

## A COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE

In the opinion of some of the advocates of the philosophy of Henry George, the circumstances of the times make opportune its presentation in association with the strivings of the working people against the modern capitalistic system. They realise that there is being sought a new industrial condition in which, as Mr. Ramsay Macdonald recently wrote, "the worker shall be neither the slave of the Capitalist nor of the State." In place of the bureaucratic collectivist state there is emerging the ideal of the co-operative commonwealth. Such a social and industrial organism would undoubtedly naturally emerge were the common right to the land established. To make this manifest and to advocate the method of the assertion of common rights in its simplest form the Commonwealth League has come into being. Its object is set out as follows:—

For the foundation of a Commonwealth based on the establishment of the common right to the land by calling upon each landholder to pay to the community the economic rent, or annual value, of the site he holds.

It is held by the promoters of the League that whatever success is achieved in getting the main principle of the common right to the land accepted will aid all endeavours being made for the application of the principle.

### The Commonwealth League Manifesto

The world is now witnessing the revolt of the class on whose subjection the fabric of modern civilisation has been reared. Abroad the sceptre has been struck from the hand of the Czar, Kaiser and Emperor, and where the Romanoff, the Hohenzollern, and the Hapsburg ruled, the tribunes of the people hold precarious sway. The revolt, at first directed against autocracy, is now challenging the capitalistic system. World wide is the institution, and world wide will be the struggle for its overthrow. The war has taught the working classes that it is they, the many, and not the few, who uphold the fabric of the State. They know that they provided the millions of soldiers and the munitions for its defence. That which they saved they rightly seek to enjoy in equality. No geographical boundaries will contain this movement. Nor, as all history proclaims, can the spirit of revolt against oppression be curbed, or crushed, by prison, or gallows, or armed force. It is deathless, for it is the impulse for Justice and Liberty inherent in man, and behind it are the disruptive forces that war engenders through bankruptcy, famine, and high taxation. Therefore the highest wisdom dictates that this mighty impulse should be directed to the securing of Justice and Liberty from which all will benefit, so that it be not dissipated in the creation of chaos out of which a more repressive social order must arise.

To this high task this Manifesto directs attention.

### THE MODERN SLAVERY

There are to-day in Britain upwards of 1,000,000 unemployed men and women, and the number daily increases as demobilisation proceeds. For the moment they exist on a State subvention, but soon, in competition with one another, they will be compelled to cry in the markets of flesh and blood, "Who will buy us?" What is the worth of citizenship that resolves itself into the citizens being lashed into the market by hunger to sell themselves at any price? What interest have they in the maintenance of a social order in which their lot is so cast?

And there are other millions at work who during the war have forced nominal wages up, and improved their status, because there were no unemployed to take their places. But with millions clamouring for work, with millions competing for their jobs, their wages will inevitably fall and the mass of the people will be working, or workless slaves.

It is from this industrial condition that Capitalism derives its power to exploit labour. It is this system that the masses

now seek to destroy, as they see what the future has in store for them under its operation. By strikes, by "direct action," they seek to destroy, in hope of freedom. Dimly they see rising from the *débris* the Co-operative Commonwealth in which there shall be neither master class, nor slave class, and in which there will go to each the full product of his labour. Herein, too, they perceive to lie the only hope of Peace amongst the Peoples.

### THE COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE

Those who, at this time of crisis, have come together as the Commonwealth League, believe that this vision of emancipation can and must be realised. Their first object is to secure economic freedom as the foundation of the Commonwealth.

The present wage system is based on the appropriation by the few of the bounty provided by Nature as the common heritage of all. From the days when the people were dispossessed of immemorial communal rights in the land, and had in consequence to sell themselves, the capitalistic system grew to its present monstrous proportions. The overthrow of landlordism, by the restoration of the common right to the earth, is the first step to emancipation and must be taken first.

### THE APPROPRIATION OF NATURE'S BOUNTY

Through the land, Nature offers full, but sole, opportunity of existence to mankind. Here is the seed bed of the golden grain, here falls the rain in due season and the sun shines to fructify, and to ripen the harvest. Here is stored the coal and the iron. The mountains and rivers make their offer, and the shores march with the gift-bearing ocean.

And Nature has given brain and hand to man so that by labour he may turn this goodly heritage to account and, aided by her, easily produce abundance. But that bounteous heritage has been appropriated by the few who rear barriers against mankind, and levy tribute upon those whom they may permit to enter. So the multitude, dispossessed of Nature's bounty, trespassers in the land of their birth, must cry themselves for sale in the market and plead to be chained to a machine as were galley slaves to the oar. No endeavour to substitute for the capitalistic system a system of co-operation in freedom can succeed except by first abolishing the primary injustice on which secondary injustice is based.

### PRIVILEGE ROOTED IN LAND MONOPOLY

As the establishment of the common right to the land is the first essential step towards the foundation of the Commonwealth in industrial freedom, so it is also the first essential step towards the establishment of the Commonwealth on the basis of political and social equality. All legislative and social privileges, all class rule, all aristocratic, plutocratic, and bureaucratic systems of government originated, and are rooted, in landownership and will fall with it. Free institutions can only be created and maintained by citizens who have economic freedom. Nor can a Commonwealth be established in freedom unless it be able to provide for common needs without casting the burden of taxation upon commodities that are essential for the satisfaction of the needs of the citizens.

Therefore the League makes this declaration in pursuance of the establishment of the true Commonwealth. Believing that no attempt to establish a society based upon Justice can succeed until the fundamental and manifest injustice of land monopoly is removed from the path of mankind. Believing that if this be not forthwith accomplished the masses must inevitably be the slaves of the Landholder, the Capitalholder, and the Bondholder.

### THE TRUE COMMONWEALTH

The true Commonwealth will be a community of citizens in free association, in which there will be secured to the Com-

munity all that of common right belongs to the Community, and to each citizen equality of opportunity and the full product of his labour.

The first step therefore in the foundation of the true Commonwealth is to establish the common right over that which in justice is common property.

The land belongs of inherent and equal right to all, and there is consequently due to the Community from each landholder the annual value, the economic rent, of the land he holds. By the exaction of this payment, which is morally due to the Community, private ownership of land will be abolished, the common right will be established, the common fund for common benefit will be created, and land will be held with security of tenure from the Commonwealth, but only for full use. Through such full use at the hands of Labour, in freedom, Plenty will replace Poverty.

The emancipation of the citizens from the thralldom of land monopoly will enable them to substitute for the present wage system a system of co-operation in freedom. A political, social and industrial system based on monopoly and privilege will then be replaced by a Commonwealth based upon Justice

#### AN APPEAL

The co-operation of all who accept these simple and fundamental truths of Justice and Liberty and of Common Right is solicited so that their realisation may be secured; so that the foundation may be laid on which the fabric of a nobler civilisation can be reared; so that the mighty human impulse that stirs the masses may be directed by reason to splendid achievement; so that in place of sham democracy there shall be the true Commonwealth.

Signed, R. C. LAMBERT, *President*.  
R. L. OUTHWAITE, *Secretary*.

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#### DR. EDWARD MCGLYNN

Judge James G. Maguire, reviewing in the *SAN FRANCISCO STAR* (October, 1918) Mr. Sylvester L. Malone's Biographical Sketch of Dr. Edward McGlynn\*, says:—

"This publication is not only a very complete and reliable record of the life and teachings of one of the greatest men of all time, but a very complete exposition of the great cause for which he gladly suffered—the cause of the equal right of all men to the use of the earth, through the medium of the Single Tax on Land Values.

"Father McGlynn's constant teaching, in ever varying forms of expression, and ever pleasing, was 'The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.' I remember once, in 1888, several of us, including Dr. McGlynn, were standing near the entrance to the pavilion in Madison Square Garden, when a reporter for one of the New York papers came up and asked each of us to give him brief statements of our several ideas of the purpose of the Single Tax. It took me several minutes to formulate my statement and reduce it to the proper brevity, so with each of the others, except Dr. McGlynn, who, although conversing constantly in the meantime, promptly wrote this answer to the question: 'To make room at the Father's table for all His children.' The reporter was struck by the brevity, clearness and reverent character of the answer, and showed it to all of us. None of our answers could be compared with it, and although that occurred thirty years ago, I remember it as well as if it had occurred yesterday.

"Dr. McGlynn was a most remarkable man, fearless as a lion, gentle as a dove, eloquent almost beyond comparison, yet modest as a well-bred child; his great, almost superhuman powers were always enlisted on the side of the oppressed against the oppressor—of the weak against

the strong—and, while that is not always right, it is generally so.

"The book contains Dr. McGlynn's lecture, entitled 'The Cross of a New Crusade,' in full, of which the *NEW YORK SUN*, the morning after its delivery, said that 'to say that it was a remarkable intellectual performance is to do it imperfect justice,' and further said that 'it is entitled to rank with those great orations which at critical times and from the mouths of men of genius have swayed the course of public opinion and changed the onward movement of nations.'

"The book contains hundreds of excerpts from his other speeches, all of which should be within the reach of every Single Taxer, and of every forward-looking man. I earnestly recommend the book not only to all Single Taxers but also to all who wish to promote the well-being of mankind in any way consistent with the equal rights of all, for these were the conditions for which Dr. McGlynn stood throughout his splendid life."

#### ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE INCOME TAX

A Royal Commission on the Income Tax, with the following terms of reference, has been appointed:—

To inquire into the income-tax (including super-tax) of the United Kingdom in all its aspects, including the scope, rates, and incidence of the tax, allowances and reliefs, administration, assessment, appeal, and collection, and prevention of evasion, and to report what alterations of law and practice are in their opinion necessary or desirable, and what effect they would have on rates of tax if it were necessary to maintain the total yield.

The constitution of the Commission will be as follows:—

Lord Colwyn (Chairman), bank and colliery director, who has presided over many committees.

Sir T. Whittaker, M.P.

Mr. Charles William Bowerman, M.P.

Mr. William Brace, M.P.

Mr. Ernest Pretymann, M.P.

Sir Edmund Nott-Bower, ex-Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue.

Sir J. Harwood-Banner, M.P.

Sir Walter Trower, ex-President of the Council of the Law Society.

Mr. Holland Martin, hon. secretary of the Bankers' Clearing House.

Mr. N. F. Warren Fisher, Chairman of Board of Trade Revenue.

Mr. S. Armitage Smith, Principal Clerk in the Treasury.

Mr. Philip Birley, rubber manufacturer.

Mr. William Graham, M.P.

Mr. Arthur Hill, Chairman of the General Investment Trust.

Mr. D. M. Kerley, K.C., Chairman of the Board of Referees for Excess Profits Duty.

Mrs. Lilian Knowles, Reader in Economic History to the University of London since 1907; Lecturer in Modern Economic History at the London School of Economics and Political Science, 1904; member of the Departmental Committee on the rise in the cost of living to the working classes, 1918.

Mr. H. J. Mackinder, M.P., ex-Director of London School of Economics.

Mr. W. McLintock, chartered accountant.

Mr. Edward Manville, M.P., Chairman of Daimlers.

Mr. Geoffrey Marks, President of the Institute of Actuaries.

Mr. Henry J. May, Secretary of Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Congress.

Professor A. C. Pigou, Professor of Political Economy, Cambridge University.

Mr. Nicholas J. Synott, Chairman of the Bank of Ireland.

\* Published by the Dr. McGlynn Monument Association, 215, Broadway, New York City Price, \$2.00