

In November 1892 the Social Democrats under the leadership of Dr. Leo Arons drew up a resolution disagreeing with my administration, and towards the end of the year 1893 they all withdrew from the League, as their resolution had not been adopted by the other members. Since then the Social Democrats have had nothing whatever to do with our work, but members of almost all the other parties have joined the League and have spread our doctrines among their own parties. This was possible only as long as we remained quite unpartisan, and untouched by the actual political conflict. Anyone who has ever been through the political battle knows that the fight is made not against the things our antagonists say as much as against the things they do not say. An association which remains neutral between the parties stands above them all. This, it seems to me, is the position the Land Reform League should take.

It is not an easy position to keep and it demands from the members of the League much tact, self-control and diplomacy. But I am happy to say that our members have thus far never shown any lack of these qualities and I believe that they will continue to show no lack of them in the future.

THE ABOLITION OF POVERTY BY THE RESTORATION OF EQUAL RIGHTS TO THE USE OF THE EARTH.

AN APPEAL TO THE WHITE SLAVES OF LANDLORDISM.

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CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

AN APPEAL TO THE READER.

One final word. You who have been won for the good cause, the cause of the emancipation of the whole human race, do not allow yourselves to be deceived by the hope that the prevailing injustice can be abolished by words without deeds. Words without deeds can never lead to victory. Words without deeds remain mere empty noise, "sound and fury signifying nothing."

Nor should you ever seek to win people for the good cause who do not firmly believe that Justice must necessarily result in the well-being of all. I have spoken of the advantages of recognizing the equal claim of all to the use of the earth, not to convince, but to give some insight into its meaning. He who thinks rightly must believe that a cause based upon Justice must necessarily bring salvation to mankind. Where this conviction is wanting, there all other persuasion will be futile.

Whatever may be said against the recognition and enforcement of the equal claim of all to the use of the earth, nothing can serve to transform wrong into right. True, we have wandered so far from the ways of truth and justice that to many this thought will seem strange. We have been so intimidated by the avarice, arrogance and insolence of the usurpers of our land that to many the abolition of their tribute-levying power may seem unimaginable. They think that before any step is taken threatening the continuance of the unrestricted private ownership of land these gentlemen must be compensated for any probable loss of power and income. According to their view it is not those who have so long been cheated of their rights as men, not those who in the treadmill of unrequited continuous toil have grown old and grey before their time, not the women who have to earn their living to work from early morn to late into the night, not the children who in their springtime have been converted into mill hands without enjoyment of the present or hope for the future, not those whose lives from the cradle to the grave have been made one long martyrdom, who should receive compensation. No! those only are to be compensated who by means of infamous and unjust property laws have been enabled, without doing a stroke of honest work, to levy tribute upon their fellows. Compensated in order that they should condescend graciously to renounce the power to appropriate to themselves that which by right belongs to others.

Compensation! our opponents are ill advised to say anything of compensation, for the word suggests restitution. Strict justice does not demand that the workers should be called upon to pay compensation before they are allowed to reap the fruits of their labor; but it does demand that restitution should be made by those who in the past have made use of unjust laws to take it from them. This is the clear, unmistakeable demand of justice, if justice is to be done to both rich and poor. Of such compensation little has yet been heard.

It would be opposed not only to our conception of justice; it would be morally poisonous and unwholesome to pay compensation to land-owners. For what are we to compensate them? Because they renounce the power of extorting tribute from us for the permission to live upon God's earth? Is not that preposterous? What can the masses gain if their oppressors are not to lose anything?

They also deceive themselves, or deceive others, who contend that the rights of mankind will be restored by gradual evolution, without a great, and possible bloody, struggle against the worst passions of human nature. That the world can be made better is no idle vision; but it is an idle vision to imagine that this is possible unless those who know the truth have the courage of their convictions, and are willing to stake life and fortune to promote them. They alone have rights who dare maintain them. A people who hide themselves like cowards, or who with dull apathy look on when it is a question of their highest possessions, have lost the right to call themselves a free people, however glorious the traditions of the doings of their more courageous ancestors.

You landless and disinherited, who are dispossessed of your rights to the use of the earth, have you the courage to demand a better fate? Will you continue for ever the white slaves of the privileged classes? Are your daughters fit for nothing better than to cook the food and black the boots of your exploiters? Are your sons born but to increase the unearned wealth of insatiable millionaires?

God helps those who help themselves. Do not allow yourselves to be deceived by those who tell you that the social problem is a very complicated one, which can only be understood by those who read learned books. It is not true! The social question is the question of what by right is our property. It is the question whether we shall spend our lives in helpless poverty and subjection, or in prosperity, happiness and freedom. It is a question we dare not leave to learned professors; it is our right and our duty to decide it for ourselves.

What a storm would break loose if all those who hate injustice were to follow the voice of their conscience, and no longer attempt to serve two masters! If all these would commence the struggle against the prevailing injustice with the fixed resolve to conquer or perish in the attempt! How the hypocrisy and lies and cowardice of our time would vanish; and the men of conscience and character come into their rights! How would every better tendency of human nature have a room to grow and develop! What proud independence and self-consciousness would animate the most humble of our people, if once the highest law in the land were to guarantee to each his equal right to the use of the earth!

Enough of words! For those who are weary of impotent talk, who feel themselves insulted by the empty teachings of learned Professors and omniscient editors, by the empty do-nothing of our politicians, I think I have said enough. For those who find themselves at home in the mire of existing conditions, these lines have not been written. Where there is no deep feeling for right and wrong, my words will remain in vain. But I find satisfaction in knowing that they will carry conviction to the hearts of all who love justice and would serve her.

The End.

Down, down and down and down
 With idler, slave and tyrant!
 He that will not live by toil
 Has no right on English soil—
 God's word's our warrant!

—KINGSLEY.

If we tax land values more and labor values less, then surely the idle man and the idle acre have a better chance to get together.