, London, from 10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. The Conference is open to visitors. R. C. K. ENSOR will be chairman.

AGENDA.

1. Chairman's address.

2. Secretary's report as to work, progress, and organization and methods of local societies, followed by discussion.

(Delegates are requested to come prepared with brief statements as to the experiences of their own societies, instances of success and failure, enquiries and questions to which replies are sought, suggestions for new developments, etc.)

It is proposed that the discussion should be taken under the following heads:

(a) *Disposal of Literature.*—What is the practice as to this? What methods have been found most effective? A special literature secretary. A group of volunteers to sell. A stall at the society's own meetings. Stalls at other meetings. Sales by volunteers attending other meetings. Outdoor sales.

(b) *The Society's own Meetings.*—What subjects are found most attractive and most useful? Arrangements for getting lectures from among the society's members. From other societies. Arrangements for making known the meetings and for getting them reported in local press. How to get non-members to attend.

(c) *Organization of Lectures in other Societies.*—The success of Liverpool. Experience elsewhere. Appointment of a lecture secretary. The kind of circular to issue to other organizations in the locality. Preparation of a complete list of such organizations.

(d) *Publication of Local Tracts.*—The Liverpool Fabian Tracts. The Blackburn Housing Leaflet. Experience of other societies. Suggestion of a possible "localizing" of a general Tract.

(e) *Increase of Membership.*—Experience as to the most effective methods of making new members. Personal solicitation. Invitations to meetings. House to house distribution. Special circularization.

(f) *Utilization of the Local Press.*—How reports of meetings are obtained. Experience as to getting letters inserted. Running a controversy. Contributed articles.

(g) *Local Government.*—Advantages of systematically watching proceedings of local parish, district, town, or county council, board of guardians, (in Scotland) school board. Influence on elected representatives. Material for press campaigns. Local elections.

(h) *Educational Classes.*—What is the experience with regard to running classes in (1) economics, (2) Socialism, (3) a leading book, (4) some topical subject, such as Insurance Bill, Syndicalism, etc.? Would it be possible to run these if syllabuses, lecture notes, questions, etc., were supplied from London?

(i) *Fabian Book Boxes.*—What has been experience with these? What defects are reported? Why are they not used? How could they be made more acceptable and useful?

(j) *Research Work.*—How far has it been found possible to undertake any specific research of local character? Investigations into housing conditions at Deptford, Blackburn, Hull, Chesterfield, etc. Conditions of school feeding, school medical attendance, etc. Local administration of Poor Law. Co-operation with Fabian Research Department in Control of Industry Enquiry on Land and Rural Problems Enquiry.

(k) *Joint Action with Other Bodies.*—How far has it been possible to take joint action with local I.L.P.? Or with local Labor Party? Or in helping with Labor or Socialist demonstrations, conferences, or meetings? Suggestions and experiences.

(l) *Funds.*—What have proved the most successful methods of raising funds? What is the result of (1) fixed subscription, (2) appeal for donations, (3) sales of literature, (4) charging for admission to lectures, (5) other methods?

(m) *New Lines of Work.*—Suggestions are invited as to any other lines of work tried or proposed.

(n) *Assistance by the London Fabian Society.*—In what directions has this assistance been found most useful? What are the drawbacks which have prevented its being more freely taken advantage of? How could it be made more effective?

CHISWICK F.S. :

That the proposed discussion following the adoption of the Secretary's report on the work of local societies be postponed until after all the resolutions on the agenda, for the discussion of which the Conference has been primarily called together, have been disposed of.

RESOLUTIONS.

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

That this Conference, recognizing that the fullest information in regard to the latest developments in the control of industry and the methods of co-operation and trade unionism should be at the disposal of the Socialist movement, urges upon the members of all Fabian societies to co-operate in the work undertaken by the Fabian Research Department.

Amendment by FABIAN NURSERY :

For "the fullest" substitute "sufficient"; for "should be" substitute "is already." Delete all words after "societies" and add "the necessity of utilizing it by propagandist and political action."

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE :

That this Conference is of opinion that the work of exposing overcrowded and insanitary housing conditions is a valuable method of promoting the War against Poverty Campaign, and urges Fabian societies and local Fabian groups to investigate the housing conditions in their districts and, when advisable, to publish the results in a similar form to that adopted by the Blackburn Fabian Society.

3. WOMEN'S GROUP :

That this Conference of the Fabian Society protests against the action of our retrograde Government in interfering with the right of

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public meeting and the freedom of the press, and arresting persons on mere suspicion under an obsolete Act.

Amendment by CHISWICK F.S. :

That the following words be added after the word Act: "And desires to make such protests effective by registering the opinion that it is highly undesirable that Fabians should in any way support such a retrograde Government by standing as, or assisting, Liberal candidates.

4. WOMEN'S GROUP :

That this Conference of the Fabian Society endorses the resolution passed at the last Annual Conference of the Independent Labor Party demanding a Government measure for the enfranchisement of women, and calling upon the Parliamentary Labor Party vigorously to oppose all proposals for amending the franchise or registration laws unless women are included.

Amendment by WOMEN'S GROUP :

After the word "included" in the last line add the following: "And this Conference desires also to call attention to the work of the Suffrage Committee of the Fabian Women's Group, and urges all members of the Fabian Society to support the Committee in every way possible."

Amendment by GLASGOW F.S. :

That after the word "laws" in the last line the following words be inserted: "including measures for the abolition of plural voting."

Amendment by CHISWICK F.S. :

Delete the words "or registration" in line five.

Amendment by FABIAN NURSERY :

Delete all words after the word "Society" in line one and substitute "demands a Government measure for the enfranchisement of women, and endorses the determination of the Labor Party to oppose the extension of the franchise which does not include women."

5. WOMEN'S GROUP :

This Conference is of opinion that women should be eligible to compete for posts in all grades of the Civil Service (as at present organized or as it may be reconstituted); and that they should enter the Service and obtain promotion therein on the same terms as men; also that the principle be adopted of equal rates of pay for the same work done by men or women of the same standing; further, this Conference is of opinion that there should be less disparity between the payment awarded to the higher and lower grades of the Service.

6. GLASGOW F.S. :

This Conference is of opinion that special efforts should be made to increase the membership of the Society, and that the Executive should consider the desirability of issuing an invitation to join the Fabian Society, with an explanation of its aims and methods, for distribution by the London and Provincial Societies and Groups, as well as other methods of giving effect to this opinion.

7. COVENTRY F.S. :

That, in the opinion of this Conference, the best interests of the Society demand that the next Annual Conference shall be held in some provincial centre, such as Birmingham.

Amendment by GLASGOW F.S. :

Delete all words after "That" in the first line and substitute "in the opinion of this Conference, the best interests of the Society demand that the Conference be held alternately in London and the provinces."

8. EDUCATION GROUP :

That this Conference is of opinion that further grants from the National Exchequer should be given in aid of education.

Amendment by GLASGOW F.S. :

That the words "housing and public health" be added after the word "education" in the second line.

9. EDUCATION GROUP :

That this Conference calls upon the Government:

- (a) To abolish half-time labor below the age of fourteen years.
- (b) To establish fourteen years as the minimum age for total exemption from school attendance.

Amendment by CHISWICK F.S. :

Delete the word "fourteen" in line four, and substitute the word "sixteen."

Amendment by FABIAN NURSERY :

Delete the words "calls upon the Government," and substitute "urges upon the Labor Party to introduce a Bill."

10. NURSERY :

That this Conference, while welcoming extensions of State and municipal activity, is of opinion that such activities can only be rendered democratic by the existence of strong labor representation on administrative bodies, and instructs the Executive to urge the necessity for increased labor representation on every possible opportunity.

Amendment by GLASGOW F.S. :

That the words "and socialist" be inserted after the word "labor" in lines three and five.

11. NURSERY :

That this Conference requests the Executive Committee to endeavor to arrange for the formation of a standing joint committee of the executives of the Nursery and the University Socialist Federation, in order to prevent the very serious loss of membership which now occurs when persons leave the universities.

Amendment by EDINBURGH U.F.S. :

Delete all words after the word "Conference" in line one, and substitute the following: "suggests that the Fabian Nursery correspond direct with the University Socialist Federation regarding the establishment of a joint committee of the two organizations."

Amendment by GLASGOW F.S. :

That after the word "Nursery" in line three the following words be inserted: "representatives of provincial societies."

12. OXFORD U.F.S. :

That the Executive Committee take no official action, by issuing appeals or by subscribing, in support of either of the two Labor Dailies.

Amendment by CLAPHAM AND DISTRICT F.S. :

Delete all words after "That" in line one, and substitute the following: "if the Executive Committee take official action, by issuing appeals or by subscribing, they shall support both of the Labor Dailies."

*13. LIVERPOOL F.S. :

That in view of the methods adopted by the insurance companies in settling claims under the Workmen's Compensation Act it is advisable that such insurances should be taken out of the sphere of private enterprise and brought under a scheme of National Insurance which shall be compulsory on the employers.

*14. WOMEN'S GROUP :

That this Conference is of opinion that in any legislation affecting the remuneration of women weight should be given to the fact that a large proportion of women workers are contributing to the support of others besides themselves.

*15. CAMBRIDGE U.F.S., LONDON U.F.S., BIRMINGHAM U.F.S., LIVERPOOL U.F.S., EDINBURGH U.F.S., MANCHESTER U.F.S. :

That this Conference urges the Fabian Society actively to reciprocate the desire of the University Socialist Federation for complete co-operation with its work.

* These resolutions were received after the appointed date.