

# WHERE COBDENISM AND SOCIALISM MEET

BY PHILIP SNOWDEN

(Chairman of the Independent Labour Party)

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The superficial Cobdenite and the superficial Socialist would probably declare that Cobdenism and Socialism are the antipodes of political and social theories.

No political or economic philosophy has seized and held the minds of great masses of people unless it had some great truth to preach. Both Cobdenism and Socialism have appealed with success to three or four generations of people, and have gained support from men and women whose earnestness and sincerity in the cause of world reformation cannot be doubted.

The fact that Cobdenites and Socialists have been thrown together so closely during the last five years in defence of principles which each regarded as an essential part of their political and economic faith has led thoughtful people in both schools to consider whether there is not much more in common between them than had previously been supposed.

The aim and purpose of Cobden and his school, as I understand it, is precisely the aim and purpose of Socialism, namely, to secure the largest possible measure of individual liberty in a well-ordered State and in a well-ordered world. Cobden differed from modern Socialists in his ideas as to the best method of attaining that desirable state of complete individual liberty, but there are certain fundamental conditions of attaining to that state of liberty, without the practical application of which neither Socialism nor any other plan of social organisation will achieve the purpose. . . .

But the terrible times through which the world has been passing during the last five years have proved that there are Cobdenite principles other than Free Trade which are essential for economic, social and international well-being. No charge brought against Cobdenites and Socialists alike could be more unjust than that they are "Little Englanders," using the phrase to describe men who have no concern with international policy and world affairs. On the contrary, Cobden was the first and greatest of internationalists; but he believed that international goodwill could be best attained by allowing each nation freedom to work out its own development in its own way, and by removing all artificial barriers to the free exchange of commodities and to the free intercourse of peoples. . . .

Our country is rushing headlong to ruin. Wholesale extravagance and vicious national financial and foreign policy, arbitrary and illegal interference with trade by interested persons in their own private interests, are responsible for the present position. Much of the national expenditure, which is carrying the nation rapidly to national bankruptcy, is rendered necessary by foreign policy. We might have a government which was efficient and economical, but if its policy be such as to necessitate a colossal expenditure, national bankruptcy will come just the same. The violation of the principles of Cobdenism and Socialism are responsible for the maintenance of an Army of Occupation in Ireland, for the expense of wars all over the

world to put down democratic revolutions. A peace treaty which violates these principles at every point and in every detail must impose upon the country, however efficient and economical the administration might be, a burden which the country cannot possibly sustain.

To place national finances on a sound basis, to secure economy and efficiency in national administration, to eliminate corruption from the State departments, to relieve trade from the incubus of artificial restraints, are immediate reforms necessary to establish the conditions upon which alone complete industrial reconstruction can be secured.

In this essential work Cobdenism and Socialism occupy common ground, and these reforms must be accomplished before we need consider the further question of the functions and organisation of the State in a well-ordered community.

## SPAIN

Señor Antonio Albendin, founder and President of the Spanish Single-Tax League, has been appointed head of the Cadastral Survey for the Province of Zamora. The headquarters of the League and of its monthly paper are now removed to his new address at Avenida Requejo, 5, Zamora, Spain. The League announces that its annual celebration of Henry George's birthday will be held on September 2nd.

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