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SIXTY YEARS OF TRADE UNIONISM

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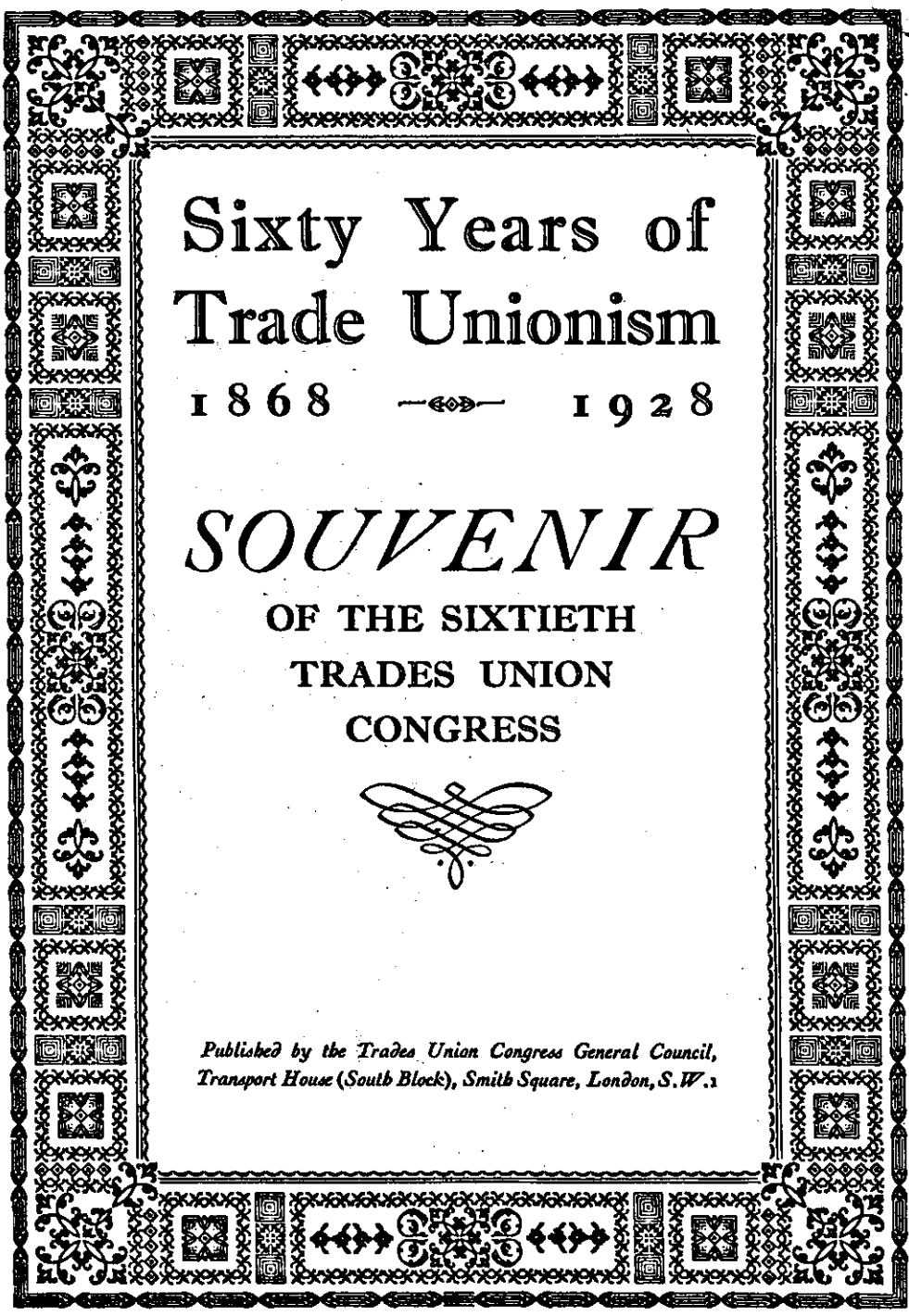
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HEADQUARTERS OF THE T.U.C.



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Sixty Years of Trade Unionism

1868 —  — 1928

SOUVENIR

OF THE SIXTIETH
TRADES UNION
CONGRESS



*Published by the Trades Union Congress General Council,
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FOREWORD

The Sixtieth Trades Union Congress is an event of importance in the social history of Great Britain. It is a landmark in the development of Trade Unionism and affords an occasion for reviewing the achievements of organised Labour during the last 60 years. Within the compass of these pages the full story cannot be told, but an effort, despite the handicap due to lack of adequate photographic records, has been made to set forth the salient incidents of that story and to show the changes that have taken place under the influence of the Congress between 1868 and 1928.

Congress was born during a venomous attack by the successful Capitalism of the period, upon the workers' organisations. When the preliminary conference was called by the Workingmen's Association in 1867, very few people had the vote. In the Franchise Act, passed in the year before Congress was established at Manchester in 1868, the agricultural workers were not enfranchised. The ballot was not secret. There was no education system. Illiteracy was widespread. The fight for political industrial and social freedom was assisted by the Trades Union Congress, and almost without exception every reform passed since that time was either initiated by the Trades Union Congress or received its full support to the successful end.

It will do our younger folks good to read the story of our Movement and to learn what changes have been brought about by the Trade Union Movement. If it is not presumptuous to say it, even Trade Union officials would be surprised if they went outside their own section of Trade Union history, and read up the work done by our forefathers. The 60 hours per week has been brought down to 48, 47, and 44 hours per week. The rates of pay have risen from 4d. to four times 4d. per hour in many trades, and women's wages have risen 300 per cent. The Franchise has been extended to include all adults and no harder fighter for this claim has ever been known than the T.U.C. Congress made possible a variety of Acts for the betterment of industrial conditions: Mines Acts, Factory Acts; Inspection of mines, buildings, factories, ships; better housing, free education, secondary education, the abolition of sweating, and the half-time system; Trade Boards, Minimum Wage Acts: All came from the Trades Union Congress.

In the preparation of this Souvenir we have had the invaluable help of Mr. Sidney Webb, M.P., Sir H. H. Slesser, K.C., M.P., and Mr. J. J. Mallon, whose contributions appear under their names. The remainder of its contents is the work of our Congress Secretary, Mr. Walter M. Citrine and his staff at the T.U.C. Headquarters, with the assistance also of two members of the Labour Party staff, Messrs. W. W. Henderson and W. G. Hall.

London, August, 1928.

BEN TURNER.

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