THE INDEPENDENT
LABOUR PARTY,
ITS
PROGRAMME AND POLICY
BY
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(Fabian, and Delegate to the Bradford Conference)
WITH
INTRODUCTORY LETTER BY
J. KEIR HARDIE, M.P.

This is a people robbed and spoiled, they are all of them snared
in holes, and they are hid in prison houses, they are
for a prey and none delivereth, for a spoil
and none RESTORE."—Isa. 1,11.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

The rate at which the Independent Labour Party is developing, and the change which is coming over the public mind relative to social and Labour Questions, makes the publication of a Pamphlet like the following very opportune. There is a demand for enlightenment, and it is well that this should be met by those who will not confuse the seeking mind, either by a mass of meaningless words, or by a slightly enlarged edition of the Newcastle Programme. The cause of the Democracy suffers much at the hands of its friends who, with the best of intentions, frequently succeed in putting forward such a presentment of the case as almost makes one shudder.

My friend, the author of the following pages, has not only knowledge, but also the ability to put the position in a clear strong light. The I.L.P. movement is the first serious attempt to teach the Democracy how to use the power of which it is possessed; and to use it in its own way, free from either patronage or dictation from the privileged classes of society. Till this has been accomplished, the common people will remain enslaved and unrepresented however much the franchise may be extended.

J. KEIR HARDIE.

16th May, 1893.
THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY,

ITS

PROGRAMME AND POLICY.

The Independent Labour Party is a fact. That, no one whether political wire-puller, superior person, or Liberal-Labour candidate out of employment can deny. The infant Labour Party has been conceived in the womb of time, has successfully accomplished its parturition, and is proving itself to be a remarkably vigorous and lusty child. The recent bye-elections tend to show that although only in existence for a few weeks, the Independent Labour Party already holds the balance of power, and as Mr. Henry Broadhurst can testify, is likely to have a very disturbing influence on the politics of the future. Therefore no apology or justification for its appearance is necessary, it has already proved its right to exist. But as all new movements are received with a considerable amount of distrust and suspicion (for whatever his politics may be, there is no more intense conservative than your average Englishman), I shall endeavour to briefly outline the objects we have in view, and what we hope to accomplish.

THE MISSION OF RADICALISM.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth, and the first quarter of the present centuries, the working classes were plunged into a condition of more hopeless degradation and misery than had previously been known in English history. They were in a state of serfdom, but without the serf’s privileges. Cut off from all access to the land, denied the right of existence, except by permission of their employers, their scanty wages eked out by pauper relief, fettered on all sides by landlord made law, their condition was pitiable in the extreme. Thorold Rogers speaking of the period of which this fifty years was the culminating epoch, says,⁴ "I contend that from 1563 to 1820 a conspiracy concocted by the law, and carried out by parties, interested in its success, was entered into to cheat the English workmen of his wages, to deprive him of hope, and degrade him in irremediable poverty."

Such was the state of merrie England at the commencement of this nineteenth century of the Christian Era, and the working classes, deprived of the vote, without any voice in the administration of the state, looked upon Government with hatred and horror, for to them it was only an engine of oppression. "Let us alone," they cried "Give us but fair play, and we will achieve our own freedom." Thus laissez-faire became the watchword of Radicalism and the early Trade Unions. The franchise was only

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⁴Six Centuries of Work and Wages.
desired for the purpose of abolishing repressive laws, not of constructing new ones.* The vote was to be merely used as a means of restricting the despotic powers of the State, and reducing it to a position of impotence. Manhood suffrage was looked upon as the one thing necessary to establish the millenium. Their motto openly proclaimed was "The best Government is that which governs the least." The mission of Radicalism was destructive. That policy has accomplished much. The enactments restricting the free play of the law of wages, and combinations of workers, have been repealed. Capital and Labour, as far as the law is concerned, now meet on equal terms. Freedom of contract is established, but still the labourer is enslaved. He has escaped the clutches of the landlord, only to find himself under the, if possible, harsher despotism of capital. He is still at the mercy of an exploiting class who have discovered that whilst they hold the means of life in their hands, there is no necessity of Governmental interference to make him toil, that they may live in sloth and luxury. But a change is taking place in the mind of the worker. The old hatred of Government, natural when labour was denied the franchise, is giving place to a nobler conception of citizenship, now that he sees the state is but the executive of the nation, and that Parliament is as capable of passing laws in the interests of labour, as it was in passing laws against it. The Independent Labour Party is the logical sequence of the older labour party. Their function it was to pull down the economic prison in which they were entombed, ours is to build a stately palace in its stead.

The Policy of the Independent Labour Party is one of Social Construction.

Political freedom is obtained, the democratization of our institutions is, if not complete, so nearly so, that we have lost faith in the millenium it should have brought about, and we find instead of being at the end of our journey we are only at the beginning. The franchise is but the key with which to unlock the gate that bars us from the wealth we have created. The vote is but the scythe with which to reap the golden harvest, the produce of our labour. We refuse to wait any longer for the fashion of the blade to be altered, when the wheat is rotting in the ground. Political reform is only a means to an end. The old party divisions have faded out, a new line of cleavage has arisen, politics is ceasing to be a struggle for office between the Ins and Outs, it is rapidly becoming a class war, a fight between the Haves and the Have-nots. Outside the political arena, the fact stands out in brutal frankness. The Cotton Operatives of Lancashire, the Durham Miners, the Scotch Railwaymen, the Starving Dockers of London, Bristol, and Hull, have found to their cost that Liberal and Tory masters stand firmly united for

*The Liberals led by John Bright offered the bitterest opposition to the passage of the Factory Acts, though the country was ringing with the inhumanities practised in those dens of torture
the purpose of resisting their just demands, and Liberal and Tory workers equally firm in resistance to capitalist oppression. We are told that the movement is premature. We on the contrary say the time is rotten ripe. The old party of progress has accomplished its mission, it refuses to advance further on the path of Social Reform, it is dying of inanition, eking out its feeble life by living in its past traditions. But progress cannot die! The younger generation is knocking at the door. The party of Social construction, the true party of law and order, has been formed. With hearts beating high, and fired by a new faith and courage the Independent Labour Party has seized the banner of Freedom and lifting it on high, shouts forth the battle cry, "Advance Democracy."

**The Facts of the Case.**

Strange as it may seem to those who regard our commercial system as the only possible method of sustaining the national existence, there is no reason in nature why poverty should be, There is no reason why an abundance of wealth should not be within the reach of every man and woman, willing to work, at a far less expenditure of labour than they now give to secure a bare subsistence. It is admitted by all scientific authorities that the land of these islands is capable of sustaining a population of at least twice our present numbers. Everything we desire for necessity, or pleasure, comes from the land, and is raised by human labour, aided by tools and machinery. It is evident there is an ample supply of labour, only too anxious to be employed, abundance of raw material, and vast quantities of machinery either unused, or not used to anything like its full capacity, yet we are unable to utilize these opportunities. In a land overflowing with possibilities of wealth, we are poor. With so much work waiting to be done, we stand hopelessly idle. As Carlyle says, "We have more riches than any nation ever had before, we have less good of them than any nation ever had before. Our successful industry is hitherto unsuccessful, a strange success if we stop here. In the midst of plethoric plenty the people perish, with gold walls and full barns no man feels himself safe." Here is the problem we have to solve. Here is the Sphinx' riddle that threatens to destroy us and to which we Socialists profess to have found the answer.

**The Object of the Party.**

We assert the earth is the inalienable gift of nature to the whole of mankind, that our country is the property of the nation at large, and not of a limited few who originally stole it and then passed the laws which made that robbery legal. Britain for the British, say we. Capital is the stored up labour force of the labourers, the result of their energy and skill, and should be collectively owned by the combined body of the workers, instead of by an idle class of shareholders and capitalists who have probably never swung a pick nor raised a hand to create that wealth they claim as theirs.
The national income of the country is £1,350 millions,\(^2\) that is, the value of the commodities raised by the labour, and services rendered, of the country in a year amounts to that sum. It is divided as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rent (i.e., permission to use the land)</td>
<td>£220 millions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest (i.e., permission to use the machinery, buildings, railways, &amp;c.)</td>
<td>£280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unearned Incomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>£500</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profits and wages of Superintendence</strong></td>
<td><strong>£350</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total sum taken by the monopolists</strong></td>
<td><strong>£850</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Wages of the manual labourers</strong></td>
<td><strong>£500</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£1,350</strong></td>
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Thus for every sovereign's worth of value the workers produce they pay thirteen shillings of it for permission to labour. Truly a very equitable and beneficent arrangement! Or admitting for a moment that the monopolist classes are entitled to the inflated wages they draw for services rendered, there still remains the fact that half the product of the labourers is confiscated for permission to gain access to the means of life. It is especially against these unearned incomes of rent and interest that the Socialist wages relentless war, for when equality of opportunity is secured for all, the rent of ability will average to the general level. Hence our object is—

"To secure the collective ownership of all the means of production, distribution and exchange," and further, that society shall itself organize the industries of the nation and shall produce for use and not for profit, thus securing to labour the only truly fair wages, viz., the entire product of labour. In other words, the object of the Independent Labour Party is to form a Cooperative Commonwealth.

**The Programme.**

Although we thus fearlessly proclaim the object we have in view, we recognise that society is not yet prepared or educated sufficiently to seize the reins that are dropping from the nerveless hands of capital, and drive the industrial coach itself. Therefore we have to devise means which shall mitigate the worst evils of society as at present constituted, and which will be steps in the right direction. We must mount the ladder of progress rung by rung. The time is past for merely telling of the high tableland of peace and plenty, we must construct the road by which the ascent is to be made; or to use the simile that I started with, we must first put in the foundations of our social edifice before we begin to erect the building.

Now labour carries on within itself a fratricidal war upon two points. Owing to the continual displacement of labour by machinery, and to the incapacity of our capitalists system to

\(^2\) See Fabian Tract, "Facts for Socialists."
absorb the surplus workers, there is a continually increasing competition for employment. This causes a constant tendency to lengthen hours of labour and to reduce wages. These, then, are the two evils to which we must first turn our attention.

A LEGAL EIGHT HOURS DAY.

This has been rightly placed as the first item of our programme, and takes precedence of all other measures. It is true society is not yet sufficiently organised to supersede private enterprise, but it is at any rate competent to enforce that the industries of the country shall be conducted under humane and decent conditions. We can determine that these excessive hours of toil which are sapping the vitality of the nation and raising a generation of feeble, physically and mentally degraded people, shall be limited to a maximum of eight per day. The question has been so much discussed of late years that I do not intend to occupy much space in its advocacy. It has been clearly proved that the introduction of an eight hours day will (1) stimulate production, (2) temporarily absorb the unemployed, and (3) raise wages.* But the stimulus given to the introduction of machinery will soon cause a re-appearance of the workless worker and the present economic congestion. It is mainly as a sanitary measure that the legal Eight Hours Day is advocated by Socialists.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

In all our large industrial centres arises the cry daily growing more impatient and more menacing of the gaunt hungry armies of the unemployed clamouring for work at subsistence wages. With the exception of the Socialists the utmost extent of the political sagacity of to-day seems to be to find these men work. Let us lay out public gardens, erect buildings, pull down prisons, break stones, let us find work! work! work! but this finding of work will not remedy the evil. One of the causes of our economic congestion is unproductive consumption. The idle rich, their dependents, retainers, and the hosts of trades ministering to their luxuries and caprices are all drawing wealth from the national storehouse and returning nothing to it, constituting a burden under which society is being slowly but surely crushed. Unproductive consumption almost of necessity brings in its train, insufficient or under-production. The unemployed are (like the idle rich) also unproductive consumers (consuming little enough it is true, but still consuming), and merely to find them work will in no sort remedy the evil unless that work be productive. To take a theoretical illustration. In a settlement of a hundred men eighty are working and twenty unemployed. Work is found for them by making them carry weights up a hill and then carry them down again. Now, this work though hard enough as a labour test is productive of nothing whatsoever, therefore the only means of sustaining

* See Fabian Tract, A Plea for an Eight Hours Bill, and the Eight Hour Day, by Harold Cox and Sidney Webb.
them would be to put a tax upon the other eighty; but if instead of this senseless method land were taken and they were employed at agriculture they would consume a portion of the food themselves, and the rest they would exchange for commodities manufactured by the others, thus increasing the wealth of the whole community. In all primitive societies where access to the land is easy every man has the power of sustaining himself by his labour. We want a modern substitute for this elementary right. It is the local authorities who must organize the unemployed, but it is too long and too hopeless a task to trust to local effort to compel each municipality to take up the question in a bold and comprehensive spirit, and apply the remedy simultaneously, for if some municipalities were in advance of the others, the better conditions would simply attract the surplus labour from the more backward centres. But a more formidable difficulty arises in the fact that the local parliaments are dominated by business men, who, in the main, do not want to solve the unemployed question, for a margin of surplus labour keeps wages down; neither would they want to establish municipal industries which might possibly compete with their own.* They would, therefore take very good care that these industries should fail, as the municipal workshops of Louis Blanc, in Paris, were made to fail. The question, therefore, must be made a national one. The local authorities must be compelled by Parliament to do their obvious duty, whilst at the same time the fullest local autonomy and initiative must be preserved. We want a national recognition of the right of a man to live by his labour. Parliament should pass an Act compelling the Municipality, County or Parish Council to provide unskilled work to any applicant between the ages of 21 and 55 resident in the district at a fixed minimum wage of thirty shillings a week. It should then be left to the local authorities to discover the best means of employing the surplus labour remuneratively. This might vary in particular localities, but they would one and all speedily recognise the fact that wealth does not fall in some mysterious way like the manna from heaven, but is actually a product of human labour. They would, therefore, organise the labour in production, which would generally take the form in the first instance of municipal farming. The return of labour to the soil would cause a corresponding demand for other commodities, and this, coupled with the continuous pressure for employment owing to the constant displacement of labour by machinery, would force on the organization of labour for the production of other commodities, and so the way would be paved to the gradual municipalisation of all the staple industries. It may be argued that these industries could not be self-supporting, but of that there is little fear. Municipalities can carry out building operations at a less cost than the private contractor. Since the late reforms in the

* From the Socialists point of view it is undesirable that the local authorities should enter the competing market except in staple food stuffs. The demand should cause supply.
dockyard, government ships are built at a cheaper rate than in the private yards. Enfield can turn out rifles at a lower rate than Birmingham. Municipal gas and water works do not compare unfavourably with those under private control. The keen commercial intelligence of the middle-classes that now dominate our local politics is quite as capable of conducting municipal industries as private one. The danger of the local councillors killing these enterprises by kindness will be prevented, for if the industries are not self-supporting the wages will have to be supplemented from the rates, and the ratepayers are likely to make short work of those councillors who do not devote the highest skill and intelligence to making these enterprises remunerative. Parliament is not likely to repeal such an Act when once it is passed, and so the fear of raising the rates, which now is a great obstacle to any effective dealing with the matter, would then be turned and used as a force towards collectivism.

It is from the revival of agriculture that the future prosperity of Britain may be looked for. The private system of farming has broken down, on all sides is heard the cry of agricultural distress; we see the land going out of cultivation and the country labourer driven to compete in the already overcrowded labour market of the towns,† yet the English farmer has the richest markets in the world at his door, abundance of cheap labour, and a soil which has a higher average yield than any country in the world save one. Such a high authority as Lord Derby has publicly scouted the idea of over-population, and all agricultural experts agree on the point that the land, if properly cultivated, is capable of easily sustaining a population vastly in excess of our present numbers. The late Alderman Mechi, one of the greatest authorities on agriculture of this century, stated that:—"If all the land of this kingdom, which is equal in quality with my own, produced as much as mine does per acre, our agricultural produce would be increased by the enormous amount of £421,000,000 annually, the present produce according to my calculation being £3 7s. per acre, or £169,000,000. According to my annual produce of £11 1s. per acre it would be £687,000,000."

Further words of mine are unnecessary.

Allotments are sometimes advocated as a cure for agricultural depression; but this remedy is no remedy, and is in fact a most reactionary proposal. If it were advocated that in order to cure the depression in the cotton trade we should return to handloom weaving there would be a universal chorus of derision, yet this is practically what a system of small holdings means. Farming must develop on the same lines as other industries. We must follow the example of the joint stock

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* To those who may object to applying Parliamentary compulsion to the municipalities I would like to ask, How many localities would have put the Education Act into operation if there had been no compulsion.

† During the last twenty years, from the calculations of Professor A. R. Wallace, it is estimated that over 4,000,000 of people have been driven from the rural districts.
companies of America, the Bonanza farms, and cultivate large areas on the most scientific methods, with the aid of the most improved machinery and with a large amount of capital. Municipal farming is likely to be in the highest degree successful. There is in the first place the enormous manorial value of the sewage now so iniquitously wasted, there is the boundless capital and the skilled intelligence they would have at their command, and, above all, there would be the non-necessity for profit-making. Another most desirable result would be obtained by the passage of such a measure,

A Minimum Wage

would be established for all industries automatically. The right of public employment being obtained no one would be foolish enough to work for a private employer for less money than he could obtain from the municipality, and therefore the capitalists would no longer be able take advantage of the glutted state of the labour market to depress wages.

Sweated Industries would Disappear

as if by magic, and the labour placed upon a decent footing. The devil's weapon of starvation, which the masters always use when they have a dispute with their employées, would be broken in their hands. The workers would be freed from the carking harassing care which the uncertainty of employment produces, and being secured in the means of existence that old individualist delusion, Freedom of Contract, would become a reality.

In order to prevent the municipalities being swamped by too sudden a demand, the compulsory clause might be suspended for the first two years from the date of the passage of the Act, and the local authorities simply empowered to give employment. This period of grace would give them time to organise their forces, acquire land, and to absorb the surplus labour gradually. There would still be the idle vicious class, the drunken shiftless loafers who infest our street corners, who would have to be dealt with. But society owes a duty to these people. They equally with the idle rich are the products of our social system, and therefore our efforts should be directed to reform and not to punish. The municipalities would have to be invested with guarded rights of dismissal to a State Labour Reforming Colony, where the ne'er-do-wells would be compelled to work under a firm but kindly discipline, and under restraining conditions which might, if possible, win them back to citizenship and civilisation.

* The ordinary commercial intelligence cannot grasp the idea of producing for use and not for profit, but as a matter of fact it is but a trifle less immoral for a municipality to make a profit out of labour as for a private employer. The workers of Birmingham and Manchester would be considerably better off if their gas and water were supplied to them at the cost of its production.
II

THE CHILDREN.

Oh grief, then grief and shame,
If in this flourishing land
There should be dwellings, where the new-born babe
Doth bring into its parent's soul no joy,
Where squallid poverty receives it at its birth,
And on her withered knees
Gives it the scanty food of discontent."

On no section of the community do the evils of our competitive system press more hardly than on the children of the poor. Barely fed, scantily clothed, their play-ground that nursery of vice, the gutter, it is marvellous that they do not, one and all, develop into thieves and drunkards. That they do not, argues much for the natural goodness of humanity against which the Christian Churches impiously declaim. In London alone there are at least 40,000 children who are driven to school every morning without breakfast, and with but scanty prospect of dinner. If this happens in the richest city in the world the proportion in the other large centres must be greater. We feed the mind, but not the body, reversing the natural order in our usual topsy-turvy fashion.* Free meals, whether State or voluntarily provided, are but the merest palliatives. The children must be removed entirely from the evil influences of the gutter to healthier surroundings. The Education Acts must be extended to provide

FREE BOARDING SCHOOLS

in the country, where the children of the poor may be sent by their parents in preference to the day schools in the towns. There, with ample nourishment, warm clothing, fresh air, and in contact with the objects of nature, they may be instructed not in the dull routine that comprises our educational system, but in the knowledge of agriculture, chemistry, and other sciences. Brought up under such conditions they may be expected to develop into healthy and intelligent citizens, a credit and an honour to their country. The respectable working classes will send their children to these schools for the benefit of the children, as the middle and upper classes send theirs to the great public schools of Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and others, many of which are charitable institutions. The vicious class will send their children in order to be free of the responsibility, and though this may be objected to because of the vicious, the children at any rate will be saved, which is the main object.

There may be an objection raised that the children would be too much separated from their parents, but I would point out that there would be no compulsion exercised unless in the case

* Another illustration of this economic blindness is the treatment of the evil of drunkenness. All our efforts are directed to remove the drink itself, instead of getting at the causes which create the drink appetite, that is the unsanitary and degraded conditions of the people and the exhausting nature of their work. This may be called the policy of mopping up the slops instead of stopping the leak.
of neglected or ill-treated children, and also, as the schools would
be under the local school boards, they would not be far removed
from the town, and free weekly return tickets could be provided
that the children might visit their homes. With regard to the
objection that being relieved from parental responsibility the
vicious class would be reckless in propagating their kind, I would
point out that that recklessness already exists and is indulged in
to its fullest extent, restraints being practised more and more as
a higher scale of economic comfort is reached.

Child labour should be entirely forbidden, a limit of 15
years being fixed, and the children should be kept at school till
that age, with the option of continuing their training should
they or their parents wish. Free unsectarian education with
maintenance being provided right up to the University

Old Age Pensions.

Of all the problems submitted to the nation for decision,
that of making proper provision for the aged workers, worn out
in the service of society, seems the most desirable. The Right
Hon. Joseph Chamberlain has stated that out of every two
manual labourers who reach the age of 65, one is a a pauper.
This statement in itself is sufficient to condemn our whole social
system, for, as owing to the exhausting and unsanitary conditions
of labour, the average age of the working classes is but 29, whilst
that of the better-to-do is 55, it argues the practice of a
considerable amount of thrift, sobriety, and morality, to reach
that period of life. But instead of society treating its industrial
veterans tenderly and lovingly, it dooms them to the punishment
of the workhouse, and rewards their services to the nation with
a pauper's grave. Many schemes of old age pensions have been
proposed by worthy gentlemen drawn from the rich middle and
upper classes, but with the noble exception of Mr. Charles Booth,
these are merely methods by which the poor may be induced to
insure themselves when young, in order to save the rates when
old. Apart even from any other reason, and there are many, it
is impossible, and if it were not impossible it would be absolutely
criminal for the unskilled labour class, always trembling on the
verge of starvation, to contribute anything from their scanty
wages, so sorely needed for the support of their wives and
families. The maintenance of the aged must be claimed as a
right from the state, in the support of which they have expended
their health and strength. Many of the wealthy may ask why
they should be taxed in support of others to whom they owe
nothing. Nothing legally that is but morally they have been
robbing from the workers, under sanction of the laws, two-thirds
of their produce, and the national endowment of old age is but a
feeble attempt at restitution. The pension should be sufficient
to maintain the recipient in a fair degree of comfort, and should
be bestowed at an age when the capacity for enjoyment still
remains, instead of being a miserable pauper dole, not enough to
live on, and not to starve on. Every person above the age of 55, who cares to claim it, should be entitled to a national pension of 20s. per week as a right, without the taint of pauperism or charity. With the aged should be included the disabled and incapable.

**Finance.**

The Programme I have sketched out will require money to carry it into effect, the amount may be roughly estimated at 250 millions a year. I have shown that the unearned incomes of the monopolists of land and capital amount to 500 millions a year, added to which at least 200 millions of the 350 millions drawn as rent of ability is only obtained by the monopoly of the more highly paid posts. The funds necessary should be raised by a graduated income tax on these unearned incomes, so that we shall transfer by means of the tax collector some of the wealth now wrongfully drawn from the workers by the monopolists back into the pockets of the wage earners.

Here then is a programme on which the Independent Labour Party can appeal for the support of every man honestly wishful to solve the social question.

By the Eight Hours Bill, we prevent the physical deterioration of the nation and provide leisure for culture and amusement.

By Municipal Employment, we provide remunerative work for every willing worker, and we establish a minimum wage for all industries.

By Free Boarding Schools, we provide education and maintenance for the children and a healthy, intelligent and stalwart race for the future.

By Pensions for the Aged, we provide a decent subsistence for the worn out worker.

**It is a programme which could be carried into effect in a single Parliamentary Session.**

**The Coming Crash.**

Before such a happy state of affairs can be brought about much remains to be done. The workers must organize themselves to capture the reins of Government ere it is too late. Every circumstance seems to point to the fact that we have reached a crisis in our history. The ordinary politician, blind to the handwriting on the wall, scoffs at the idea of a social collapse, just as did the French nobles before the Revolution that swept them and their houses into the oblivion of night. But to the more far sighted student of economics, the sentence is written in letters of fire.

The constantly recurring periods of trade depression caused by over-production and the race for markets are becoming each time more and more prolonged, and the continual displacement
of labour by machinery destroys the purchasing power of the workers and intensifies the evil. John Stuart Mill points out that the tendency of machinery is to entirely dispense with human labour never actually reaching that goal, yet continually approaching nearer and nearer to it. Under an organised system of society, with the collective ownership of the means of production, this would be of unqualified benefit to the whole community, but under existing circumstances it is fraught with consequences too terrible to contemplate. The commercial system of Europe shows every sign of a collapse in the near future. There are but two alternatives from which to choose. One is the establishment of the Social Democratic State, the other is a combination of the great capitalists and plutocrats such as is developing in America, the abolition of the competitive system and running of the country practically as a joint stock concern. The capitalist class have the intelligence and power to evolve a new social order for themselves. In such a case the franchise would soon be reduced, or a perpetual hereditary parliament formed. They would no more allow the workers to have a voice in the management of the country, than they now allow them a voice in the management of the railways, docks, or other enterprises. The parting of the ways has come. I therefore appeal to all workers of whatever ranks of life to join the Independent Labour Party, the political expression of Social Democracy. It is the only party which holds up a definite ideal and has a definite policy. I appeal to the workers, whether

Liberal or Tory,

to cast off the political chains that now fetter their intellects, and to join the party of emancipation from the thralldom of capital. There is but one test to the value of any political measure, and that is the bread and butter test. If both Liberal and Tory programmes were realised in all their emptiness to-morrow, there would not be a single prostitute saved from the streets, a single child rescued from the gutter, nor a single unemployed man who would obtain work thereby.

The workers of the nation are divided into two hostile camps, and at election times we see working man fighting against working man, to decide who shall have control of the means of plundering them. But outside the parliamentary battlefield party distinctions disappear, and the true cause of conflict, the struggle of Capital and Labour for supremacy, is revealed. The Tory Government lends the forces of the State, the police and soldiery paid for by the workers, that the Irish Landlords may wring from their half-starved tenants the rack rents they dissipate in London brothels and continental gambling hells. The Liberals protest with all the theatrical machinery and caucus indignation at their command. Yet when they occupy the seat of Government they send Gunboats to the Humber, and pour troops into Hull to overawe and coerce the down trodden docker fighting
against the contemptuous tyranny of the Liberal shipowners. If the workers of the nation are in earnest in desiring to achieve their social liberty, if they desire a freer, fuller, happier state in the future than they have had in the past, they must sink their party differences and stand united upon the common platform of Independence. It is useless going cap in hand to either Liberal or Tory whining for a few of the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, we must demand to take our proper seat at the feast. We must shake off our slavish apathy, and strike a blow for freedom. We must elect Independent Labour men to represent Labour, and not professional politicians, to run our country in their own interests. Do not be misled by the parrot cry that the movement for Independent Labour representation is a Tory dodge for splitting the Liberal vote. Try to realize it is quite possible to hate a Liberal without loving a Tory. The Liberals do not hesitate to split the Labour vote when they have the opportunity, witness Halifax, Salford, and South West Ham where Labour candidates were first in the field. It is but natural they would rather see a Tory, with whom they are in virtual agreement, returned, than a Socialist who wars upon the ill-gotten wealth of both. But there is one sufficient answer to this senseless accusation. If they really think we are a Tory dodge supported by Tory gold, let them, while they have the power, pass a Second Ballot Bill, and all splitting the party will be at an end. They will not do so, however, for they have no desire to see labour represented.

To Trade Unionists.

On all sides, employers are gathering their forces together for an attack upon your combinations. Capital is taking a leaf out of the workman's book, and is combining too, and combined capital must prevail over combined labour, for the labourers must eat. You form your unions to fight an enemy, where is that foe save in the ranks of your employers, and yet you deliberately vote for them to represent you in Parliament, handing over to them the resources of the State, whilst you go defenceless to the fight. You elect and pay your fellow-workers to be your secretaries and to represent you at your congresses; if the employers are capable of representing you in Parliament, why do you not elect them to represent you on your unions, they would be willing to do the work for nothing. The old order changeth, trade unionism must be backed up by Parliamentary action if it is to continue. Many of you oppose us from blind unreasoning hostility to progress. Do not forget the opposition you also encountered before trade unionism was fashionable. We ask you to join this new political union, and to stand with us together united upon a common platform. Do not be political blacklegs.

I appeal to

The Christian Churches.

Remember the Bishop of Peterboro' has declared it is
impossible to realize Christ’s teaching here on earth. True, under present circumstances it is impossible. But it would be easy and possible under Socialism. You acknowledge the principle of Universal Brotherhood, but you postpone it to some indefinite period in the future. You teach your children to lisp “Our Father” at their Mother’s knee, yet you are upholding the blasphemous system that permits your brothers and sisters to perish in crime and misery, and will not stretch forth a saving hand to help them. The charities you support are but the chloroform with which to lull your consciences to sleep. They intensify the evils of society and perpetuate its degradation.

To Lovers of Freedom.

Only under the Social Democratic State may Freedom be secured. The wage-earners of to-day are as truly slaves as ever were the negroes in the Southern States. Freedom under Individualism is the freedom of one man to enslave his fellows, “Shall I not do what I like with mine own,” says the Capitalist, heedless of the harm he may work others. Under Socialism there will be the most perfect freedom for all, but freedom only to do good, there will be no liberty, as there will be no desire to work evil.

In the words of Shelley:

What is Freedom. Ye can tell
That which slavery is too well,
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

Thou art clothes, and fire and food,
To the trampled multitude.
No—in countries that are free,
Such starvation cannot be
As in England now we see.

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