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By X.



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(For Map see page 3 of cover.)

Landholding in Berkshire.

Seven years held about one fourth of the county.

Class 1. Holders of more than 1,000 acres—54 persons held nearly one-third.

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Class 3. Holders of 1 to 100 acres—2,017 persons held over one-seventh.

Class 4. Holders of less than 1 acre—12,014 persons shared between them less than a fourth part of the county.

Landless.

585,000 others did not possess one square inch of their native land.

which satisfied the

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A first examination of the "Socialism" of Mr. Philip Snowden, the first Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer.

What is the

Commonwealth Land Party?

an inquiry into the

By X.

It is an association of persons firmly convinced that Henry George in his great work, "Progress and Poverty," exposed the cause and prescribed the remedy for Poverty, the greatest evil and disgrace of modern civilisation.

The followers of Henry George number millions in all parts of the world and have numerous small organisations, the object of which is to carry the Gospel of Henry George to all the people.

The English Commonwealth Land Party, however, is distinct from other Associations of the kind in that it believes that:—As the remedy can only be applied by political action, it is necessary for it to take the form of a Political Party, with a view to returning Members of Parliament who will urge the application of the remedy. It differs from all other existing political parties in its complete repudiation of compulsory Socialism, holding that man should be free politically and economically to work out his own individual destiny, should own his own body, his own labour power, and be secured the enjoyment and disposition of the product of his labour as his own private property to which his labour has given him a title.

The "Henry George" Doctrine.

Is briefly, that the cause of poverty is private ownership, collection and use of the rent of the source of all wealth—the Earth.

Rent is in itself not an evil; it cannot be abolished any more than can the Law of Gravitation. The private appropriation of rent, however, is an institutional wrong, which has led to another institutional wrong, viz. the imposition of Taxation, or the taking of that which should be left sacredly to the individual as private property, to provide the funds to pay public servants to manage those affairs which must be the common concern of and be conducted for the benefit of all alike.

The Earth (or the Land).

George reasserted the self-evident truth, which modern civilisation appears to have lost sight of, that the Earth, out of which all wealth is produced by labour, must be for the equal use of all mankind, if there is to be any meaning in the statement that *all* men are equally entitled to "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Herbert Spencer in "Social Statics" made the same truth clear. It is a self-evident truth and needs no argument to establish it. It is constantly being proclaimed—and disregarded.

From this truth it follows that no one individual can own the Earth or the rent of it; it is the common property of *all*, and the right of every man to access to the means of life cannot be alienated by any law or custom, nor by a majority agreement, without the denial of this truth. This denial has been made by modern civilisation in practice, although in law the land of England is the property of *all* the people, with the Crown, as head of the State, the Trustee for the people.

As the Liberal Land Committee report states clearly, it is not a question of nationalisation, because the land has never been regarded by the law as private property. The C.L.P. simply want the law operated, not disregarded.

Possession.

Exclusive possession, security of tenure, has been confused with ownership, has grown into ownership in actual practice, and all portions of the common property are bought and sold without any regard to the rights of the real and legal owners, the people, not only of this, but of future generations. It is not possible to sell for money the rights of the unborn.

In order to apply the remedy prescribed by Henry George, in order to get into harmony with the Moral and Statutory Law, it is necessary:—That the rights of the people should be reasserted by a declaration in Parliament in some such form as has been suggested by the Liberal Land Committee.

It would be no use to stop at this point; the reassertion of the true relation in which the people must stand towards their land must be followed by a real resumption of those rights by the collection of the annual rental value of the bare earth, apart from any improvements which are the results of the labours of man, and its confiscation into the public treasury. Thus the owners of the land would collect their rent as owners are entitled to do.

The C.L.P. do not advocate the dispossession of any holder of land. They contend that security of tenure is a necessity for the proper use of the land. They believe that security of tenure should depend upon the payment of the economic rent of the portion of the land held, and upon nothing else.

Do you hold a piece of the public property? Very well, you can continue to hold it so long as the rent is paid.

The effect of such collection of economic rent would be to put an end to the buying and selling of the public property, and therefore to speculation in it.

It would also "impel" the best use of all land and provide an enormous stimulus to wealth production under conditions of freedom without confiscation by Government authority and force, or any complicated and ineffectual bureaucracy based on the theory of Socialism.

The self-interest of the producers, now repressed, would find scope, and, as the confiscation of the economic rent for public purposes would mean the rapid abolition of enforced taxes, all wealth produced would be secured to the producer.

The rent would, of course, come out of the wealth produced, but would be returned to the producer in the form of the necessary public services.

This rental value, however, is not the creation of the producer who would be called upon to pay it into the public treasury. It is the measure of the extra desirability of any portion of the common property over the least desirable portion; its collection would not be a Tax. It depends upon *all* the people, it grows as the population grows in density. It is a nationally created value which the Community is fully entitled to collect. *It is the only value that can be socialised without a denial of the real right of property in the things produced by labour.*

The words of Lord Oxford are as follows:—"The value of land rises as population grows, and National necessities increase, *not* in proportion to the application of Capital and Labour, but through the development of the Community itself. A source of value, created by the Community, *which the Community is entitled to appropriate to itself.*" (Paisley, 1923.)

The Commonwealth Land Party do not attempt to explain the failure of Political Leaders to take action based upon the truths enunciated. Not to see the truth is to be blind. To see it and not to act upon it is to be false to principle. The most charitable explanation of the inaction of politicians is that they are blind.

Ownership of the Earth by a few can no more be made moral by an Act of Legislation than can the ownership by one human being of another of his kind. It is upon the same moral plane as chattel-slavery. It places mankind in economic servitude everywhere that private collection of the publicly created rent is permitted. It is a private tax or tribute levied by the few on the helpless many. It is wrongful confiscation of the public property, and should be stopped. The C.L.P. contend that as it is the *cause* of poverty, this evil cannot be eradicated until and unless the cause is entirely removed.

Such is the C.L.P.'s understanding of the doctrine of Henry George regarding ownership of the Earth and its rent.

Only those who are prepared flatly to deny the existence of any natural right to life, and who are prepared to assert that the State (soulless abstraction) has the right to take away from the producer the product of his labour, will disagree.
Wealth.

Wealth is the result of labour applied to land. For convenience of exchange, money of all kinds, metal, paper, stocks, shares, bills of exchange, War Bonds, cowrie shells, brass rods, and what not are merely representative of real wealth, i.e., of all things produced by labour necessary for the sustenance of life and the satisfaction of the material desires of man. The lavish production of wealth is to-day a simple matter. More than enough for everybody could easily be produced were the prohibitions as to the free use of the Earth removed. The Earth is inexhaustible, the matter of it being usable again and again for all time.

The problem of production, therefore, may be considered as solved. It never was a difficult one, as human beings applying their labour to land have always been able to produce sufficient for their wants.

It is the faulty distribution of the wealth that is produced which constitutes the second part of the gravest problem of Society. It could be solved quite easily when, following the collection of the rent for the public benefit, wealth-producers are permitted to retain the whole of their product. Not only are the wealth-producers to-day deprived of the rent of their Earth, but a large portion is taken from them by taxation; it being quite clear that the wealth represented by the taxes must come out of the total wealth produced.

When the real right of property is recognised, there can be no distribution of wealth at all except at the will or with the consent of the owners thereof. The solution, therefore, of this secondary problem will follow inevitably on the settlement of man's true relationship to the Earth, and needs no official action excepting the abolition of all enforced taxation.

Wealth is now divided into unequal portions:—

1. **Wages:** the profit of Labour for producing; the share of Labour in the product. The largest portion (but not as large as it ought to be and might be).
2. **Interest:** the profit of Capital for its assistance to Labour in production.
3. **Taxes:** for the maintenance of services for the good of all.
4. **Rent:** the portion allowed to be taken by a few holders of the public property for doing nothing but give permission for Labour and Capital to produce wealth.

Obviously, to take rent for public purposes would increase the portion available for wages. When men have their rights secured to them, when everyone can keep all the wealth he produces, and when no one can get any wealth that he does not produce, except by theft or gift, there will be no problem of distribution to be solved.

The C.L.P. urge that the collection of the rent and its substitution for taxes would be an act of simple justice in strict conformity with the Moral Law, and with the almost forgotten Statutory Law of Britain.

Summarised, the self-evident truths for which the C.L.P. stand are:—

1. That all human beings have equal right of access to the bounty of Nature (i.e., Land Monopoly is morally wrong).
2. That to the producer exclusively belongs the product (i.e., enforced taxation is morally wrong).

“ We would simply take for the Community what belongs to the Community, the value that attaches to land by the growth of the Community; leave sacred to the individual all that belongs to the individual.” (Henry George.)

It is up to those political leaders who have enunciated these same truths, to explain why political action cannot be taken upon them.

The C.L.P. hold that it is the business of those who pretend to represent the people to keep the Law of the Land in conformity with the Moral Law, plainly explained in the two articles of the Great Charter of human liberty formulated by Henry George and quoted above.

What is required to apply the remedy set forth fully in “ Progress and Poverty ” for the evil of poverty—the crime of poverty for which all are responsible—is, as indicated in the foregoing:

1. To re-assert the common ownership of the Earth and forthwith to call upon any who exclusively possess any portion of it, to pay into the public treasury the annual rental value thereof.
2. To abolish enforced taxation, local and imperial, whether levied on incomes, imports or exports, houses, cheques, dogs, births, marriages, and deaths, in short, to discontinue all the man-made devices which have been and still are the hurtful and unjustifiable methods of raising revenue for public services practised by all Chancellories, on the ground that they all act as taxes on and discouragements of industry.

Capital and Labour.

Except in the minds of those who misunderstand the relations existing between them, there is no antagonism between Capital and Labour. Capital is dependent entirely upon Labour for its existence, employment, and preservation. How then can it be in antagonism to that on which it depends? Labour employs Capital to assist it in the production of more wealth. How then can Labour be antagonistic to its useful assistant? It is not so: Capital and Labour do, and must, co-operate. They are made to co-operate like the upper and lower teeth. That there is often friction between individual capitalists and bodies of those who employ their capital, is obviously true. There is no such thing as a “ Capitalistic System,” as commonly stated by Labour politicians, nor is there yet any com-

plete organisation of Labour, but there is more organisation of the workers than of capitalists. What, then, is the cause of the feeling that also undoubtedly exists, that Capital and Labour are in irreconcilable conflict? The answer the C.L.P. give is, that the inability of those who wish to produce wealth they require to employ themselves in its production (an inability directly caused by land monopoly), forces them into a position in which there is nothing left for them to do but to sell their labour power to some one who has opportunity in his possession.

There have always been, and always will be until the present land system is changed, numbers of persons willing to work but unable to find jobs. The so-called capitalists are obliged to make terms with those who control the only opportunity in existence, viz., the land, and they get more criticism and blame than they deserve. The real cause of the misunderstanding, and the unemployment for which Governments cannot find any remedy, is the private ownership of the opportunity, and the consequent power to exact tribute from the workers, (capitalists and labourers alike) for mere permission to work. This, with the wrong method of providing the public revenue by taking from the workers arbitrarily and unnecessarily a portion of their product by way of taxation, restricts the opportunities for men to employ themselves, brings the workers in competition for the limited number of jobs, and forces wages down to subsistence level.

The C.L.P. see that neither capitalists nor Trade Union councils, nor any of the leaders of Labour organised or unorganised, correctly understand the position and the economic forces that are at work.

They believe that freedom to employ oneself is the only cure for economic slavery; employment the only cure for unemployment; and they *know* the way to achieve a complete economic freedom, to solve the unemployment problem and to abolish involuntary poverty. These are large claims, but that they are just was ably demonstrated by Henry George, to whose influence and teaching the Commonwealth Land Party are due.

All normal men are self-supporting, or would be if free access to their raw material were secured to them. The dole, poor law relief, charity, etc., are well-meant palliatives, no doubt. That the problem of poverty remains is sufficient indication that the palliatives serve little or no good purpose. Mankind should not need to beg, and should demand justice in this matter of the use of the common property.

The Commonwealth Land Party urge upon the people their right to demand justice, complete justice, and at once, by insisting that from an appointed day the Crown, as Trustee for the people, shall collect for the people the economic rent of the land.

Compensation.

It is not possible to compensate the people for their loss and suffering caused by land monopoly. When this great iniquity comes to an end, when the rental value of the people's land is confiscated for their use, the people's claim for compensation, including arrears for past wrongful confiscation of their rent, may have to be waived because of the impossibility of collection. "Let by-gones be by-gones in this matter," said Henry George.

Claims for compensation for the loss of power to collect rent will be put forward, but they are not entitled to be considered. They cannot be admitted without admitting that the Earth can be and has been privately owned. It is upon the self-evident truth that *all* own the Earth that the law stands, and upon it that Henry George founded his philosophy and based his remedy. Claims by those who have been illegally collecting the people's rent in the past will be dealt with as were claims made by owners of chattel-slaves in the U.S. in 1863. It is true that owners of slaves in the British West Indies were fortunate enough to get payment from the British tax-payer of the price they put upon human beings held as chattel-slaves, but the British tax-payer is more alive now, as he is more consulted, and, unless he is deceived by politicians, will not be so foolish as to agree to purchase his natural right to life and liberty, for the land is admittedly his own property. Yet the suggestion is in the air that landlords may be compensated or pensioned, a suggestion that the C.L.P. assert is an impracticable and immoral one, born of ignorance, superstition, and cowardice.

That some who now profit financially will suffer hardship through the loss of their power to take what does not belong to them, is probably true. A great wrong, however, cannot be righted without affecting those who are profiting financially from the wrong.

The C.L.P. declare that the collection of the annual rental value of the land (the communally created value) for public use is just, and that which is "just" cannot at the same time be "unjust." They point out that possible hardship is being mistaken for injustice. Justice must be done at all costs, hardship can be dealt with in the proper time and place, and the suggestion the Commonwealth Land Party make is that a liberated people in possession of their communally created value (rent) could and would take into consideration any cases of hardship that might arise, not as claims for compensation, but as cases of hardship not entirely due to any individual sufferer. Such cases would be few, and could be quickly dealt with by a suitable Tribunal.

It is important to remember the difference now pointed out between hardship and injustice. The C.L.P. declare that they do not advocate injustice, but Justice. It is possible to modify hardship resulting from just common action.

Exemption.

The principle on which the philosophy and economics of the C.L.P. are based, being eternally true, is applicable in its entirety in every case in which portions of the common property are exclusively possessed. The holder in every case must be called upon to pay the annual rent without any exemptions of any kind on any pretence or argument.

The C.L.P. declare that it is not their intention to propose anything which will disturb those in possession of the Earth. Asserting that all have an equal right to the use of the Earth, they urge that the method of securing this right is not to divide up the land, but to take the rent of the land for the purpose of Government, utilising for this purpose the present machinery of the Tax Department.

The C.L.P. are convinced that Justice cannot be done piece-meal, and insist therefore on the necessity of holding strictly to the principle in all its truth and purity and to its application in full. On this no compromise is possible, for so long as any portion of the rental value of land can be collected by private individuals, speculation in the people's property will be possible and profitable, and the evils arising out of private ownership of the Earth will persist. Like causes under similar conditions produce like effects. There is as deep and abject poverty in New York, where a large portion of the economic rent is confiscated for public use, as there is in the City of London, where little or none of the people's rent is taken for public use.

Such is a brief and imperfect outline of the main principles of the Commonwealth Land Party.

The C.L.P. ask that they be not disregarded simply because they would supersede what is old and seems to be established. "Wrong," says Lowell, "wrong, though its title does go back to the days of Sodom, is by nature a thing of yesterday, while the right of which we became conscious but an hour ago, is more ancient than the stars, of the essence of Heaven."

Briefly, quoting from Henry George:—"What we, therefore, propose as the simple yet sovereign remedy which will raise wages, increase the earnings of Capital, extirpate pauperism, abolish involuntary poverty, give remunerative employment to whoever wishes it, afford free scope to human powers, lessen crime, lift morals and taste and intelligence, purify government, and carry civilisation to yet nobler ends," is, *to appropriate the rental value of the people's land for the people's benefit, and to substitute the rent collected for all enforced taxes, thus to abolish all enforced taxation.*

Could anything be more simple, just, and effective? If you agree with the principles set forth in the foregoing, join the C.L.P. and help in the endeavour to put the clear issue before the people.

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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COMMONWEALTH

The Church
holds
1,771 ac

De. Dyshire.

Land held by	Acres
11	160,771
54	206,806
328	137,280
6017	95,210
12874	1,337
19384	601,691

Landless
359,910

Enclosures

146 Ac. - 87 No. acreage stated.
89 Ac. - 21,159 acres
(1786-1815-87)

Area
64,200
acres

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