

C.L.P.21.

“SET MY PEOPLE FREE!”

By

Wm. C. OWEN.



Published by the

COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY
43, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON, W.C.2.

PRICE

TWOPENCE

6-1624

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(For Map see page 3 of cover.)

Landholding in Cambridgeshire.

Six peers held nearly one-twentieth of the county.

Class 1. Holders of more than 1,000 acres:—47 persons held nearly three-tenths.

Class 2. Holders of 100 to 1,000 acres:—721 persons held over one-third.

The above 774 persons held over two-thirds of the county.

Class 3. Holders of 1 to 100 acres:—5,373 persons held less than one-sixth.

Class 4. Holders of less than 1 acre:—6,677 persons shared between them less than a four hundred and sixty-fourth part of the county.

Landless.

174,082 others did not possess one square inch of their native land.

TO THE DISINHERITED.

The Author of this pamphlet says that he wrote with the "deliberate intention of making the disinherited disgusted with themselves for enduring the conditions now existing in this country; of getting them to understand, if possible, that the life of a Lazarus crawling at the feet of Dives is a life not worth living." It is difficult to imagine that any thoughtful reader can follow him through to his conclusion without being profoundly affected by the fact that we are living in a "so-called economic system which is nothing but the continuous looting of the helpless by those who have reduced them to helplessness."

But Mr. Owen is no pessimist. He is a realist who probes beneath the surface, tracing effect to cause and refusing to be lulled into a false sense of security by those who cry, "Prosperity! Prosperity!" when there is no prosperity. Because of this he is an optimist in the true sense of the word. Correctly diagnosing the disease, he prescribes, not an opiate to deaden pain, nor an ointment to allay irritation while leaving the cause unaffected; but, going direct to the root-cause, he demands its immediate and entire removal as the only possible means of restoration to perfect health.

"Two things at least every one of us knows, for certain," he says:—" (1) That he is living on this planet; and (2) that, somehow or other, by the natural resources of this planet he must live. We may humbug ourselves on other matters, but not on that; and never can we hope to settle satisfactorily any of our social problems until our institutions are brought into harmony with these two irrefutable facts."

"The whole earth, and all its resources," he declares, "should be for the free and equal use of every child of man"; and in writing the present pamphlet he has added yet another to the many valuable contributions he has made to the cause of Human Freedom.

J. W. G. P.

“SET MY PEOPLE FREE!”

By

Wm. C. OWEN.

To continue a so-called economic system, which is nothing but the continuous looting of the helpless by those who have reduced them to helplessness, is—SHEER INSANITY.

To pay tribute to the few for permitting us to have access to our common mother, Earth, is—LUNACY GONE MAD.

To wear away our lives as wage-slaves, and then allow our wages to be filched from us by financial thimble-riggers, is to have lost all touch of the realities of life.

We are living in a madhouse; for in all the allegedly civilised countries the masses go hungry because they have worked too hard at raising food; shiver in rags because they have produced more clothing than the market can absorb; and wander homeless because, with wide spaces all around them, they cannot occupy the patches of land on which to build their shelters. No animal ever allows itself to be reduced to that extremity. The savage starves only when his natural supplies have failed; and nowhere will you find a tribe that cannot clothe and shelter itself, even in climates twenty times as hard as ours. No; so long as we remain content to be shut up in this madhouse, we have no right to look down upon the savage. By virtue of the knowledge our forefathers accumulated, we should be a thousand times more powerful than he is; but, in the mass, we are far more helpless. The savage who would change places with the slum inhabitants of Liverpool or Glasgow, where thousands of families have to pig it in single rooms, would be a savage who had lost his wits.

I write this with the deliberate intention of making the disinherited disgusted with themselves for enduring the conditions now existing in this country; of getting them to understand, if possible, that the life of a Lazarus crawling at the feet of Dives is a life not worth living. Nature has no patience with the moral coward, and the slave who has not the pluck to claim his rights, and get them, is the creature she punishes most mercilessly. She leaves him coldly to the penury he has brought upon himself. In the name of all that is sensible, why should she weep for him? He has turned his back on her. He has deserted the mother who never would have allowed him to come to want. He has shown himself, in all sober truth, the atheist of atheists, for his whole existence is one assertion that he has no belief in LIFE, and no confidence in the powers with which Evolution—or God, or Providence, or whatever other name you choose to use—has generously endowed him.

The proof of my statement that we are living in a madhouse, and that it has robbed us for the time being of our senses, is furnished by the almost universal belief that we can patch this crazy system up; that by judicious pulling and hauling we can insure the stability of a social pyramid at present standing on its apex; that by a carefully-organised and efficiently-policed “charity” we can bridge the gulf between millionaire and pauper; that we can continue indefinitely to treat this world as if it were a ball of gold, to be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder; that through books and officially-licensed teachers we can civilise children whose homes are in slums to which no self-respecting nobleman would condemn his pigs; that somehow or other, by soft words and fine parliamentary orations, we can satisfy our wage-working masses, although ninety per cent of them, working at jobs in which they have no personal interest, are habitually haunted by the fear of losing these jobs; and that, by a cunning mixture of doles and military circuses, we can breathe into the masses an undying love of what, with brazen effrontery, we call “their” country, although not a foot of it is open to their use.

To me all that is madness, and a cowardly evasion of the bottom facts of life. To me a landless people is a Mohammed’s coffin, suspended in the air, and only able by a miracle to prolong its unnatural existence. To me a nation that can only live by wheedling or forcing all the peoples of the world to buy its goods, is a nation that has lost its last shred of independence and become the slave of every money-making scoundrel. Already we have reached that desperate pass. Our traders to-day dare not discriminate. If some blood-thirsty Oriental despot is in need of arms, they supply him gladly, and congratulate themselves and their country on having done a good stroke of business. If Darkest Africa wants idols,

Birmingham is delighted to supply them, and if you examine the whole field of British commerce, as my own professional occupation compels me to examine it, you will discover that its activities are largely devoted to forcing its wage-slaves to toil maddeningly at worse than useless tasks. You prate about a soul! England, commercialised to the marrow of her bones, is thinking only of how she can keep her head, by hook or crook, above the water.

Necessarily her wage-workers, absolutely dependent on the jobs their masters can provide for them, are in no better case; and the course our Labour Party is forced to pursue shows conclusively how deep the rot has cut. The Labour Party is always, loudly and ostentatiously, for peace; but the Labour Party must build new cruisers, to furnish its dissatisfied followers with work. The Labour Party is for economy, but the Labour Party must howl with indignation when it is proposed that certain dockyards, devoted to the maintenance of warships, shall be closed down. The Labour Party professes to be working for the overthrow of Capitalism, but the Labour Party must vote huge subsidies to capitalist syndicates operating in foreign countries, because it will bring work to English factories. The leaders of the Labour Party know as well as I do that in voting huge sums for road improvements they are simply adding to the landowner's wealth; but they dare not oppose such measures because they promise to provide the wage-worker with work.

It is the misfortune, the unspeakable misfortune, of the position into which the whole nation has drifted by resigning itself to an unnatural and most precarious method of earning its subsistence. A sensible man will not voluntarily squander the priceless heritage of life by devoting his energies to useless, and still less to injurious, work. He will want to labour at the useful; to aim at targets worth the hitting. But England is no longer in a position to think or act that way. England's masses must have work, and England as a whole has now become debauched into the belief that the opportunity to toil, no matter at what degrading occupation, is Life's most precious boon. I am incapable of imagining a philosophy more degrading. I can think of none more essentially irreligious and cynical; and I say, with profound conviction, that a nation committed to such a conception of its destiny is a nation lost.

It is a desperate position, but it has to be tackled; and there is only one way of tackling it successfully. We must face our facts. We must speak out, evading nothing. We must not care a fig for popularity, or stand in awe of place and power. The road we have to travel will be no primrose path, and it cannot be trodden for us by any paternal Government or benevolent Dictators. It is our job, and we ourselves must do it; going straight for realities; awakening the masses

to some better conception of Life's true meaning and possibilities; inspiring them with hope, and thereby clearing the way for that great change which must be made if England is to live. How that can be done and how that hope can be honestly held out, I should like to have the opportunity of explaining, to the best of my ability, in a future article. Meanwhile our great danger is that we shall drift into non-essentials, and find that, after all our sacrifices, we have had only a disgusting and useless row. If we fail to free ourselves of the parasites now devouring us nothing will have been accomplished.

A lad, clothed in the cheapest of materials and evidently poor, comes swinging down the Californian trail. As is the custom of the country, I hail him with a "Hullo, Bud! How goes it?" To which he replies, frankly and cheerily, "All right. How goes it with yourself?" On the other hand, when I visit prosperous friends not fifty miles from London, the men on the estate touch their forelocks, the women curtsy, and a professional beggar, who understands his business, murmurs submissively, "Good morning, Squire!" The first style of greeting delights me, because it reminds me of our common manhood. The second style disgusts me, because it is not courtesy but humiliation, and the man who humiliates himself before me pulls me down. He throws up a barrier between us, and sterilises my social life by robbing me of that good fellowship to which I am entitled. In short, I dislike a country in which every one is either looking up or looking down.

I put this at the very front, because I consider it the cardinal hinge on which everything must turn. Since my return to England, nine years ago, I have talked with men and women in pretty nearly every walk of life, and I have discovered that we can discuss economic questions quite amicably; for over intellectual problems people seldom get excited. But when I insist on the equal rights of all men, and declare that the Duke of Northumberland, for example, should not be accorded a single privilege his humblest tenant may not enjoy, I run up instantly against deep-rooted prejudices and have a battle on my hands. This I know by experience, for I have tested it time and again, and always with the same result. On one occasion a charming old gentleman, a stonemason, with whom I had been holding a most friendly conversation, broke it off abruptly, saying: "Sir, I am no believer in equality." Then he looked at me pleadingly and asked if I did not recognise that the King was superior to any of his subjects. When I shook my head, he left the table.

What does this mean? In the first place it means a spiritless view of life, which paralyses a nation intellectually by stopping the free interchange of thought. No wonder Englishmen are proverbially silent. In the second place, it shows how deep has cut that carefully-systematised teaching

which, through the mouthpiece of the Established Church, bids the masses look up to all who have been set in authority over them, and do their duty humbly in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call them. In the third place, it seems clear to me that never could that teaching have produced the result it has produced, had it not been re-inforced, daily and hourly, by an economic pressure and domination which drove it into the people's very soul, making the caste feeling finally instinctive, and causing it to be accepted as an irrefutable law of nature. Any number of workers have answered my criticisms of existing conditions with: "It has always been so, and it always will be so." Such men have no real hope; no sense of their own manhood; and until that hope and sense can be awakened in them, they are not worth a button.

Another point I wish to emphasise. To me England's economic position seems most precarious, and almost certain to grow more so as time wears on. But I am very far from thinking that her greatest danger. The thing that will break her back, as I believe, is her subservience to caste; because that is setting all the world against her. The world is moving rapidly, and with extreme energy and violence, away from caste. In the United States, despite the tremendous pressure of plutocracy whose one ambition is to bring the workers obediently to heel, there is no worship of aristocracy. On the contrary, the feeling of the masses is profoundly democratic, and they submit to gross maladministration and innumerable abuses as being preferable to settled rule by an allegedly-superior class. The same holds good of our colonies—Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa. Beyond all question it holds good of Ireland. It holds good of the new nations released by the Great War from the yoke of ancient Empires, and notoriously it is breathing new life into all the Orient, and kindling there the spirit of revolt.

Now, England's ruling class will not abandon caste, which is its real religion. Indeed, it cannot; and this compels it always to take the losing side. In Russia it was all for the Czar, as against the masses. In Turkey it threw all its influence toward maintaining in power a Sultanate grown hopelessly corrupt. In America, of whose assistance in the Great War it stood in desperate need, its appeal was exclusively to the plutocracy, and never to the people—a fact of which the people, who have no love for England, are well aware. In India it relies on the native princes, whose lives are a scandal. Mussolini has its sympathies, because it believes that his Dictatorship is firmly-established, and even the aristocratic Lord Curzon was proud to shake by the hand this formerly disreputable Bolshevik. Our Raj would give just as hearty a welcome to Zinoviev, or any other of the clique now ruling Russia, if it felt that their rule was equally secure, and that they could be trusted to uphold the existing order.

But what has all this to do with the Land Question? To my thinking it has everything to do with it, because until we can shake the British public out of its present reactionary isolation, and make it understand that safety lies in entering the stream of modern thought, a real movement of the masses is impossible. Only when they have become infused with the conviction that one man has just as good a right to life as has another, will the people, in the mass, be stirred into decisive action, and so provide that driving-power without which no movement can win success. Surely all propaganda should be regarded as merely a stepping-stone to action; and the only excuse for delaying action is that it will be necessarily futile until thought has run clear and men know exactly what they want. Students, therefore—keen-eyed, hungry students, such as Europe and the East is now producing in constantly-increasing numbers—are the first necessity, because their special function is to clarify thought and steer the movement out of non-essentials and into the practical and real.

An enormous simplification is needed; for all history is there to prove that the great movements march to their appointed goals on simple lines. The Reformation converted half Europe to Protestantism on the simple issue that an authoritarian church could no longer be permitted to rule dictatorially the conscience of mankind. Feudalism was overthrown—in France but not in England, where it still flourishes—because the serfs decided that they could no longer allow their lives and fortunes to be at the mercy of a merciless landed-nobility. Chattel slavery perished in the United States when the people realised that it was monstrous to set human beings on the auction block, and buy and sell them like a bale of cotton; and Land Monopoly will perish when the masses discover that exactly the same result is obtained by the private cornering of those natural resources essential to existence on this planet. Until then, in my opinion, its overthrow cannot come.

By "students" I do not mean at all the graduates of schools and universities. Those institutions are maintained by the State, and by the privileged classes that control and run the State, for two main purposes. Their higher education is devoted to the training of future rulers, or assistants to rulers—the gentlemen of the so-called learned professions. Their lower education has as its object the production of workmen whose technical skill will make money for the employer. The last thing they are thinking of is any radical change in the existing system; and their chief effort is to cover up any awkward truth which, if generally accepted, would menace the safety of the system. If we are to break away from the established order we must get out its leading-strings; think for ourselves, and refuse to take as gospel the word of those who are deeply interested in leading us off the track. The

real student is the one who insists on getting down to bottom facts. That is the type needed most urgently to-day; because ninety-nine hundredths of our troubles are due to our being habitually drugged with lies, bamboozled with those half-truths which are always most misleading, and bewildered by clouds of dust raised for the express purpose of bewildering us. The basic principles of sociology are simplicity itself, and the first of those principles is that what human labour has created is in a category entirely distinct from that which no human labour brought into existence, viz., the LAND. That is the first thing a real student is sure to grasp, and he will be no more able to get away from it than the chemist is able to get away from the fact that gasses combine in certain proportions which he is powerless to alter.

See now where we stand! We have a huge and powerful legal profession whose entire life is devoted to expounding and defending the law of property. It cannot see this distinction. We have an immense ecclesiastical force which earns its living by teaching the masses that "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof"; which, if it means anything, must mean that the earth, with all its inexhaustible contents, belongs to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, and that he has set it apart for the support of its inhabitants. Yet this profession, trained at heavy national expense and highly honoured, cannot see this distinction; and we find our own Ecclesiastical Commissioners extorting £455,000 a year from our miners for allowing them to dig out coal which our Established Church has cornered for its own special use. Or, again, the Labour movement as a whole, though founded on the axiom that labour should be the only title to reward, cannot see this distinction; and thinks it entirely proper that a Duke of Westminster should absorb annually out of Labour's earnings a sum calculated roughly at £1,000,000, because his ancestors cornered land on which tens of thousands of Londoners are now compelled to live. I have said that we are living in a madhouse, and I maintain that it is madness to tolerate, generation after generation, arrangements so obviously unjust, so palpably provocative of that wide-spread poverty of which we complain perpetually, and so grossly opposed to common-sense. The student's task is to bring the nation back to sanity, and to show it that it can no more hope to defy with impunity a fundamental law of life than it can hope to jump off the top of the Monument and land uninjured on the pavement. All the social evils we complain of follow logically from the fact that our social structure rests on a foundation radically unsound; and I repeat that the only sane thing to be done with such a fundamental error is to root it out. If this cancer is not to kill us we must use the knife. If we are to have any chance of recovering our health we must expel this poison from our system. And who dares say that this country is in

good health? It is a country of hospitals; one in which colossal sums—every penny of which comes from the application of labour to natural resources—have to be paid annually out of the general fund, to keep a large percentage of the population from starving to death.

My plea is for men and women who, seeing a perfectly simple truth, will have the loyalty to stand by it, and the courage to shout it from the housetops. And for this they must be students. A famous critic has said that literature influences the reader not so much by what it says as by the manner in which it says it; and so it is, I think, with propaganda, which seems to me the most difficult of arts. It is easy to grasp a simple truth and state it baldly; but to demonstrate, at once clearly and attractively, how it courses through all the channels of our daily life is a very different matter. That calls for a wide range of exact knowledge; for actual experiences on which to draw; for that instinctive sense of how to do it which, in my belief, can be acquired only by constant practice and close contact with the masses. In my judgment—and my life has been divided pretty equally between the two countries—the Americans are much better at this than we are; and I attribute this to the fact that they are more democratic, and that, priding themselves on being good "mixers," they are in the habit of talking to, and arguing with, every one they meet. For similar reasons Communist and I.L.P. speakers are often most expert in the handling of a crowd, and that counts enormously. It is the old saying that poets are born but orators are made; and they cannot be made by the reading of papers, or by set speeches, mugged up in libraries and delivered at drawing-room meetings. Such performances interest only the languid, and the languid are useless. The entire Labour and revolutionary movement tends steadily toward a focussing on certain central points, chief of which is the question whether this planet shall be monopolised by a few, or whether it shall be for the free and equal use of all.

It seems to me that a survey of world movements, and especially of those which have developed since the War, justifies this last statement. Whenever it has become possible for the masses to settle up new territory they have seized the opportunity with eager hands; and the War, which overthrew three great Empires and uprooted ancient landmarks, gave the land-hungry their chance. The artisans of Moscow and Leningrad, being dependent on wages, may have suffered greatly by the general dislocation, but the Russian peasant got his burning desire and greatest need, the LAND. Moreover, he got it, and holds it, on the terms invariably regarded by a peasantry as just—that is to say, by taking possession of unused land and using it—for never does it occur to the unsophisticated that they ought to pay tribute for the right of

cultivating the soil, which they look on as placed there for that very purpose. When the Kerensky Government proposed that the Russian peasants should buy out the landlords, they answered, instinctively and as their whole philosophy of life compelled them to answer: "Why should we compensate them? It is they who should compensate us, because for generations they have been living on our toil." This is the natural view of the land-worker, and the vast bulk of the earth's population is composed of land-workers. As compared with them our wage-working industrialists are but a handful; and it is a handful which, living at the good will of its employers, has no real power. Rulers can play with it, as they have been playing with the British wage-worker for centuries; but the pressure exercised by a population in possession of soil is one the boldest law-maker dare not despise.

The strength of our movement is that it has not sprung from the brain of Herbert Spencer, Henry George, Tolstoy, or any other Intellectual, but that it is rooted in mankind's instinctive common-sense. That the land should be for the free use of those who are willing to cultivate and develop it was, until comparatively recent times, the universal opinion of mankind. We inherited our system of land monopoly from the old Roman Empire, and it was that system which brought about the Empire's fall—the greatest smash on record, which shook civilisation to its foundations and was succeeded by the long centuries of barbarism known as the Dark Ages. Never yet has humanity at large believed that the earth should be the private property of the richest buyer, or that it should be possible for certain moneyed groups to corner Life's prime necessities—corn, oil, metals, rubber, etc.—which is the position confronting us to-day. It is a position without precedent in human records; and within a few short years it has grown to be a scandal so monstrous and a tyranny so oppressive that public opinion is everywhere in arms against it; for, whatever may be the productiveness of our present industrial system, the world is quite unwilling to purchase its advantages at the price of slavery to the monopolist. On that it is becoming stubbornly resolved, and this it was which caused Leo Tolstoy, a great observer of world tendencies, to declare that the land question is as ripe for settlement to-day as was that of chattel slavery three-quarters of a century ago.

Even here in England, conservative as is the general temper of our people, you will not easily persuade the miner that any single individual has the right to draw £423,000 a year (see p. 6 of "Coal and Power") for allowing him to get at this island's coal deposits, nor will you be able to convince our city populations that the enormous land values their labour has created should go into the pockets of the privileged few. So long as that endures all talk of our being a Commonwealth, or a Democracy, or a country where every

willing worker has his chance, is nauseating hypocrisy. The fact is, of course, that at present the man we honour and reward most highly is the parasitic exploiter, and that all our emigration policies are prompted by the one idea that the best thing to do with the worker is to get rid of him when we can no longer see our way to making money out of him.

Two things at least every one of us knows for certain:—
(1) That he is living on this planet; and (2) that, somehow or other, by the natural resources of this planet he must live. We may humbug ourselves on other matters, but not on that; and never can we hope to settle satisfactorily any of our social problems until our institutions are brought into harmony with those two irrefutable facts. A population divorced from access to natural resources is necessarily a population that cannot devote its energies to the satisfaction of its own wants. It must seek employment at the hands of those who are in possession of the universal storehouse, and must labour as they dictate. It may be starving, but if the master chooses that it shall be employed on digging out diamonds for the adornment of his mistresses, diamonds it will have to dig. It may be in rags and shelterless, but it is not in a position to say:—"Look here! Before I build you any more palaces I am going to put up a decent house for my own use, and before I waste time on court dresses I am going to see to the covering of my own back." Labour ought to be able to say just that; but certainly in England it cannot, and a century of organisation has not brought it a minute nearer to the day on which it can; because England's masses have permitted themselves to be driven, like steers, into a slaughter-house of helplessness, and now lie at the mercy of every exploiter. Given the fundamental stupidity of which they still remain guilty, it could not be otherwise; for, as long as the few are allowed to own the country, the many live on sufferance and must be thankful for what crumbs their masters throw them. The whole earth, and all its resources, should be for the free and equal use of every child of man. It is not a ball of gold, to be grabbed by the strongest and used or abused as suits his selfish whims.

See where we stand to-day! We have a frightful unemployment problem, and we can give our people work only by opening up to their labour the natural resources of this island. For this we have to pay whatever tribute the landed aristocracy chooses to ask. We have a frightful housing problem; but houses call for sites, and for their construction clay and timber and iron ore and other products of the soil are needed. They are to be had only on the terms the landed aristocracy sees fit to grant. We are huddled together in monstrous cities, and out of them we cannot get because on the broad spaces lying beyond their boundaries we may not trespass. Does any one mean to tell me that these spaces are being used for the

welfare of the nation? I answer that they are being abused most villainously; that they have become merely the playground and pleasure-park of the idle rich.

Go a step farther. As the natural result of this most unnatural condition, the very existence of the nation depends on capturing and holding foreign markets. Driven by that imperious necessity we became the greatest of invaders, perpetually at war. We had to open up new markets, as men open oysters, with the knife—India for our cotton goods, China for Indian opium, and so forth. Because of this millions of Englishmen have perished on the battle-field, while many more millions, slaving in our factories and workshops, have worn out their lives in producing huge quantities of goods, a large proportion of which is worse than useless. Think of the labour wasted on fleets and armies, and all the inhuman implements of modern war! Think of the human energy devoted to pandering to the vices and caprices of the idle rich! Has the game ever been worth the candle? For my part I say emphatically that never has it been, and never can it be.

However, even that worthless game is becoming played out. These markets are slipping from our grasp. The greatest of them all, such as Russia and China, are no longer willing to be used by us as dumping grounds. The new nations to which the War gave birth see no reason why they should not do their own manufacturing, and put up protective-tariff walls against us. They think that good, and they study their own interests; but to us it is death. And the British nation cannot afford to die. It will have to adjust itself to revolutionary times. It will have to abandon its old idolatry of caste, and accept that nobler Democratic faith which claims for all an equal right to Life, and, therefore, free and equal use of that which is necessary for the sustenance of Life.

This, as I understand it, is what the COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY stands for. It asserts Man's inalienable right to natural resources; believing that, if such was not the intent of whatever Power has placed us on this globe, the whole scheme of existence is meaningless, and Life itself a cruel farce. It echoes the cry of "SET MY PEOPLE FREE!" raised centuries ago by Israel, then in bondage to the Pharaohs; and thereby sets itself, as it believes, in the vanguard of that great struggle to escape from slavery which is at once the special task and special glory of this age.

(The End.)

COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

Twice, after successful revolutions, Declarations of Independence and of the Rights of Man have been made.

Now, after an upheaval of the world which has left the minds of men confused, the Commonwealth Land Party address the following Declaration to men of good-will everywhere, as indicating the foundation upon which alone Society can be made secure.

The COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY DECLARE, following the statement of the Declaration of Independence of 1776, and the Declaration of the Rights of Man by the French Assembly in 1798, that:

1. Every human being, by the mere fact of "being," has an equal and inalienable right to life (and therefore to access to the means of life), and a liberty bounded only by a like liberty of every other human being.
2. No legal enactment can deprive any human being of these inalienable rights, even with the consent of the individual; they are always and forever inalienable.
3. No human being, therefore, can have or obtain any exclusive right to ownership of the Earth, the source of all sustenance, the mother of all wealth. It is always and forever the inalienable property of all its inhabitants.
4. Security of tenure and exclusive occupation (**not ownership**) of portions of the Earth are necessary for the better production, transportation, and exchange of those things (wealth) upon which mankind depends.
5. Security of tenure and exclusive occupation of portions of the Earth can be in conformity with the natural inalienable equal rights of all, only if:

The value of such exclusive occupation is taken annually by an Authority representing the whole Community, and expended by that Authority in the service of and for the benefit of the whole Community. This value is **Rent** (or economic rent), and the measure of it is the difference in desirability, from any cause, of any portion of the Earth, as compared with the least desirable portion.

6. This **Rent**, or value of the bare site, appears as the result of the presence of human beings, and grows with the growth of the population.
7. The collection of this **Rent** for private use (as at present) is a denial of the right of access to the means of Life:

a denial of the justice of equality of opportunity: and has no sanction in equity or in natural (or moral) Law. It is, in fact, the assertion by some of a greater right to Life and Liberty than that right which should be enjoyed by all.

8. This denial of the equality of the right to Life has led to a denial of the real right of property in the things produced by labour, viz.:

The imposition of unequal, unjust, arbitrary taxation on Industry, to meet public needs, on the principle that "Necessity knows no Law," which is the denial of the right of the producer of wealth to retain it for his or her own use. This denial of the right of property, together with the failure to collect for public use the annual value created by the public, is the real cause of wars, revolutions, involuntary poverty, and most of the disease and crime of the world.

9. The Rent created by the Community is sufficient in normal times, under just conditions, to meet the expenses of the public services, and to enable the managers of the public business to take care of the incompetent and the old, and to provide educational facilities for all alike—not as charity or benevolence, but as mere Justice.
10. No generation can bind a following one, and it is the right and duty of the living to do Justice, even if some who profit by unjust conditions suffer hardship.
11. No legislative enactments of the past that are contrary to the natural Law of simple Justice can be regarded by the living as valid; if there are any such, they should be ignored or repealed.
12. No human being can purchase or otherwise acquire any valid title to the right to exact toll from other human beings in exchange for permission to use the Earth. All claims to such, or for pecuniary compensation on the part of individuals claiming to "own" the Earth, for loss of power to confiscate public rent, as above defined, should be denied.
13. Whoever exercises labour on land after opportunities are equalised by the collection of the Rent of the bare land for the public Treasury, has an exclusive right to all the products of such labour, free from any arbitrary, confiscatory deductions by officials.
14. Proposals for the control of human activities by the State or Government are in the direction of economic slavery; any such, and any interference with the right of the individual to self-development and self-sustenance, are no substitutes for a freedom based on the foregoing principles and leading to a natural and voluntary extension of the co-operation under which alone Society can peacefully endure and prosper.

The COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY realise that the obstacles to the establishment of a just relationship between man and the Earth, and therefore between the individual units of Society, can be removed in an orderly, reasonable, just, and constitutional manner, only when and if the Electorate in sufficient majority see the principles upon which Society must be constituted; and, recognising that the only true and just solution of the Social Problem is to make all the land the common property of all the people, by diverting the rental value, which now flows into the pockets of the Land Lords, into the Common Treasury, call for support for an attempt to return Members to Parliament pledged to carry out, at the earliest moment, the Will of the people to Freedom, through Justice and equality of opportunity.

The COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY invite all interested in the proper solution of the questions which now vex us, to join up and make a united effort to carry into effect the principles clearly defined and urged upon the world by HENRY GEORGE.

For further information address:—

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