

## LIBERAL LIBERTY LEAGUE

The League held an important Luncheon on 16th November at the Savoy Hotel, London, for the purpose, as the Invitation said, of voicing the fundamental political and economic concepts of Liberalism and the great need for rallying all Liberal forces in a combined determination to ensure the fulfilment of the Good Society. Mr. Ashley Mitchell, Chairman of the League, was Guest Speaker. Mr. T. Atholl Robertson, F.R.G.S., ex-M.P. for Finchley, presided. The lunch party included: Rt. Hon. Harcourt Johnstone, M.P.; Sir E. Graham-Little, M.P.; Sir Ernest Barker, Sir Arthur Page, Sir George Paish, Sir Walford Selby, Sir Murdoch Mackenzie Wood, Very Rev. Dr. W. R. Matthews the Dean of St. Paul's, Professor Hermann Levy, Rev. Dr. S. M. Berry, Rev. Dr. A. E. Garvie, Rev. Dr. A. J. Grieve, Professor W. A. Robson, Professor T. S. Sterling, Miss Jean Henderson, Mrs. Nixon, Miss Helen Hope, Miss Nellie Muspratt, Dr. Dorothy Stede, the Hon. Mrs. Whitmore, Deryck Abel, S. W. Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Batty, Commander Geoffrey Bowles, L. G. Bowman, E. G. Brunner, R. Butters, John Carvel (the Star), L. Chittenden, Col. G. W. T. Coles, B. F. Crosfield (News Chronicle), F. O. Darvall, W. R. Davies, H. C. Drayton, Archibald Dunn, F. Dupuis, George Edwards, J. W. Fidler, R. M. Findlay, Victor Gollancz, Thomas Graham (British Weekly), Mr. and Mrs. W. Harrison, G. G. Honeyman, G. Bernard Hughes, J. H. Humphreys, F. Jelinek, Raymond Jones, W. R. Lester, A. W. Madsen, S. Martin, Robert Muller, Cecil Palmer, R. Desmond Robinson, Norman Robson, P. Roche, W. L. Schwartz, W. C. Searle, Capt. J. R. M. Senior, Col. F. H. Smith, Louis T. Stanley, F. Sykes, J. W. Thompson (Evening Standard), Horace Thoroughgood, Maurice Webb (Sunday Express), Frank Welch, C. H. Willcock, H. E. Wincott (Investors' Chronicle), George Winder, W. C. Woodroffe; representatives of *The Times*, the *Manchester Guardian* and other newspapers. Expected guests unavoidably detained, included among others Mr. D. Owen Evans, M.P., Sir Goronwy Owen, M.P., and Messrs. J. Ward Daw and W. Ridgway.

The proceedings were reported in the *Manchester Guardian* as follows:—

A call for a revival of Liberalism based on the fundamental principle of the freedom of the individual, with Free Trade and the breaking of land monopoly as essentials of policy, was made yesterday at a luncheon in London of the Liberal Liberty League.

Mr. Atholl Robertson, who was in the chair, said that numbers of people, both Liberals and those of no party affiliations, had written to the league asking for a definition of Liberal policy. The league was determined to get the party "away from eclipse and on to the road where the sun was shining." They wanted to restore Free Trade and the breaking of the land monopoly to their proper perspective and secure equality of opportunity and social justice for all. They proposed to reinstate the Liberal policy for the taxation of land values. He added: "In my opinion there is no place in British politics for a Liberal party that is not a Free Trade party."

Mr. Ashley Mitchell said there was a crying need in the world to-day for Liberalism for liberty. Before 1914, the common man could understand the political issue—it was between reform and privilege—but latterly the issues between the parties had got thoroughly confused. We should reiterate that there is something crucial, the one great issue of the liberty of the indi-

vidual. The people of the Continent looked to Britain as the defender of liberty and they were right, but it was important that we should defend liberty in its home. On all sides we saw people clamouring for some kind of State control, which was authoritarianism or paternalism and involved the subordination of the individual.

Free Trade and taxation of land values were essential, said Mr. Mitchell. We had been told that private enterprise was breaking down. But we had never had private enterprise except by a privileged few, who could keep the land out of production if they wished. "Free the land and let Tom, Dick and Harry have private enterprise, and we shall see what they can do." It was the common man who had made this country great, and it was our business to see that he had his opportunity and his liberty.

A brief discussion followed. Mr. S. W. Alexander proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers which was carried with acclamation.

Appropriate use was made of quotations from two books, *History of the Liberal Party* by Sir Henry Slesser and *The Good Society* by Walter Lippmann, the former placed at each seat at the Luncheon and the latter circulated with the invitations.

"Thus, until the coalition of 1931 . . . when once again the Liberal Party was split asunder, the party either grudgingly assisted Labour or aided the Conservatives. In either case the Liberal Party did little to revive that belief in the sanctity of individual right which is the fundamental justification for their continued existence.

"Disappearance of the Liberal Party as an effective force in politics . . .

"Another explanation for their failure to continue as a party with any reasonable prospect of power lies in the assertion that the ideal for which Liberalism contended is spent. Sociology, it is said, has exploded the notion of the free and autonomous individual. . . . Planning by competent authority must be the prime concern of government and society.

"Whether, therefore, a resurrection of Liberalism is probable may depend upon the possibility of the recapture of the vision of the invaluable quality of personality.

"If the present collective outlook persists or develops the very notion may be incomprehensible to future generations."—*History of the Liberal Party* by Sir Henry Slesser.

"To the liberal mind the notion that men can authoritatively plan and impose a good life upon a great society is ignorant, impertinent and pretentious. It can be entertained only by men who do not realise the infinite variety of human purposes, who do not appreciate the potentialities of human effort, or by men who do not choose to respect them.

"The liberal state is to be conceived as the protector of equal rights by dispensing justice among individuals. It seeks to protect men against arbitrariness, not arbitrarily to direct them. Its ideal is a fraternal association among free and equal men. To the initiative of individuals, secure in their rights and accountable to others who have equal rights, liberalism entrusts the shaping of the human destiny. It offers no encouragement to those who dream of what they could make of the world if they possessed supreme power. . . . It relies upon the development of the latent faculties of all men, shaped by their free transactions with one another.

Liberalism commits the destiny of civilisation not to a few finite politicians here and there, but to the whole genius of mankind. This is a grander vision than that of those who would be Cæsar and would set themselves up as little tin gods over men. It is a hope engendered in the human heart during the long ages in which the slowly emerging impulses of civilisation, beset by barbarism, have struggled to be free."—*The Good Society* by Walter Lippmann.

## ADVT.

*The Liberal Liberty League is affiliated with the Liberal Party Organisation. It seeks the co-operation of all who have the cause of true Liberalism at heart. To them it appeals for funds in aid of its work. Minimum membership subscription is 5s. yearly. Address: 4, Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1; Telephone: Abbey 6665.*

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