

**Trade Unionism
and the
Class War**

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In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act

Trade Unionism and The Class War

AUTHOR'S NOTE (1919 Edition).

Trade Unionism and The Class War was published first in 1911. It met with a great deal of criticism and received one complimentary notice. This was from "Dangle" in the *Clarion*! It was reprinted in 1914 in the *Herald of Revolt*.

The present edition is revised. The introductory section is expanded into a chapter. The third section of the original pamphlet—which would have been the fourth as the essay now stands—treating with the question of representation is omitted. This properly belongs to the companion essay, *Representation and the State*, and will be embodied in it when that pamphlet is revised.

Many persons object to the reasoning of this essay because they consider its logic fatal to all idea of action. This criticism is based on a misunderstanding. I do not deny that men and women must function under capitalism and engage constantly in petty disputes. I only insist that such disputes are not vital. By preaching up dissatisfaction, I am removing the tendency to engage in worthless palliative effort, and hastening the crisis. After all, action which accomplishes nothing, is not of much moment. And trade unionism has accomplished nothing so far as the well-being of the *entire* working-class is concerned. The plea for revolution is not pedantry. It is a simple statement of stern necessity. The second and third chapters are unaltered, except for a passing word here and there, from the original pamphlet.

London, W., June, 1919.

G. A. A.

I.—TRADE UNIONISM AND REVOLUTION.

The struggle of the Tolpuddle Martyrs for the right of combination under the Reform Ministry of 1832, marks the beginnings of British Trade Unionism. The glamour of romance which belongs to its origin has contributed to its successful development as a social institution. Eight years after the Repeal of the Combination laws, Trade Unionism was deemed an illegal conspiracy. To-day, it is a bulwark of the capitalist system. Something more than tradition is necessary to explain this passage from outlawry

