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The A B C *of* SOCIALISM

by FRED HENDERSON



TWOPENCE

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This pamphlet is the first chapter of "The Case for Socialism," in which book other chapters deal with SOCIALISM AND

CONFISCATION
PERSONAL PROPERTY
LIBERTY
OFFICIALISM
UNEMPLOYMENT
WASTE
LEVELLING DOWN
HUMAN NATURE

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The ABC *of* Socialism

NOBODY can exercise the rights of citizenship intelligently nowadays without clearly understanding the case for Socialism. At parliamentary and municipal elections, in every department of public affairs, the issues are defined, with constantly increasing insistence, in terms of Socialism and Anti-Socialism ; not only in the direct proposals put forward by Socialists themselves, but in the implications of the Socialist idea in the proposals of all political parties. And no vote can be an intelligent vote unless there is behind it a knowledge of the Socialist case and a reasoned judgment upon the Socialist idea.

The Socialist movement has passed beyond that ordeal stage which every new movement has to encounter, the stage of mere unreasoning prejudice and the unstudied use of epithets against it. Within the life of a single generation it has drawn to its ranks millions of earnest thinking men and women ; and it has made out its case so convincingly that in every civilised country its capture of the power of government is now the dominant issue in political conflict. It is sweeping on from strength to strength ; challenging the old order everywhere with confident boldness. Here in Great Britain its hands are already on the reins of government ; and there is manifest in the utterances of its opponents a bewildered sense of the futility of their efforts to stay its march to power. It claims to explain to the common man why poverty and squalor exist in a world of

abundant resources ; and the common man is everywhere finding in it the hope of fulfilment for his dream of human life set free from these miseries. In these circumstances, every citizen who wishes to keep intelligently abreast of the responsibilities of his citizenship must study the Socialist case ; and the desire amongst reasonable people for a serious study and understanding of it is now everywhere manifest. It is to meet this desire, to provide a statement of the essential teaching of Socialism, that this book is written.

In the first place, we Socialists believe that poverty can be prevented. The fact we ask you to begin by bearing in mind is that people are not poor in Great Britain because Great Britain is a poor country. We believe that the civilized world is able to produce enough wealth to give a high standard of life to all its people, if only that wealth could be got into the lives of its people.

Our first point, therefore, is that poverty is not inevitable ; that the resources of the world are sufficient to prevent it ; and that it could be prevented if only the nation saw clearly what it is that stops the wealth of the country from getting into the homes of the people and being available for the general life.

That may seem like a commonplace to you. But if you will think about it for a moment, you will see that it establishes a very real difference between Socialism and all other political ideas.

All other parties take the fact of poverty for granted, as being part of the natural and inevitable order of human affairs.

It is true that both Liberals and Conservatives put forward schemes of social reform intended to get rid of the extremes of poverty ; such schemes as those for old-age pensions, for feeding necessitous school children, for ensuring workmen against unemployment, and the like. That is all good so far as it goes ; but it does not touch the actual problem of the cause of poverty. On the contrary, it assumes that there will continue to be poverty to be relieved in these ways. These reforms are only proposals for giving

relief; and amount to no more than constantly baling out the boat while the leak which causes all the trouble is left untouched. The problem of poverty can only be effectively dealt with at its source—by stopping the leak.

What both Liberals and Conservatives take for granted is the broad fact of a rich class and a poor class continuing to exist; a population on the one hand living at ease with all the comforts of a spacious life, and a working population on the other hand living in small houses, with little leisure, and with incomes only at or about the margin of subsistence.

No political party other than the Socialist party has any idea of fundamentally altering that state of things. They are quite willing to give us reforms within the existing social order; and would be glad to see the poor class assured of regular work and wages good enough to go a little beyond the bare margin of subsistence; so that, for instance, working men might live in suburban streets of artisans' houses instead of in slums, have a little back garden to cultivate, work eight hours a day instead of ten or twelve, and even get a week or a fortnight for holiday in the summer.* But the broad fact of a rich class and a poor class would remain; a small rich class with spacious lives and a large poor class with comparatively little. The notion of the other political parties is that practical politics are limited to such reforms as simply mitigate the extremes of poverty; the Socialist idea is that the national resources should be made available for the general national life, and that this class division, being in itself an evil and unjust thing, should cease.

When therefore, we Socialists say that poverty can be prevented, you will see that we mean by "poverty"

* In precisely the same way, while serfdom existed there were all sorts of proposals put forward by humane people for relaxing the conditions of serfdom, making it less intolerable for the serf, while still retaining the institution of serfdom as part of the social order. What was wrong, of course, was not that the conditions of serfdom were too harsh and required to be modified, but that the institution of serfdom itself was unjust, and required to be abolished. The position with regard to private capitalism is precisely the same in relation to all this proposed reform within the existing order.

something very different from utter destitution. Poverty is not an absolute term. It is a relative term; relative to the kind of life which the actual resources of the world might make possible for men.

A man is a poor man if he is shut out from any of the possibilities of human life within the range of the general existing resources of the world.

He may have his animal wants supplied; may have a sufficiency of food, of clothing, and of shelter. His master's cattle have that, according to their cattle standard. But that is not human life. If the resources of the world are ample—as they are ample—to provide for all men leisure and a high standard of the graces of life as well as of its animal satisfactions, he is a poor man so long as he is shut out from the full enjoyment of those graces. We Socialists refuse to accept as an adequate standard of life any standard which stops short of full human life. The habit of setting up separate class standards as to what is an adequate kind of life is so engrained in the minds of men to-day that it is the commonest thing to hear rich men denouncing as extravagant and unreasonable any claim by working men to many things which the employer class would find an intolerable deprivation in having to go without themselves. We Socialists present our challenge straight in the face of that class idea. We say that a man is a man, and that we will have no class standards in these things.

We set up a human standard. And whatever kind of life the general resources of the world can make possible for all men has to go into that standard; and as the powers of men over Nature increase, and their wealth producing activities become more and more fruitful by reason of growing knowledge and invention, that increase has got to go into the general standard, raising the general level of life, leaving no class out of the general advance.

To be below that standard is to be poor. To reserve for the enjoyment of a class alone any of these things which might be the common human heritage is evidence of injustice in our social organisation. And if the whole of the proposals of the orthodox political parties for "social reform" within the existing order were carried out to-

morrow, this fundamental injustice of class division and class privilege would still remain.

We should still not have a human society ; but a class society of the rich and an underworld of the poor.

You see, therefore, something of what we Socialists mean when we say that our aim is to make the national resources available for the general life of the nation.

The question is : How can it be done ?

And you cannot answer that question until you first see clearly what it is that now prevents the resources of the nation from getting into the life of the nation. To that point, therefore, our enquiry must in the first place be carefully directed.

The wealth upon which the world lives is produced by labour, skill, and thought, working upon land and capital.

Now, look at the two classes into which society is broadly divided, and you will see that they get their shares of that wealth in different ways.

The class which gives the labour, skill, and thought, lives upon wages.

The class which owns the land and capital lives upon rent, interest, and profit.

*In both cases the livelihood comes out of the current daily wealth production of the world.**

And broadly speaking, the method of getting one's living by wages represents the bare life, and the people who get their living in that way are the poor class ; while the method of getting one's living by rent, interest, and profit represents the full life, and the people who get their living in that way are the rich class.

There are exceptions, of course. There are people living poorly upon rents and dividends, and highly skilled experts living well upon wages. There is a certain mixture of classes. You do not have a mass of poor people living on wages, then a gap, and on the other side of the gap a

* Note this very carefully ; you will see its importance as the argument develops.

mass of rich people living upon rent and dividends. From abject poverty to great wealth there is every sort of gradation in between. Some small owners supplement their little rents or dividends by earning wages, and some wage-earners save a little and draw dividends on a small scale. But, broadly speaking, the generalization is true that the distinctive way of living of the poor class is by wages, and the distinctive way of living of the rich class is by ownership.

The purpose of our enquiry, therefore, is to discover how it is that the resources of the nation, daily produced by the activities of the nation, should be distributed in this way. Why is it that ownership should mean one way of life and industry another way of life; the one spacious, the other poor?

And here a brief digression is necessary in order to make every step in the argument perfectly clear as we go along; a digression of which the reader will find the germ in the footnote to the previous paragraph calling upon him to note specially the fact that "in both cases the livelihood comes out of the current daily wealth production of the world."

The facts as to this must be made as clear as possible.

The problem into which we are enquiring is not a problem of one class possessing resources and the other not. It is a problem of the distribution day by day of the resources *which are being produced day by day by the industry of the world.*

It is upon this point that most confusion exists in the minds of those who do not think clearly on these matters. They imagine the rich man possessing wealth and living upon that wealth, inheriting it from his father, paying wages out of it to the people he employs, and so on. Nothing of the sort. *The whole nation, rich and poor, lives upon the current daily wealth production of the world.*

The rich man owns land. But he does not live on land. He lives on wealth produced out of the land by industry. He owns capital. But he does not live on capital. He lives

on wealth produced day by day by industry applied to his capital. The whole worth of his land and capital as a means of income to him is in the industry attached to that land and capital, and in the constant production of that industry. He does not pay wages to anyone. The industry produces its own wages as well as his income. If any workman doubts that, let him ask himself whether he would be allowed to stop ten minutes in the factory if he did *not* produce his own wages and something over.

The rich man does not inherit the wealth upon which he lives. He cannot live upon any form of wealth other than the wealth which is being produced round about him day by day. What he inherits is *power over the sources of that wealth*. Land is the primary source of all wealth. Labour applied to land makes it fruitful; and it is upon that perishable and constantly renewed fruitfulness that the world lives. It is fruitful, not in food only, but in its minerals, its timber, its products out of which invention and labour shape the implements of the more complicated wealth production of modern life. As civilization advances, the production of these implements becomes greater and greater, representing vast powers of creating wealth when human energy and human ingenuity works with and upon them.

It is power over these sources of production, land and capital, which the rich man inherits; and the value of that inheritance is that it is a means of making the immediate perishable wealth upon which the world lives flow into his life as fast as it is produced.

You will thus see that, when you speak about the distribution of our national wealth, it is necessary to guard very carefully against the common error of picturing to yourself that wealth as a sort of fixed and permanent thing. When, for example, people repeat the familiar idiotcy which some of the more stupid amongst them imagine to be an argument against Socialism, that if you divided up all the wealth of the country to-day there would be inequalities again to-morrow, the simple-minded error into which they fall is that of supposing the wealth of the country to be a fixed and permanent thing, which you could get

together into a heap and divide up. You could, of course, do nothing of the kind, even if anybody were silly enough to suggest it.

The problem of the distribution of wealth is not the problem of an act of distribution, but of a continuous process of distribution. The wealth of the country is a constantly produced, constantly distributed, constantly consumed stream of commodities; and the problem of its distribution is not a problem of its division at any given moment, but a problem *of having proper channels for its constant and regular flow into the life of the nation.*

I have put this point at some length because a thorough grasp of it is of fundamental importance. Confusion of mind about it means confused and fallacious thinking on the whole economic problem. Clearly see this true nature of the wealth on which the world lives—how it is in constant production and constant consumption, how it is created and used and done with day by day—and the problem of its distribution at once presents itself to you in a clearer light. The error into which people fall is that of supposing that the rich class actually possess great wealth, and that the Socialists wish to take it from them and give it to the mass of the people. Whereas, I repeat again, the fact is that what the rich possess is power to divert from the mass of the people the flow of the wealth which the labour of the mass of the people constantly produces; so that wealth which does not now exist at all, wealth which will be created to-morrow, next week, next year, counts as their possession, and will flow into their lives steadily and constantly as fast as it is produced.

It is this process of distribution which is the important thing.

The rich class possess wealth which is now passing through the national life; but that is only incidental to their power over the sources of wealth and over the process of its production and distribution. The real nature of their class privilege is that they possess the power of appropriating wealth which is or will be created at any time, now, hereafter, and to all time if the existing system continues.

And so we get back to the question on which this digression arose: What is it that prevents the resources of the nation from getting into the life of the nation? How is it that this constantly flowing stream of wealth, flowing from the daily activities of the nation, how is it that, instead of irrigating the whole life of the nation, it runs in such a way as to make a few lives grow rank with excessive luxury, and leaves myriads of other lives bleak and dry?

Is not the answer to that question already becoming clear to you? Hark back for a moment to what we saw is the fundamental distinction between the two classes, and the different ways in which they get their living. The distinctive way of living of the poor class is by wages; the distinctive way of living of the rich is by rent, interest, and profits. Evidently the difference between incomes derived from wages and incomes derived from rent, interest, and profits, gives us the clue to be followed up in this enquiry as to what it is that prevents the resources of the nation from getting into the general life of the nation.

The best way of following up that clue is to take an actual case of wealth production under normal capitalist conditions, and see what happens.

Here, for instance, is a boot factory where a thousand men (they are largely women and boys, to be strictly accurate) are engaged in producing boots and shoes. By the end of the week, labour, operating upon capital in the form of raw material and machinery, has created new wealth in the form of finished boots and shoes.

The value of the finished boots and shoes includes the value of the raw material and the industry of a vast army of people engaged in preparing that material, from the cattle-tender to the tanner, before it comes into the hands of the shoe operative at all; beside the industry and skill of those who, from inventor to miner, have placed at the disposal of the operative the machinery with which he works. But the shoe operative by transforming this raw material into the finished article, has created a new value and brought new wealth into existence, value and wealth which is his human energy embodied in the boots and shoes.

How is that new wealth distributed ?

The whole of it belongs to the man who owns the factory.

At the end of the week, having come into possession of this newly created wealth, the owner pays a portion of its value back to the operative in the form of wages.

What is it that regulates the amount so paid back as wages ?

Just in the same way as oil and fuel have to be supplied to the inanimate machinery to keep it in a state of working efficiency, so the workman, the human machinery, has to be supplied with food and clothes and shelter to keep him in efficient working order. The owner of the factory buys labour as cheaply as he can. Wages represent the cost of keeping labour alive and working,—the cost of running the human machinery of the factory.

Now compare this with the position of the slave under a slave-owner. When the slave-owner bought a man, he bought labour. The value of the slave to his owner was the slave's capacity for labour. All that the slave produced belonged to his owner. The cost of the slave's keep had to come out of it ; and the owner lived upon the surplus.

So far as the distribution of wealth between the slave-owner and the slave is concerned, is it not analogous to the distribution of wealth between ownership and industry under capitalism ?

The slave-owner had to make three payments—the payment of a lump sum down for the slave, the payment for land and tools and equipment for the slave to work with, and after that the constant daily payment of the cost of the slave's maintenance.

The capitalist has this advantage over the slave-owner, that he escapes the first of these payments. He gets his labour for nothing, and calls that process " providing men with employment," claiming to be a benefactor to the community by doing so. All they produce belongs to him, in exactly the same way that all the slave produced belonged to the slave-owner. The cost of their keep has to come out of it in the form of wages and the owner takes the surplus.

That is the process by which the constantly produced wealth of the country is distributed between wages on the one hand, and rent, interest, and profit on the other. We Socialists can see no essential difference between this system, which we call " wage slavery " and the old system of chattel slavery. There are superficial and non-essential differences in detail ; but the two things are identical in the main fact that the slave-owner and the capitalist both live in exactly the same way—upon the surplus wealth remaining after paying the cost of maintenance of the labour which produces that wealth.

The chief superficial difference between the two forms of slavery is that whereas the slave-owner owned both the man and the means of the man's work, the capitalist owns only the means of the man's work. Under this latter system the man is nominally free. But in its practical consequences there is little real difference between owning the man and owning the means of the man's work. The man is helpless without access to the means of his work. He must either sell himself into wage slavery to the owner of the means of his work, or starve. It comes to the same practical end in either case ; whether you own the man or only own the means of his work, either form of ownership gives you power to take possession of everything the man produces, simply for the price of his keep out of it.

We come, therefore, to the fact of private ownership and control of the means of the nation's work, as the explanation of the present one-sided distribution of the national wealth ; the reason why vast armies of people live in poverty in a land of plenty. The nation's industry is carried on for the profit of its proprietors, and society is organised for their exclusive benefit. The share which the workman gets is simply maintenance for himself and his family, necessary to keep wealth production going. It is not regarded by the employing class as being really part of the national distribution of wealth at all. The industry of the nation belongs to them ; and they look upon the amount paid in wages simply as a charge upon their resources ; a charge which they enter in their accounts as " cost of

labour " ; so much taken off the profits ; an expense in the same category as the expense of machinery or fuel. The workman has no status, no right to work or to live, unless they find it profitable to employ him. He is an alien in the land, taking his place in organised society only by permission of an owner and on condition of being able to find a proprietor willing to buy him. What is spent upon his keep is, from the point of view of his proprietor, merely one of the expenses of business to be set against the profit got out of his labour ; like the cost of feeding cattle set against the price of beef.

We can now see pretty clearly how it is that the constantly produced stream of national wealth is distributed ; and why it is that the distinctive fact about poverty is that men live by wages, while the distinctive fact about the spacious kind of life is that men live by ownership. The private ownership of land and capital stands revealed as simply a device for enabling a small class to live by imposing their maintenance upon the industry of the community ; diverting into their possession, as fast as it it produced, the whole of the wealth created by the national industry over and above the necessary maintenance of the workers.

Ask yourself, frankly, is that way of living honest ?

We Socialists assert that there is no moral difference between this process of capitalist exploitation of the workers and ordinary pocket-picking or brigandage. To us, the gentleman class which lives in this way is merely a class of " disgraceful sponging creatures." I put this general consideration of the ethics of the question to you,—that in a world in which no human need is served without human industry, there must be a process of dishonesty hidden somewhere in the social and industrial arrangements which send the flow of the world's wealth into non-productive lives. Call it what fine names you please—rent or interest or return on capital or unearned increment—the fact remains that in its essential character it is theft, tribute levied by an idle class upon industry.

"Oh, but," you say, "it is legal. After all, the land and capital belong to these people; and surely they have a right to their income from it."

To which I reply that it is this private ownership of land and capital which we Socialists indict as the root cause of poverty. We challenge its justice and its right to exist or continue. We trace directly to it the ruin, the widespread misery and destitution, of the mass of the people.

In the first place, we point out to you that the proprietor class get their capital in exactly the same way as they get their income,—out of the surplus produced by industry over and above the cost of maintaining those engaged in the industry. Capital is no more a fixed and permanent thing than is the currently consumed wealth on which the world lives. Like that wealth, capital is constantly being used up and constantly being renewed by fresh production. I have before me as I write the half-yearly statement of accounts and balance sheet of one of our great railway companies. I find in it, as I find in it every half-year, a heavy item of expense set down for depreciation and renewals. What does that mean? It means that during the half-year a certain proportion of the capital of the company has been used up, worn out of existence; and that it is being renewed and replaced out of the half-year's revenue. And that happens every half-year. Within a sufficient period of years, a comparatively short period, practically the whole of the capital of the company is worn up and wiped out of existence, and replaced out of revenue in this way. And so it is with every business undertaking. It provides its own capital as it goes along. The capital upon which labour is now operating in my neighbour's boot factory is capital provided by labour, capital provided out of the revenue of the business as the business has grown and developed. That is what is meant by "a developing business"; a business whose capital is obtained out of revenue, not only for replacing that which is constantly wearing out—the business would become bankrupt if it did not do that—but also for extending and enlarging it. The whole thing comes out of labour, the capital as well as the profits.

As for landownership,—well, it is hardly necessary nowadays to be a Socialist to see what most Liberals and many orthodox politicians admit, that there is, and there can be, no moral or just title whatever to the private ownership of land.

Land is the primary need of the human race. It is the essential thing; the storehouse from which, in the first instance, we draw all our resources. Human life depends absolutely upon it, as absolutely as upon the air we breathe. The land of the country is the nation's birthright and means of existence, upon the use and occupation of which all our activities depend, and without which life itself is impossible.

To have private persons in the position of being able to demand toll and tribute for the use of the earth, the natural creation, is against public policy. It is a violation of the common right of the human race. It is the enslavement of the nation.

It is legal, no doubt. But so was slavery. So was serfdom. Its legality simply comes down to us from the time when our institutions were whatever the lords and masters of the world were able, by force or fraud, to set up for their own advantage. It belongs to the category of the many devices by which servitude has been fastened upon the peoples of the earth. Trace the title to land back, and always the original title is the title of force, of the sword, of the armed robber powerful enough to establish his lordship over other men or cunning enough to alienate the patrimony of his clan to himself. No moral validity whatever attaches to this device of placing the people under permanent tribute to the robber class for ever and ever by giving legal sanction (legal sanction in this matter meaning the sanction of the robbers themselves, who controlled law making) to private ownership of the thing essential to life.

That is the meaning of private landownership. When you say that a man owns land, you are simply describing a state of things by which one man possesses the power of taxing for his own benefit all the life and industry over a given area; making the whole population pay him tribute for the right to live in their native land. You might just as

well have air-ownership ; rent-charges for the right to breathe. That would be in no way more ridiculous than the claim to private landownership. The whole thing is merely a device for imposing the maintenance of an idle class upon the labour of the countryside, compelling the people who live and work upon the land to maintain a powerful group of brigands ; and is happily ceasing to be regarded as respectable even amongst orthodox politicians.

The position occupied by the landowning and industry-owning class can be best illustrated by a comparison. Up till a little over a hundred years ago we had in England what was known as " the sinecure system." It was a beautiful arrangement of Providence for providing incomes for the younger sons and poor relations of the governing classes. Nearly every post in the public service of this country was filled by the appointment of a " Place holder." He was appointed under Letters Patent by the Crown at an adequate salary, with leave to appoint a deputy. The word " Placeholder " conveys to us to-day nothing of its old official meaning. When we speak of a placeholder to-day, we simply mean a man who holds an office of some sort or other ; though a sufficient reminiscence of its earlier meaning still clings to the word to give it, so far as it is now used at all, an implication of easy office. But under the old system it did not mean a man who held an office in any responsible sense at all. It merely meant a man who owned an estate in the emoluments of an office with the work of which he had nothing to do. The estate in the office and the actual work in the office were as separate and distinct as an estate in land and actual work on the land are separate and distinct to-day. The estate in the office was simply a means of drawing emoluments from the work of the office, exactly as an estate in land is a means of drawing tribute from industry on the land. The whole system of Patent Placeholding was a device for quartering favoured people on the public purse. The younger son or the poor relation of this or that governing family was given the Place. His Letters Patent were his title deeds. Not infrequently the Place was inherited, like any landed estate.

The person holding it appointed a deputy at a small remuneration, and lived on the rest of the income of his Place and its emoluments, without having any duties whatever to perform. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, practically the whole public service of this country was estated in this way to " Patent Placeholders " ; and the nation had the honour of maintaining by this device the otherwise unprovided-for members of the governing classes.

For example, George Selwyn, famous as a wit and a man about town, was a Placeholder. He was " Clerk of the Irons and Surveyor of the Melting Houses in the Tower of London." " Paymaster of the works concerning the repairs and well-keeping of His Majesty's Houses," " Surveyor General of Crown Lands," " Clerk of the Crown and Peace, and Registrar of the Court of Chancery in the Island of Barbadoes "—it was the Court, says his biographer with sly humour, " it was the Court which was in the Barbadoes, and not the Registrar "—and so on. These Places were, of course, absolute sinecures. The Placeholder simply drew an income from them ; and the whole civil service, by being allocated in estates in this way, was made a means of providing a settlement in life for an army of idle and irresponsible persons ; exactly as the land is now.

In 1782 Burke abolished most of these sinecures. And exactly the same cry about " confiscation and robbery " and " depriving people of their property," which is now raised by landowners and capitalists against Socialism, was raised by the Patent Placeholders. Horace Walpole, himself a Placeholder several times over, wrote very bitterly about it.

" He who holds an ancient Patent Place," he said, " enjoys it as much by law as any gentleman holds his estate ; and from the same fountain, by grants from the Crown, as I possess my Places."

And Horace Walpole was perfectly right. There is no difference whatever between landownership and the old system of Patent Placeholding. They are both nothing

more or less than devices for imposing the maintenance of a parasite class upon the resources of the nation.*

Socialism puts it to you that the settlement of this problem of poverty can only be brought about by getting rid of the Placeholders who are bleeding the life of the country white by the tribute-levying system of private ownership of the land and capital of the country. The nation, if it desires its resources to get into the homes and lives of its people, must own its own land and capital, and so control the sources of the wealth upon which it lives; must organise its own industry, and carry on the production of the national wealth for use in the general national life.

That is Socialism: Community ownership of the land and of the means of producing and distributing wealth; and the organisation of industry under that common ownership as public service for the benefit of all; directed to social ends and the equipment of the life of the whole people instead of, as now, to the private enrichment of a privileged class of owners.

That is what Socialists are working for. The Socialist party cannot do it, and does not pretend to be able to do it. The nation must do it. Socialism is not something that the Socialists say they are going to do for you. It is a principle of national life and organisation, which the nation must adopt or reject for itself. Our mission in politics is to convince you of the justice of this principle. We believe that in this proposal lies the hope of the world, the possibility of a real human society in which citizenship shall be—as citizenship in a civilized community should be—the guarantee given by the collective life of the nation of full opportunity to every man and woman.

The enslavement of men by their fellow men has taken many forms in human history. Whatever its form may

* It is worth noting, in passing, as an illustration of how history repeats itself, that one of the arguments used on behalf of the Placeholders was that by their expenditure they provided a great deal of employment for the poor; and that the abolition of these Patent Places would therefore be a very serious injury to the working-man!

be, the substance and reality of enslavement is that it gives one man the power to say to other men, "I shall live pleasantly on the good things of the world by making you provide them for me." Whatever the device may be which enables men to do that, is slavery. The fight against private ownership of land and capital, the fight for Socialism, for the nation's control of its own resources, is the last fight in the age-long struggle of humanity for freedom; a struggle which can have but one end. And that end is the final disappearance from human society of the right of an owning class to live by tribute upon the labour of a subject class.

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