

FREE LAND FREE TRADE FREE MEN

Statements on Liberal Policy

Anti-Corn Law League

"Holding one of the principles of eternal justice to be the inalienable right of every man freely to exchange the result of his labour for the productions of other people, and maintaining the practice of protecting one part of the community at the expense of all other classes to be unsound and unjustifiable, your petitioners earnestly implore your honourable House to repeal all laws relating to the importation of foreign corn and other foreign articles of subsistence; and to carry out to the fullest extent, both as affects agriculture and manufactures, the true and peaceful principles of Free Trade by removing all existing obstacles to the unrestricted employment of industry and capital."—*Resolution of the Anti-Corn Law League, at meeting held at King Street, Manchester, December, 1838.*

"We do not seek for privileges or immunities at the expense of other portions of the community . . . Whilst demanding the total repeal of a law which professes to protect the agriculturist, we are bound in fairness to call for the removal of all duties upon the manufactures of foreign countries imposed for the purpose of affording protection to ourselves. We desire neither to be benefited at the cost of consumers of cottons, silks, or woollens; nor injured for the benefit of the proprietors of cornfields and pastures. We do not seek to depend for a languid and slothful existence upon the fostering hand of monopoly or privilege. Far from holding out the delusive prospects of advantages not purchased by the toil and industry of the people, we boldly tell our industrious countrymen that labour is the price at which every earthly boon must be purchased; and that which we seek in their behalf is the freedom which shall secure to them a recompense, great or small in proportion to the extent of their exertions . . ."
—From the "Address of the Manchester Anti-Corn Law Association," 12th December, 1839, reprinted in the "Manchester Guardian," 12th December, 1939.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman

"Let the value of land be assessed independently of the buildings upon it, and upon such valuation let contribution be made to those public services which create the value. This is not to disturb the balance of equity, but to redress it. The unfairness is in the present state of things. Why should one man reap what another man sows? We would give to the landowner all that is his, but we would prevent him taking something which belongs to other people. Here you have perhaps, the clearest example in present politics of the cardinal, abiding, and necessary difference between the Liberal party and our opponents. It is here that lies the chasm yawning between us, athwart almost every public question."—*At Leeds, 19th March, 1903.*

"Our present land laws cause a greater drag upon trade and are a greater peril to the standard of living than all the tariffs of Germany and America, and even our own Colonies. We have got to set before ourselves in regard to the housing question the same ideals that Mr. Cobden had in view when he was dealing with the food of the people."—*At Bolton, 15th October, 1903.*

"Our policy is the policy of freedom; freedom in all things affecting the life of the individual; freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom of religion; freedom of trade, internal as well as external; freedom of the individual to have developed to the fullest extent possible the talent endowed in him or in her by nature, and freedom to reap the fruits of those faculties without parasitic toll levied thereon by privileged forces set up by the State; and freedom for all who have to conform to the law to raise their voices in the counsels of the State in the making and the repealing of such laws."—*At Norwich, 26th October, 1904.*

"The rating of site values goes to the root of the most pressing and most neglected of social questions. What is claimed for it and rightly,

is that its effect will be to increase the supply of houses and improve their quality, and to reduce the rents, which in many cases are artificially high, and a cause of widespread impoverishment to the people. Now which do you say is the better policy? Which is most likely to conduce to the comfort and well-being of the people and to the health of the children? A policy that will increase the number of homes and reduce the public burden on the poor man's house; or the policy which, while it leaves the land monopoly untouched, will make houses dearer by taxing building materials and food dearer by a universal food tax?"—*At Glasgow, 27th January, 1904.*

Winston Churchill

"There are only two ways in which people can acquire wealth. There is production and there is plunder. Production is always beneficial. Plunder is always pernicious, and its proceeds are either monopolized by a few or consumed in the mere struggle for possession. We are here to range definitely on the side of production and to eliminate plunder as an element in our social system. The present land system hampers, hobbles and restricts industry."—*At the Drury Lane Theatre, London, 20th April, 1907.*

"It is quite true that the land monopoly is not the only monopoly which exists, but it is by far the greatest of monopolies; it is a perpetual monopoly and it is the mother of all other forms of monopoly. It is quite true that unearned increments in land are not the only form of unearned or undeserved profit which individuals are able to secure; but it is the principal form of unearned increment which is derived from processes which are not merely not beneficial but which are positively detrimental to the general public. . . . It is monopoly which is the key note and where monopoly prevails the greater injury to society the greater the reward of the monopolist will be."—*At Edinburgh, 17th July, 1909.*

"All over Europe you have a system of land tenure far superior, socially, economically, politically to ours. But the benefits of these superior land systems are largely, if not entirely, taken away by grinding tariffs on food and the necessaries of life. Here in England we have long enjoyed the blessings of free trade and of untaxed bread and meat; but, on the other hand, we had to set against these inestimable booms a vicious and unreformed system of land tenure. In no great country in the civilized world, in no great country in the New or in the Old World, have the working classes yet secured the advantages of both free trade and of free land, by which I mean a commercial system from

which, so far as possible, the element of monopoly is rigorously excluded. 'You shall liberate the land,' said Mr. Cobden, 'will do more for your country than we have done in the liberation of its commerce.'"—*At Manchester, 6th December, 1909.*

"At the moment when their opponents were forging new chains of monopoly for national industry, Liberals were prepared to break the old chains which had long oppressed the national land. Land Reform and Free Trade stood together. They stood together with Henry George, with Richard Cobden, and they stood together in the Liberal policy to-day."—*At Derby, 11th January, 1910.*

Richard Cobden

"I hope I shall see petitions calling upon the Legislature to revalue the land, and that the agitation will go on collaterally with the agitation for the total and immediate repeal of the corn laws, and I shall contribute my mite for such a purpose. There must be a total abolition of all taxes upon food, and we should raise at least £20,000,000 a year upon the land, and then the owners would be richer than any landed proprietary in the world."—*At Derby, December, 1841.*

"How is it that the interests of agriculture are found in antagonism with the interests of the rest of the community? Why, these people have been proceeding upon a false system, they have been upon an unsound basis; they have been reckoning upon Act of Parliament prices, and now they find they are obliged, like other individuals, to be content with natural prices. . . . Go to a meeting where there is a landlord in the chair, or a land agent—his better-half—and you will find them talking but never as landlords and land agents, but as farmers and for farmers. And what do they say? Why, they say, 'We must go to Parliament and get an Act of Parliament to raise the price of corn, then you may be able to pay your rents.' That is what it amounts to."—*At Aylesbury, 9th January, 1853.*

Sir Edward Grey

"I am sure of this, when you take such a question as the Taxation of Land Values, that the party which first masters that question, which first makes it its own, which can show that it is really capable of dealing with it, and is really prepared to deal with it, and is not going to let itself be hampered by vested interests for exercising its intelligence upon it freely—that party will have a great and solid ground upon which to appeal to the country."—*At Leeds, 14th December, 1899.*

Walter Lippmann

"To the liberal mind the notion that men can authoritatively plan and impose a good life upon a great society is ignorant, impertinent, and pre-tentious. It can be entertained only by men who do not realize 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 transaction with one another. Liberalism commits the destiny of civilization, 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 civilization, beset by barbarism, have struggled to be free."—*The Good Society* (1938).

John Stuart Mill

"Scarcely any degree of utility, short of absolute necessity, will justify a prohibitory regulation, unless it can also be made to recommend itself to the general conscience; unless persons of ordinary good intentions either believe already, or can be induced to believe, that the thing prohibited is a thing which they ought not to wish to do . . ."

"In proportion as the people are accustomed to manage their affairs by their own active intervention, instead of leaving them to the government, their desires will turn to repelling tyranny, rather than to tyrannising; while in proportion as all real initiative and direction resides in the government, and individuals habitually feel and act as under its perpetual tutelage, popular institutions develop in them not the desire of freedom, but an unmeasured appetite for place and power; diverting the intelligence and activity of the country from its principal business, to a wretched competition for the selfish prizes and the petty vanities of office."—*The Principles of Political Economy*.

Lord Oxford and Asquith

"We hold, as we always have held, that so far as practicable, local and national taxes which are necessary for public purposes should fall on the publicly-created value than on the part which is the product of individual enterprise and industry. That does not involve a new or additional burden of taxation, but it would produce these two consequences—first of all, that we should cease to be imposing a burden upon successful enterprise and industry; and next, that the land would come more readily and cheaply into the best use for which it is fitted. These two things would be potent promoters of industry and progress."—*At Buxton, 1st June, 1923.*

"You will never get to the root of the problem of housing unless you treat it as a part of the larger question of the tenure and use of land, and tackle that question upon the well-known lines of Liberal policy, whether you are dealing with it in its rural or in its urban aspect; the Taxation and Rating of Land Values is, in our opinion, a reform which is long overdue."—*At Brighton, 23rd May, 1924.*

Sir Robert Peel

"I shall leave a name execrated, I know, by every monopolist who would maintain protection for his own individual benefit. But it may be that I shall leave a name sometimes remembered with expressions of goodwill in the abodes of those whose lot it is to labour and to earn their daily bread by the sweat of their brow, when they shall recruit their exhausted strength with abundant and untaxed food, the sweeter because it is no longer leavened by a sense of injustice."—*Sir Robert Peel's resignation speech, 29th June, 1846.*

Lionel Robbins

"It is the nationalist reaction which must claim the main credit for arresting the liberal revolution. The claim of Hitler to have saved Europe from Marx and Lenin may be dubious. But Bismarck certainly 'saved' us from Cobden and Adam Smith. In the history of the last sixty years it is the influence of German thought and German policy which has been dominant. The existence, at the centre of European civilization, of a Power whose statesmen and thinkers openly rejected liberalism and regarded the atavistic ideals of imperialism as the be-all and end-all of policy, exercised an influence which it is difficult to exaggerate. It gave the tone to thought and legislation even in countries where liberalism persisted. British imperialism was made in Germany, and the paternalism of the official liberal party in Great Britain was modelled on Bismarck's 'Social State.' It dominated

foreign policy. It accentuated national divisions and international alliances. And in the end it brought about the Great War in which liberal institutions began to founder and in whose aftermath they have been nearly swept away."—*Economic Planning and International Order* (1937).

Lord Samuel

Between the dates 18th October and 3rd November, 1932, the Bill giving effect to the Ottawa Agreements for Imperial preferences passed through all its stages in the House of Commons. On the 18th October, Sir Herbert (now Lord) Samuel made this public declaration: "I am compelled to say here and now with the approval of my colleagues and the Liberal Parliamentary Party, that if this Measure is carried in its present form we shall regard it as contrary to constitutional practice, that the rule of continuity should not apply, and that we must be free in the future to take such action as to modification or repeal as conditions may require."

Adam Smith

"Each nation has been made to look with an invidious eye upon the prosperity of all the nations with which it trades, and to consider their gain as its own loss. Commerce, which ought naturally to be, among nations as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity. The capricious ambitions of kings and ministers has not, during the present and the preceding century, been more fatal to the repose of Europe, than the impertinent jealousy of merchants and manufacturers. The violence and injustice of the rulers of mankind is an ancient evil, for which, I am afraid, the nature of human affairs can scarce admit a remedy; but the mean rapacity, the monopolising spirit, of merchants and manufacturers, who neither are nor ought to be the rulers of mankind,

though it cannot perhaps be corrected, may very easily be prevented from disturbing the tranquillity of anybody but themselves."—*The Wealth of Nations*.

Herbert Spencer

"The right of exchange is as sacred as any other right and exists as much between members of different nations as between members of the same nation. Morality knows nothing of geographical boundaries or distinctions of race. The moral law is cosmopolite—is no respecter of nationalities; and between men who are the antipodes of each other, either in locality or in anything else, there must still exist the same balance of rights as though they were next-door neighbours in all things."

Alexander Ure, Lord Strathclyde

"What are the special characteristics of land as distinguished from other commodities? FIRST: it comes from the hand of the Creator and does not owe its existence to man; SECOND: it is limited in quantity; you can no more add an acre to the area of a country than you can add a cubit to your stature; THIRD: it is necessary for our existence; it is necessary for our production; it is necessary to us when we wish to exchange our products with one another; FOURTH: the value of land is independent of the value of any buildings or other improvements upon it; FIFTH: land owes its value to the presence and activity and demand of the community; SIXTH: land cannot be carried away and cannot be concealed. I can tell you, ladies and gentlemen, these are valuable qualities in the eyes of the tax-gatherer. Do you know, does any man know, of any other commodity which possesses all these characteristics? If he does, let him name it now, and I will mention it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer!"—*At the Alexandra Palace, London, 28th June, 1909*.

The Liberal Liberty League, 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1. Minimum membership subscription 5s. Yearly. Free-will donations toward campaign fund. Chairman: Ashley Mitchel; Vice-Chairman: T. Atholl Robertson; Hon. Treasurer: Wilfred Harrison; Hon. Secretaries: C. H. Batty, F. Dupuis and S. Martin.

Printed by Vacher & Sons, Ltd., London, S.W.1. Price 1d; 3s. per 100.