

NEARING THE GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Herbert Morrison, speaking to a Labour audience, is reported to have said, *Sunday Times*, November 7, that "Labour's basic policy was simple. The country would merely have to decide (at the next election) whether the present partnership of State and industry should continue. It would be for the public to decide whether Parliament and the Government should share in the organisation of industry and planning, or whether there should be a return to the chaos of the years between the wars."

Question-begging phrases are an almost obligatory tradition of partisan rallies; but some of his audience might have noticed, after their excitement had died down, that he had not included the labouring people in the partnership. The wool scheme referred to elsewhere, and hosts of other schemes of which it is only a single example, reveals the structure of the partnership which the labouring people are asked to support under the name of "Labour." It is a partnership of State monopoly, trade monopoly and land monopoly; leading, on the one hand, to less freedom, less wealth and less access to the land, without which labour is powerless and, on the other hand, to more restrictions, more scarcities of goods, higher prices, higher rents and, above all, higher taxes. Despite all the technical inventions to increase the power of labour, and thus reduce prices, the organised pressure groups which force the Government to raise wages by decree find that even for their own members the real value of wages has not risen; and for the members of less powerful groups or those not represented by any pressure group living is becoming more difficult every day. No working man even dreams of "a home he can call his very own"; young people are lucky if their names are on the end of a list for the State-owned dwellings which are all that can now be built. The situation of the elderly on slender, fixed incomes, politically helpless and of no use to any pressure group, is a disgrace to any community which pretends to standards of humanity. And all this despite a continuous stream of humiliating alms supplied by foreign taxpayers, who show an ever-growing contempt for those who seem unable to help themselves. What if these alms should cease?

This prospect is such that our rulers do not seem anxious to turn working men's eyes towards it. The *Daily Herald*, largest organ of the Labour Party, advertises—in other newspapers—its article, "The Way Into Uncle Sam's Pocket," describing it as "a brilliant article which brings real inspiration and hope to worker, manager and salesman alike." As an alternative inspiration, labourers may listen to the exhortations of Labour Ministers to work harder and longer in factories owned by the large combines—the monopoly capitalists—whose power, as it is backed by their partners, the State, is greater than before. Although the incomes of the obviously rich are reduced by taxation, their comparative advantage remains, the full harshness of these crude efforts to redistribute income falling upon any working man who might be trying to save and invest a small amount of capital in order to achieve independence.

Political Labour, having taken over power from Conservative Governments, has, in fact, swallowed the worst principles of Conservative politics: its trade privilege, its land privilege, its tendency to deny individual right in favour of State direction. And Labour has continued and greatly developed the bureaucracy of Conservative administrations; until the labour of the people must main-

tain an army of officials, unemployed as far as production is concerned, but engaged in thwarting the efforts of genuine labourers to provide for themselves.

Mr. Morrison repeats the gibe of "chaos" concerning any period of the past in which Labour politicians were not able to direct trade and industry. And there is poetic justice in his reviving a slogan which Conservative propaganda has used so often to describe periods or conditions where the people resisted Conservative attempts to direct trade and industry to the advantage of the pressure groups which swayed their policy. And if Mr. Morrison suggests a fantastic picture of the past, which so many of the younger members of the audience are unable to check by personal recollection, we must not forget that Mr. Churchill, in his references to Free Trade England before 1914, moving slowly towards land reform, has also given a fantastic picture of political affairs which many even of his middle-aged auditors are probably unable to check. The Winston Churchill of 1909 said, "Here in England we have long enjoyed the blessings of Free Trade, but, on the other hand, we have to set against these inestimable boons a vicious and unreformed system of land tenure. In no great country in the civilised world have the working classes yet secured the advantages of both free trade and free land, by which I mean a commercial system and a land system from which, so far as possible, the element of monopoly is rigorously excluded." The Mr. Churchill of 1949, now leader of a party which has always protected the land monopoly he denounced, never gives a hint to the working classes that this was the remedy for poverty he advocated. Instead, he tells them that at that time he advocated the same remedies as Labour leaders to-day. And Mr. Morrison, who in previous years held similar language, is equally silent on the same subject. Mr. Churchill and Mr. Morrison, despite their different political labels, advocate the same principles of a partnership of State and private monopoly, and both draw distorted pictures of the past calculated to divert attention from what they then said to the working classes.

The year 1928 was midway between the two great wars, a period dominated by land monopoly and vicious taxation, just as the Western world is dominated by land monopoly and vicious taxation to-day. Although Britain was still considered "Free Trade," the false panacea of tariffs had already made deep inroads and the drug of Paternalism had started to paralyse the desire for liberation. The number of those maintained by the State for doing nothing—and called unemployed—should have touched the conscience of the nation just as those in similar circumstances to-day, and not always called unemployed, should warn us of our danger.

It was a bad and shameful time, but to call it "chaos" compared to 1949 must seem absurd to any person not blinded by partisan feeling, who can remember it. If to-morrow exchange became free; money became real; the trade gap disappeared; imports and exports gradually increased; taxes went down so much that P.A.Y.E. was abolished; prices were falling instead of rising; we were paying interest on American debt and never even contemplating asking help; and foreign relations were improving, not deteriorating—would we call this "chaos"? It would have been quite easy at that time to point to more examples of obvious poverty and squalor than appear to-day; but is it not becoming apparent that the attempt

to cure these things by pouring out public money to cover the symptoms, instead of remedying the cause, is likely to bring us into worse disaster?

It is a pity that some older members of the Party were not able to inform the younger members of his audience about Mr. Morrison's efforts on behalf of the principles advocated by that great Labour leader, Philip Snowden, a man of the people, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer and under the banner of Labour fought for labour against land monopoly, trade monopoly and the oppression of taxes on the work of men's hands and brains. He did not tell the working classes their salvation depended on working harder and longer, on paying more taxes, on ceasing to bargain in a free market for higher wages, or on submitting to the regimentation of the Paternal State. He told them that their salvation depended upon removing taxation from work, thrift, foresight, the saving and risking of unprivileged capital, and the exchange of goods. He urged them to support him in breaking land monopoly and collecting for public services the value of land which the monopolists inter-

cepted under Liberal Governments, Conservative Governments—and now intercept under a Labour Government. On the point of success, when an Act was already on the Statute Book, came an economic crisis which, starting in Protectionist America and felt worse in Protectionist-Paternalist Germany, threw the British people into a panic which enabled Snowden's Conservative opponents to save land monopoly and extend trade monopoly. And now some of Snowden's colleagues at that time, in the name of Labour, continue and extend the policy of his Conservative opponents. Snowden saw that the maladjustments of the inter-war years, and before, were due to the intervention of privilege, checking the natural harmony of economic law. Accepting the teaching of Henry George, he saw that labour could obtain its highest reward only in a community united in a partnership of justice to all and privilege to none. By regimenting the people his successors have only imposed more privileges upon those already existing, and chaos is steadily extending its influence throughout the world. Wittingly or unwittingly, Labour has betrayed Labour.

F. D. P.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND AFTER

As a supplement to this issue we publish the French and Spanish translations of the International Conference Declaration and Resolution, for which we are indebted to Mr. A. V. Beuret and Mr. L. Ceballos respectively, colleagues both resident in London. Copies, separately printed, will be made available for any of our readers who can undertake their circulation or their publication in the Press in the countries affected, as in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Spain, Cuba, Mexico and South America. Translations into Spanish have been made also by Mr. Baldomero Argente, Madrid, and Mr. Santiago Serra, Barcelona, which were thankfully consulted by Mr. Ceballos. Other translations: To Mr. Ole Wang, in Norway, we are indebted for the Norwegian translation; to Mr. Pavlos Giannelias, in Lyon, for the Greek translation; to Mr. Robert Major, in Rome, for the Hungarian translation, and to Mr. Rupert Mason for the Chinese translation, which has been made by his friend, Mr. Hou C. Chang in San Francisco for printing in Chinese papers on the West Coast. The Danish translation will appear in *Grundskyld*, organ of the Henry George Union, and the Dutch in *Ons Erfdeel*, organ of the Justice and Freedom Union. The texts of these other translations and of the German and Italian (the latter two being prepared) can be obtained on request; but considering all the expense of printing and the necessary assurance that effective use will be made of the prints, what the International Union can do by way of undertaking publication needs careful thought. Correspondents have been approached for translations into Portuguese, for circulation in Brazil, and into Swedish, Hebrew and Esperanto. It is obvious that if the Union is to do the work so enthusiastically demanded of it by the Swanwick Conference, considerable financial aid is required, and in this we stress the special appeal that has gone to all members at the instance of the Treasurer, Mr. Ashley Mitchell, who wishes to acknowledge the ready response he has received so far.

We wish to compliment several of our contemporaries on the excellent reports they have published on the proceedings at the International Conference. Readers of the *Henry George News*, New York, had the benefit of the impressions taken home to America by the President, Mr. Rupert Mason, by Miss V. G. Peterson and

Mr. Robert Clancy. In Denmark, *Grundskyld* had Mr. Nils Ebbesen, and *Ret og Frihed* had Mr. Arge Krapper as their reporters and the account was well told. The same issue of *Grundskyld* reports the flying visit which Dr. O'Regan of New Zealand paid to Copenhagen on a journey from Sweden to England, not long before he left for home. A meeting was hurriedly arranged by the Henry George Union and was held in Parliament House, with a remarkably good attendance, considering the short notice. Dr. O'Regan gave an informing address on the progress of land-value rating in New Zealand, and there was much helpful publicity in the Copenhagen dailies.

Readers of LAND & LIBERTY are urged to help in circulating the Declaration of Principle and Policy and the Resolution on Individual and Common Rights in Land, the Message of our International Conference to people in all countries. The Declaration and the Resolution form one pamphlet of which, meeting the demand thus far, already 11,000 copies have been printed. Quantities will be provided free if effective distribution is guaranteed. Let us also assist YOU in this work by your sending name and address of the persons or associations to whom you would have the document sent, we mailing them on your behalf. In this respect the President of the Union, Mr. Rupert Mason, by the quantities he has handled and the many prominent names he has supplied, has set a notable example and he is entitled to be emulated. It has been well said that the work of the Conference did not finish with its closing session. It had only begun.

For distribution within special circles, the Resolution on Individual and Common Rights in Land has been issued as a separate print in pleasing style and carrying the signatures of the President and the Secretary of the Conference. Dr. O'Regan, the mover of the Resolution, had in mind its particular appeal directed to quarters where Henry George's attitude to property in land has been misapprehended. It is well, therefore, to have this document by itself that it may fulfil its distinct purpose.

The Conference Declaration of Principle and Policy, in translation by M. Daudé-Bancel, together with his report on Swanwick, is appearing in the *Revue Socialiste*, of