

R U L E S

OF THE

National Union of the Working Classes.

ONE PENNY.

DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

The members of the National Union, convinced that forgetfulness of and contempt for the Rights of Man, in a municipal state of society, are the only causes of the crimes and misfortunes of the world, have resolved to proclaim their sacred and unalienable rights, in order that they, by comparing the acts of the government with the ends of every social institution, may never suffer themselves to be oppressed and degraded by tyranny; that the people may always have before their eyes the basis of their liberty and happiness; the magistrates the rule of their conduct and duty; and legislators the object of their appointment. They therefore acknowledge, and proclaim to the world, the following declaration of the RIGHTS OF MAN.

- I. The end of society is the PUBLIC GOOD, and the institution of government is to secure to EVERY INDIVIDUAL, the enjoyment of his rights.
- II. The rights of Man in society, are liberty—equality before the laws—security of his person—and the full enjoyment of the produce of his labour.
- III. Liberty is that power which belongs to a man of doing every thing that does not infringe upon the right of another. Its principle is nature;—its rule justice;—its protection the law;—and its moral limits are defined by this maxim:—*Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you.*
- IV. The law is the free and solemn expression of the public will:—it ought to be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes;—it cannot order but what is just and useful;—it cannot forbid but what is hurtful.
- V. The right of expressing one's thoughts and opinions, either by the press or in any other manner;—the right of assembling peaceably;—and the free exercise of worship, cannot be forbidden.
- VI. The necessity of announcing these rights, implies the existence of despotism on the part of the governors, or ignorance on the part of the people.
- VII. Instruction is the want of all; society and government ought, therefore, to do all in their power, to favour the progress of reason and truth; and to place instruction within the reach of all.
- VIII. A people have always the right of revising, amending, and changing their constitution:—one generation cannot subject to its laws future generations.
- IX. Every adult member of society, has an equal right to nominate those who legislate for the community; thereby concurring through his representatives in the enactment of the laws.
- X. Oppression is exercised against the social body, when ONE of its members is oppressed:—oppression is exercised against EACH MEMBER, when the social body is oppressed.
- XI. When a government violates the rights of the people, resistance becomes the most sacred, and the most indispensable of duties.

CONSTITUTION.

1. The constitution of this Union is essentially popular.
2. It admits as equal members all persons whatever, whose names shall be registered in the books of the Union, so long as they shall conform to its rules and regulations.
3. It holds all its members eligible to office by right, and selects from its own body its own officers and managers; recognizing only the following simple, rational, politic, and just principles in the determination of its choice;—namely, *virtue, intelligence, and capacity for the performance of duties.*
4. It confides the administration of its government, to a general committee, which committee derive their authority exclusively from the written or published laws of the Union; conformably to its letter and spirit.
5. It constitutes its general committee, upon the basis of representation, in the persons of all sub-committees, attached to branch or district divisions of the Union; of the delegates of all recognized trade, benefit, and co-operative societies; and of such other persons as shall be elected committee-men at the monthly meetings of the Union.
6. The committees of branch or district divisions shall be chosen as follows;—namely, Any member of the Union at a general meeting of the several district divisions may nominate another as a committee-man; the said nomination to be put to the vote of the meeting, and the majority of votes to determine the election.
7. It declares a fund or capital essential to its strength and prosperity, it therefore imposes upon all its members, the obligation of contributing a sum not less than one penny per month, payable in advance; such fund, to be exclusively applied to the interests of the Union and the promotion of its objects. But should a greater sum be required to meet any pressing exigency, the committee may call a general meeting of the members to raise such subscription to a sum not exceeding one penny a week.
8. That the funds of the Union be invested in the hands of a treasurer appointed at a general meeting of the members.
9. The Union decides all propositions relative to its constitution, laws, government, and objects; also the nomination and expulsion of officers and members, by the vote of a majority at a general meeting.

OBJECTS OF THE NATIONAL UNION.

1. The objects of the NATIONAL UNION are,—First, to avail itself of every opportunity, in the progress of society, for the securing, by degrees, those things specified in the preceding declaration of the Rights of Man.
2. To obtain for every working man, unrestricted by unjust and partial laws, the full value of his labour, and the free disposal of the produce of his labour.
3. To support, as circumstances may determine, by all just means, every fair and rational opposition made by societies of working men

(such societies being part of the Union), against the combination and tyranny of masters and manufacturers; whenever the latter shall seek, unjustly, to reduce the wages of labour, or shall institute proceedings against the workmen; the character of which proceedings, in the estimation of the Union, shall be deemed vexatious and oppressive.

4. To obtain for the nation an effectual reform in the Commons House of the British parliament: the basis of which reform shall be annual parliaments, extension of the suffrage to every adult male, vote by ballot, and, especially, NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION for members of parliament; this Union being convinced, that until intelligent men from the productive and useful classes of society possess the right of sitting in the Commons House of Parliament, to represent the interests of the working people, justice in legislation will never be rendered unto them.

5. To inquire, consult, consider, discuss, and determine, respecting the rights and liberties of the working people, and respecting the just and most effectual means of securing all such rights.

6. To prepare petitions, addresses, and remonstrances to the crown, and both Houses or either House of Parliament, respecting the preservation of public rights, the repeal of bad laws, and the enactment of a wise and all-comprehensive code of good laws.

7. To promote peace, union, and concord among all classes of people, and to guide and direct the public mind, into uniform, peaceful, and legitimate operations; instead of leaving it to waste its strength, in loose, desultory, and unconnected exertions.

8. To collect and organize the peaceful expression of public opinion, so as to bring it to act upon the Houses of Parliament, in a just and effectual way.

9. To concentrate into one focus a knowledge of moral and political economy, that all classes of society may be enlightened by its radiation; the NATIONAL UNION feeling assured, that the submission of the people to misrule and oppression, arises from the absence of sound moral and political knowledge amongst the mass of the community.

10. To avoid all private or secret proceedings, all concealment of any of the views or objects of the Union, and to facilitate for all persons invested with legal authority, a full, free, and constant access to all the books, documents, regulations, and proceedings of the Union

MEANS OF OBTAINING THESE OBJECTS.

The means proposed are,—

1. By the creation of a fund, constituted by an equal subscription of all the members of the Union, and by donations.
2. By the formation of branch or district divisions, having committees attached to them.
3. By convening frequent meetings of the Union, and of the branch or district divisions, for the purpose of agitating such measures as may relate to the principles specified in the Declaration of Rights; in the Constitution, and in the objects of the Union.
4. By the instrumentality of the public press.
5. By the publication and dissemination of pamphlets, tracts, &c.
6. By the active talent, zeal, and industry of the representatives of the Union, in the members of the general committee of the Union; of the committees of branch or district associations; and of delegates from trade, benefit, and co-operative societies; and by such other means as may be deemed advisable.

GOVERNMENT.

1. The management of the affairs of the Union is entrusted to the general committee, as constituted by the 5th and 6th article of the Constitution.
2. The committees of branch or district associations shall appoint collectors, from among themselves, to receive the contributions of members; the delegates of trade, benefit, and co-operative societies, shall act as collectors to their respective societies; and the subscription shall be paid by the collectors and delegates to the persons appointed by the Union.
3. Every officer of the Union shall keep a true and proper account of all business transacted by him relative to the affairs of the Union, and a copy of such accounts shall be delivered to the secretary of the Union.
4. The general committee shall meet weekly, or as often as they may deem necessary;—at such meetings seven are competent to act;—they keep a record of their proceedings.
5. The members of the Union shall meet monthly, or whenever called upon by the general committee, or by a requisition signed by not less than 40 of the members.
6. The general committee shall submit a report every three months to a meeting of the members of the Union; which quarterly report shall state the amount of receipts and expenditure; the balance of cash in hand; the increase or decrease of members, the nature of their correspondence, and the general results of their labours.
7. The accounts of the Union shall be examined every quarter by three auditors, who are not on the committee, to be chosen by the members from amongst themselves at the monthly meeting, preceding the quarterly night; the said auditors to possess the power of demanding all receipts, vouchers, and necessary explanations from the committee and servants of the Union.
8. All books, documents, &c. in the possession of officers of the Union shall be produced when demanded by the general committee.
9. The accounts of the Union shall be open to the inspection of the members at all reasonable times, whenever such inspection does not interfere with the progress of business.
10. That each member of the Union pay a halfpenny for his card.
11. That all bills for payment be examined by the committee, and no money whatever shall be paid until the committee have so determined.
12. No person shall be allowed to address the meeting in a state of intoxication; and if he attempt to interrupt the business, he shall be desired to leave the room.