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Letter to Freedom about the Carmaux strike

Agnes Henry

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Dear Comrades,

The Carmaux Strike, as a strike, is, as all the world knows, at an end. Reséguier, the employer, has succeeded in securing the services of the men he required, and has rejected 330, to whom he objects and are still unemployed.

On the other hand, he has not succeeded in crushing their Union, which was his object in forcing the strike, while it (the strike) has been the means of calling forth an enthusiastic manifestation of solidarity on the part of all the Socialists of France. That in itself is a gain in the development of Socialism, but that is not all. Where the politicians have failed, the non-political revolutionary Socialists have come not merely, as we trust, to the rescue of the Carmaux glass-blowers, but to effect a far grander, because more far-reaching purpose.

The French trade unions are composed of real Revolutionary Socialists and they would not support a mere co-operative glassworks. They are opposed to political influence and dictation, and they have learned the futility, for Socialist ends, of merely co-operative con-

cerns. They have, however, set themselves the arduous task of erecting a Workingmen's Glassworks, which is to belong to the whole body of French Socialist workmen, under the direction of a committee of 45 members of various unions, and the profits of which are to go to the benefit of the Socialist propaganda on purely economic lines.

Never yet has such a Communistic effort, on so large a scale, been attempted in the Socialist movement. Such an example, too, when once successfully carried out, will certainly be followed, and will strike a death-blow at all political Socialism.

There are two methods adopted for collecting the necessary capital: by the sale of tickets at 2d. each (which give the right to all who buy them to attend all meetings and all entertainment free, which may be held on behalf of the factory), and by lottery subscriptions of articles to be drawn for on 30th June next at Paris, or of money towards such articles.

The tickets at 2d. are sent post free in packets of 50. Could not our propagandists speak and collect in their meetings towards buying the tickets and give entertainments to which the said tickets would give admission? In short, could not our English comrades immediately start a movement of assistance and, at the same time, of propaganda? I trust they will do so, and do it speedily.

Fraternally yours,

A. Henry.