

# FABIANISM AND LAND VALUES

A Lecture delivered to the Fabian  
Society on October 23rd, 1908

BY

STEWART D. HEADLAM

To be obtained from the Office of the English League for the  
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MAURICE AND KINGSLEY :  
THEOLOGIAN AND SOCIALIST.

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*"The Fabian Society consists of Socialists."*

*"It therefore aims at the reorganisation of Society by the emancipation of Land and Industrial Capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit. In this way only can the natural and acquired advantages of the country be equitably shared by the whole people."*

*"The Society accordingly works for the extinction of private property in Land and of the consequent individual appropriation, in the form of Rent, of the price paid for permission to use the earth, as well as for the advantages of superior soils and sites."*

TO those who have attended Fabian Lectures and read Fabian Tracts these sentences in the Basis will sound strange and unfamiliar. If they had run "The Fabian Society consists of Bureaucratic Collectivists and admirers of Mr. Bernard Shaw, and concerns itself with almost every Social activity except the tackling of the Land Question," they would have been more in harmony with the actual working of our Society.

Anything rather than Socialism, as thus described in the Basis, has occupied our attention and attracted new members to us. Many of the things we have dealt with are so important, and have been so well dealt with, that it must be an advantage to Socialism for it to be proved that Socialists could treat matters outside Socialism so admirably: some in my opinion have been so dealt with as to bring serious and unnecessary discredit on the Socialist name.

Bureaucratic Collectivism is already doing valuable work as well as work which is far from valuable. But Socialism is something very different from the dominance of the official over enterprises or industries owned or supported by the Municipalities or the State: and it is to *Socialism* that we are pledged, though from the way in which we talk and act you would hardly believe it.

However, fortunately the Basis is quite clear and definite: the "therefore" of the second sentence and the "accordingly" of the third are emphatic: it is because we are Socialists that we are pledged to the Emancipation of Land and the pre-

vention of the private appropriation of Land Values. We may work for other things after these—but these are the essential things. The Industrial Capital on which another lecturer will speak is rightly also put in the paragraph that I have to deal with—for Industrial Capital can only be used by getting access to Land: the Railways and the Factories are on the Land: if you resume your rights over the Land you resume your rights over them; and any attempt to socialise Industrial Capital before you have socialised Land Values can only be partially successful. It is foolish to put the cart before the horse. If you want to socialise the milk you had better first socialise the cow. If you are afraid of the Industrial Magnate try and think what he would be worth if he had no access to Land—or if his wage-slaves had.

The first part of our Basis is in fact saturated with the teaching of Henry George; and that need not be a matter of surprise to us when those who know remember how much the original Fabians owed to him. The Fabians of the present generation would do well, if they want to understand the first principles on which their Society is founded, to read *Progress and Poverty*. Most of the older Fabians, having got the fundamentals of their Socialism from Henry George, seldom mention his name, and lead you off into all sorts of interesting propaganda which enable them to make much of details which they can handle in a clever way; but though they please you immensely they don't go to the root of the matter; the root of the matter is contained *not* for the most part in your Tracts, but in your Basis. And you will find the main justification for your Basis better stated in *Progress and Poverty* than in anything which we have published.

For I unhesitatingly claim that, according to your Basis, Land is not merely one of a large number of items, all of equal importance, to be dealt with—but that its Emancipation from individual and class ownership is the essential preliminary for the reorganisation of Society at which we are aiming. I claim that the Fabian Society is thus at one with the older Guild of St. Matthew when it maintains that by Socialism is meant nothing less than this—that the great means by which material wealth is produced should be taken out of the hands of those who now monopolise it and become the property of the people.

And I think that perhaps the Executive is wise in allowing *me* to call your attention to this simple elementary fact—wise by accident, for I fancy they would have been glad to have got someone else to deal with the matter—because, while I can value your numerous groups and your endless activities, I look with a very jealous eye on your proposals in restriction of personal liberty, am opposed to some of them altogether, and regard others of them as merely temporary expedients,

necessary only until the Socialism which I advocate is established. And yet all these activities are so interesting, the political manœuvring to get them carried so engrossingly fascinating, the business of dominating and regulating the lives of the common people so intensely delightful to superior people, especially to women, whose education is a little above the average—that there is almost a certainty that those so engaged will not see the wood for the trees: will forget the first principles in a mass of detail.

Now I, partly by chance, partly of set purpose, am not much mixed up with Fabian details, and am, perhaps, on that account better suited to deal with Fabian principles.

I ask you, therefore, to postpone for the moment the propaganda you are so much interested in; and for once at a Fabian Meeting to give a little attention to Socialism: it is worth while: for without the establishment of Socialism most of the other things you are eager about will not cause the good you expect from them, and you owe it to the common people and to your fellow Socialists that you should give some attention to the great economic change which all Socialists advocate, and without which the reorganisation of Society is impossible.

The emancipation of Land from individual and class ownership—the extinction of the individual appropriation of Rent—this is the main thing, and in a half-hearted way you acknowledge it.

When, the other day at the Queen's Hall, Mr. Bernard Shaw had to make a uniquely important announcement on behalf of our Society, he was driven back on the Land question, and showed some signs that he had not forgotten that teaching on the Law of Rent, of which he was once so able an expounder: but the numerous other interesting activities in which he has been engaged on our behalf, the prefaces and tracts which he has written for us, advocating all sorts of palliatives for the present distress, seem to have blinded him to the full radical importance of the subject he was dealing with. He rightly demonstrated the iniquity of his having to pay, for the delightful site on which his house is built, £200 a year ground rent to an individual instead of paying it to the nation. (It has been pointed out, by the way, that he said nothing as to how, if the rent of ability were socialised, which, I understand, is the intention of those who deny that the socialisation of land values is the one main thing to be arrived at, he would be able to live in a £300 a year house at all.) But he failed to face the fact that while the landlord who allows you to build and occupy a house on his land, and takes a heavy toll of your income for giving you that permission, is, as he rightly phrased it, a robber; yet that he is not the worst kind of robber: the worst kind of robber is not the man who allows you to build, and takes toll for allowing you, but the

landlord who will not let you build on his land at all. In the first place you work hard, and part of the product of your work goes into the pockets of a private individual. In the second case there is no work, no product, and you starve. Some are homeless on account of that vacant plot, others who ought to be building the houses and keeping them in repair are unemployed, and, again, others who ought to be making all sorts of useful and delightful things for those unemployed, ministering to their necessities and their luxuries, raising their standard of comfort, of refinement, of life, are themselves also unemployed—because the builders and all the multitude of people who are needed for the making and furnishing a good house are unemployed. Mr. Shaw said nothing about all this, and did not seem to realise either that it is this holding up of land on which houses other than his should be built, which is the cause of a large part of the monopoly value of the site of his house. He ought to have seen this; anyhow, it is important for us to see it: for all schemes for dealing with the Housing question and the Unemployed question will be futile until this is seen. This also proves that the taxation of Land values is a much bigger and more far-reaching thing than the mere taxation of unearned incomes which our Society is fond of advocating.

However, I refer to your chosen representative's most important speech at the Queen's Hall, not so much to call your attention to what was omitted from it, as to emphasise what was asserted; for my contention is that the Fabian Society has for many years failed in its main work, and, to some degree, hindered the progress of Socialism by not realising the unique importance of the Land question, and by not throwing itself heartily into the most fruitful movement of modern times—the movement for the Taxation of Land Values. I want to suggest to the Society the need for it to come back to the first principles of its Basis, and to recognise the fact that all its social works will fail in accomplishing what is expected of them, so long as the great means, by which material wealth is produced, is allowed to be appropriated; and that many of the impertinent interferences with individual liberty, which it has advocated, will be unnecessary when land has been emancipated by the whole of the land values having been taken for the benefit of the whole body of the people who create them. I want the Society to see that the proposal which they have lately endorsed, to put a graduated tax on the larger unearned incomes, useful as it might be for certain purposes immediately, does not go nearly far enough—for as far as this proposal deals with income derived from land, it is merely a tax on ground-rents, which is, of course, an entirely different thing from the taxation of land values, which is so ably advocated in our Basis, where we protest against the individual appropriation—in the form of Rent—of the price paid

for permission to use the earth, as well as for the advantages of superior soils and sites.

And in urging this upon you I simply want the Society to go back to the teaching so well given by another of its most honoured members, when he says: "Henry George succeeded where previous writers had failed in widely diffusing among all classes a vivid apprehension of the nature and results of the Landlords' appropriation of Economic Rent. The land question in particular has by Henry George's teaching been completely revolutionised. Instead of the Chartists' cry, 'Back to Land,' still adhered to by rural labourers and belated politicians, the town artisan is thinking of his claim to the unearned increment of Urban Land Values, which he now watches falling into the coffers of the great landlords."

Ten years ago it could be said that this teaching was widely diffused among all classes. I am not quite sure whether now it is widely diffused among Fabians. I am certain it is not vigorously insisted upon by them; not pushed to the front and made much of by them.

I don't want the Fabians to be left stranded, out of action, when this fight comes on: troubling themselves about every imaginable social reform except the one thing that matters. I don't want them to find themselves out of touch with the town artisan, who, by the way, now is not only thinking of the unearned Urban increment which he could get by taxation, but of the land in the suburbs which, by means of the same taxation, would be made to produce an excellent crop of houses, owing to the building of which the unemployed would employ each other, and houses everywhere would become cheaper.

Our Basis, you will notice, has well avoided the "Back to the Land" fallacy: some small advantage here and there may be expected from the Small Holdings Act of last session: but just as it is impossible to deal with the evils of Capitalism without first dealing with the private appropriation of Land Values—just as all plans for tackling the Housing question and the Unemployment question must fail while you leave the means by which material wealth is produced in the hands of private individuals, so the Small Holdings plan will be of little use till you first get Land Valuation, followed by a Taxation of Land Values. This is made clear by Sir Edw. Strachey, who, speaking the other day as a representative of the Board of Agriculture, said, "The majority of landlords were not opposed to the Councils buying land, because the effect would be to take a large amount of land off the market, and this would increase the value of land, greatly to the benefit of the landlord."

"Greatly to the benefit of the landlords!" That, I fear, will be the outcome of the Small Holdings Act. No

wonder the House of Lords allowed the Small Holdings Bill to become an Act while it furiously objected to a mild little Bill for ascertaining the value of Land in Scotland: but great wonder, surely, that the Fabian Society with its Basis staring it in the face has struck no strong blow for the Taxation of Land Values. What is wanted, of course, is (I quote Ll. Davies) "a proper valuation of all Land apart from improvements, and the levying of the rates on the value so ascertained on all land, whether used or held idle. In this way and in this way only is it possible to hold in check and neutralise the rise in price which must otherwise occur through making the demand of the small cultivator effective. The idle land which would be brought into the market and made available, in consequence of rates being levied upon it at a fair valuation, and the present rates on improvements being remitted, would be more than sufficient to meet the present real demand for small holdings without any rise—indeed with a fall of the standard price of land."

But though the cry of "Back to the Land" will, while land values are privately appropriated, be of little avail, there seems but little doubt that if land values were socialised and improvements no longer penalised, there would be not perhaps a return to the land by those who have lately left it, but a most desirable use of the land by people from the towns, whose education and intelligence would enable them by means of intensive culture and scientific appliances to make much of the land: as well as of many others who would be willing to hold land simply for use and not for profit: their presence, together with improved means of access between villages and towns, coupled with the facilities which the abolition of land-lordism would give for the starting of village theatres and other social amenities, would help to destroy the dulness of village life which dulness has been a contributory cause of the inrush from the country to the towns.

This again would of necessity have a healthy influence on the wages in the towns, for just as in South Africa the Kaffirs, having access to land in their own place, were able to refuse to work in the mines except under the conditions which suited them—hence your Chinese Labour—so labourers able to live in fair comfort would not come to take their chance at the Dock gates in London.

Whether in towns, suburbs or in the country it is the Valuation of the Land apart from the buildings and improvements, whether occupied or held idle, followed by a taxation of Land Values, which is necessary in order to make a beginning of getting into the hands of the people and out of the hands of the appropriators the means from which the material wealth of the nation is produced.

And while our Basis has avoided the fallacy of "Back to the Land," while the present economic system prevails, and

has left us to make much of the value which all our multifarious city industries and activities and pleasures and luxuries give to the Land, and of the need for our people to get access to land in the suburbs and build themselves pleasant dwelling places, employing each other in the process, and has also recognised that when the monopoly is absolutely abolished the country land will be better used, it has also avoided laying too much stress on the management of Land by the State. I am afraid if our Society were to begin afresh with its present members, management would be the main thing it would insist upon, partly because we have so many women in our ranks and they have a passion for managing people, especially the poor, and partly because one of our leading and most honoured members is a victim of the same passion. But management by a Bureaucratic State, management of people who have not become free by getting rid of the appropriators of the means of production, may be a very dangerous matter—and so we wisely say nothing about management, but use the excellently vague phrase “the vesting of Land in the Community for the general benefit.” But of course some public management of the Land is and probably always will be necessary: but the management, shall I venture to say even to Fabians, should be Democratic and not Bureaucratic. I weary you with that word—but it is because I am wearied myself by the evils which I have seen worked in one great department of your life, where the attempt has been made to make the officials powerful masters instead of obedient servants. But some management by the people’s own elected representatives will, of course, be necessary. Parks, open spaces, and the general amenities and health conditions in both town and country, can only so be properly safeguarded: there must be some restraint on the use that is made of Land: Building Acts more reasonable than those at present in force will be necessary. Town Planning cannot be left to individual caprice: Road making can no longer be left under divided authority: special roads for Motor traffic will be needed.

It is therefore not true to say that we want to tax Land Values 20s. in the £, and then leave things to go as they please: though it is true to say that when we have taken the whole of the Land Values from the comparatively few people who now monopolise them, for the benefit of the whole people who always create them, when we have got the main means from which material wealth is produced out of the hands of the appropriators into the hands of the community, the whole situation will be extraordinarily changed; and that, until that is done, all attempts at Land management must be comparative failures.

We are wise, then, in maintaining, at the very beginning of our Basis, that the socialising of Land Values must take

precedence of every other socialising : and it is probable that when it is accomplished we shall find that the other socialisings about which some of us are so eager will have been accomplished by means of it. Anyhow, until it is accomplished you will find that the reforms you advocate are sterilised. Thus, for instance, that communising of Waterloo Bridge, of which we heard a fortnight ago from Mr. Shaw, resulted in the rents of those who used to pay the toll being raised : just as improved transit to the suburbs increases the amount which the landlord in the suburbs is able to appropriate from the workman. The advantages of the communising of Bread, too, which Mr. Shaw advocates, would largely be eaten up by the landlords.

So I hope we shall face the fact which our Basis implies that this Land question is the first and main question to be dealt with.

There certainly is one most dangerous proposal which I hope we shall not entertain. I hope you will not attempt to tackle the *Rent of Ability* before you have socialised the Rent of Land. Why, by the way, do we talk of the Rent of Ability instead of the wages of ability? Is it because the superior people who write books and organise industry think that their ability to do these things is of more importance than the ability needed by those whom they organise and who read the books, and that, therefore, the payment of the political economist and the organising manager must have a name different from that of the navvy, the miner, the engineer or the clerk? Or is it that by this phrase—the *rent* of ability—a deliberate attempt is made to beg the question as to the essential difference between Land and everything else? Anyhow, I hope the Society will see a Land Valuation Bill passed and acted upon before it even begins to discuss an "Ability Valuation Bill."

For the bringing in of this question is just one of those bits of Fabianism which are so annoying and so fatal to progress, which plays so disastrously into the hands of the opponents of Socialism. The House of Lords will never be afraid of the suggestion to tax Ability value, it won't hit them—but they are wild at the merest suggestion even to ascertain Land value. You may do what you like with their ability, if you will only leave their land alone. I venture to hope that the fascinating study of the question as to what is ability, and what is its value, may be postponed for a considerable time. It would really be a disgrace if we Fabians, for the most part comfortable, middle-class people, who are not among the worst sufferers from the Land Monopoly, should be spending our time in pleasant intellectual gymnastics, instead of throwing ourselves vigorously into the movement, now in full swing, for getting the great means from which material wealth is produced into the hands of the people.

The unemployed, the badly housed, the over-crowded, cry to us to postpone our clever dilettanti speculations, and come into line on the principles laid down in our own Basis.

I hope that our young intellectual athletes will have the moral courage to resist the temptation which has been put before them. I know how fascinating the proposal is, "An Ability Valuation Bill"! What intensely interesting questions it would raise: to assess the value of the author's ability and the engineer's: to assess the value of the ability of one author as compared with another—Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hall Caine say: to consider whether the suggestion that an author's ability is not to be socialised until forty-two years after it has been exercised is a principle which is to apply to the ability, say, of the organisers of industry: to compare the ability of the author and the captains of industry with the dancer's ability and the preacher's: to have it down in black and white, of Column B in a Schedule, whether Maud Allan is to be assessed higher or lower than Dr. Clifford, or Mr. Shaw, or Sir Christopher Furness: to consider whether the admirable Genée is not worth more than all put together: to take the great captains of industry and find out what their ability would be worth apart from their workmen and without any access to Land. Or, again, to take the greatest ability of all: is the ability of the Bethnal Green mother with her luxuriant child-bearing, or the inability of the Belgravian mother, to be dealt with? Or, finally, what about the ability which produces no rent? the best ability which a foolish generation engrossed by Cheap Jacks will not pay anything for at all?

Oh, you might occupy yourselves for years in the "Nursery" with these delightful toys—and be kept quiet thereby. But in the name of common sense, in the name of those who are suffering under the present land monopoly, in the name of Socialism, I urge you to refuse to touch these things until we have assessed Land Values and taxed them to the full.

I said just now that we in the Fabian Society are not the worst sufferers: but though this is so we also stand to gain enormously by this socialising of Land Values. Many of us are wage-slaves as well as the others, though we have managed to get ourselves set to work which interests us and does not degrade us: one of our latest Tracts (although the remedy proposed in it is absurdly inadequate) still makes the evils of the middle-class quite clear: the middle-classes need Socialism, the black-coated working men and the prettily dressed working women, the people whom Mr. Webb so unkindly, and with I venture to say some lack of definition and some incompleteness of analysis, calls "Parasites"—all these need Socialism as well as those who are commonly known as the Working Classes. The life of all these would be largely improved if the means by which material wealth is

produced was socialised. And in three comparatively small matters we Fabians should benefit.

You remember, those few ancients among you who have read *Progress and Poverty*, how one of the chapters is headed by an Eastern saying, "White Parasols and Elephants mad with Pride are the result of a grant of Land." As who should say now, "Fine frocks and motor cars will be enjoyed only by the few while land values are privately appropriated." I now also suggest to you that "The Merry Widow" and Mr. Hall Caine's melodramas, the matinée hat and the uncomfortable conditions of this Hall can be traced to the same source.

If we were to consult Mr. Granville Barker I am certain he would tell us that the real difficulty in producing Plays a little above the standard taste of the multitude is that the extreme costliness of the sites for theatres makes long runs essential to profits, and long runs can only be secured by playing down to the popular taste. It is not that good plays are not written, but that under present economic conditions they cannot be made to pay: this fact is made especially evident in the case of Shakespeare's plays: in order to get long runs and consequent profits they are cut, decorated and staged to such a degree that now that the School Board which used to arrange for them in Town Halls without scenery is dead, and the Elizabethan Stage Society is dead, hardly any of us can judge of what a Shakespeare play really is: but if long runs were not necessary the whole cycle could be arranged for, doing, say, a new play each week or fortnight throughout the year. It is English Landlordism which is destroying and hindering the development of English Drama.

Again, what is the real cause of the continued persistence of the matinée hat? If you want to know, go to Copenhagen, where the matinée hat or any hat at all is unknown inside the auditorium. We have much to learn, by the way, from the Danish Theatre, especially from their splendid School of Dancing and their sensible treatment of dancers: but we have this to learn about hats, that if you want the ladies to remove their hats you must not drive them into little crowded cupboard rooms for that purpose with only one little door serving as both exit and entrance, but you must give them great, open, spacious anterooms with mirrors all about, and plenty of elbow room for the manipulation of the hat-pins: you can't do this in London until, by taxing site values everywhere, you diminish the site values of the centre: and until you cease to fine a man for building a large, spacious theatre by putting more rates upon him than you do on the man who puts up with a small, poky one.

The same of course applies to this Hall in which we are met, the double process of the value of the site which is caused by the population being appropriated by the owner; and of

the owner of the building being fined in the form of rates in proportion as he makes his building large and spacious; prevents us from being as comfortable here as we otherwise might be, prevents us from having a large room apart from the Hall to which we might retire after each lecture for conversation and refreshment—which might, among other things, prevent Fabians from being strangers one to another: for would it not be all to the good if we knew each other a little better?

And what is true of theatres and halls is true of shops and factories—by putting the tax on them you paralyse the industrious: by not confiscating for the State the whole of the Land Values you are often endowing the idler.

I suggest to you, therefore, that it would be well for us now to insist on the simple revolutionary principles by which the first founders of our Society were guided, and which are embedded in our Basis. It will require some courage to do this: it may lose us some friends: but perhaps we are getting too popular, our Tracts and other publications have ranged over so many subjects which for the most part have been so well treated by us: one or two of our people are so deservedly eminent on the subjects they deal with that people have got to respect us for everything except our Socialism. When, for instance, he finds us talking as if Capital and Land were in the same category, Mr. Balfour is quite pleased with us, for he sees that we are all unconsciously playing his game: when he reads that the rent of Ability is to be socialised before Land Values are socialised he will rejoice at the consequent postponement of the dreaded revolution: imagine his subtle intellect at work on your Ability Valuation Bill. On the other hand all sorts of social reformers draw on us for facts and figures and find mixed up with them very little Socialism but plenty of mild Collectivism; I think the time has come that we should have the courage if necessary to alienate all these, unless indeed we find it possible to convert them by insisting more fully than we have lately done on the revolutionary proposals of the Basis.

Our other work can go on afterwards: at any rate, as much of it as is then found necessary, and some other work will, of course, be necessary; for the Kingdom of Heaven which is to be established on Earth will not be established by the accomplishment of Socialism: rather is it Socialism which is necessary, in order that all men may have time to think about the Kingdom of Heaven and enjoy it: we want to get rid of the evil material conditions: we want to bring about the industrial revolution, by which the means for the production of material wealth shall become the property of the people, in order that we may get a spiritual revolution: we want the public to have the Bread, because so only will they be able to enjoy the other good gifts of God. Let's get

Socialism out of the way first—get it accomplished ; we shall find plenty of scope afterwards for our Fabian activities, and many other activities which are not Fabian.

But some of us have got so in the way of treating Socialism as a Religion, as a complete theory of life, some of us have read into it all sorts of things which do not belong to it: some of us have got to treat it as

“ That far off, divine event  
To which the whole creation moves,”

that they think that it is only dreamers who can talk about the accomplishment of Socialism as a matter of practical politics ; but as we have defined it in these first two sentences of our Basis, it could be accomplished in a couple of generations or less. That is what makes people really afraid when you stick to the Land question and refuse to confuse it with other matters. They don't mind the Millenialists and Sentimental Collectivists ; they are furious against a Land Valuation Bill.

Those of you who read the Gospels will remember how Jesus Christ complained that the good people were often so very stupid—it is the same with the Fabian Society. Truly the children of this world (in the House of Lords) are wiser in their generation than the children of Light (in the Fabian Society).

The House of Lords knows quite well who are the real Revolutionists: not those who confuse the issue with a thousand and one interesting irrelevancies: not those, valuable as their work is, who are working for the Collective feeding of School children out of the rates: or for paying out of the rates for their proper physical care and culture: not those who are anxious to raise the School-leaving age and to make Evening Schools compulsory: not those who know that a literary proletariat will be a discontented proletariat, and who are therefore opposing the modern reaction which would teach the wage-slaves their trade, instead of teaching them literature—these are all good things: these all prove how many other important things there are outside Socialism ; but these have nothing to do with Socialism: their advocates are not necessarily Revolutionists.

Neither are they Revolutionists who shout, and stamp, and thump, and say that the Revolution shall come—if legally, all the better, but, “ anyhow, by God it shall come”: who talk about bloodshed and seizing the State by physical force when they can only poll a few thousand supporters at an election.

No, the real Revolutionist is the person who has a tight grip of the main thing, who refuses to be mixed up with irrelevant matters, however interesting, and who works steadily with everyone, no matter what he calls himself, who will work with him for the first step. In fact, the real

organiser of the coming Revolution is Mr. Verinder, and the first step towards it is a Land Valuation Bill, or some other simple means to ascertain the value of Land.

When that has been followed by a 20s. in the £ tax on Land Values, and such a management of Land as I have already indicated—then the industrial Revolution will have been accomplished—Socialism will have done its work, and those who will can turn their attention to Bureaucratic Collectivism, if they find any further need for it; and all of us go on with other fruitful reforms which then only will become possible.

Thus, at one and the same time, we come back to the Revolutionary first principles on which our Society was founded, and we find ourselves compelled to give strenuous support to a measure to which a Liberal Government is pledged. I do not know which of these things will be the more distressing to the Fabians of to-day, to whom finessing, manœuvring, wire-pulling have become almost a passion, and who think their proposals vastly superior to anything any Liberal Government brings forward.

But I hope that, after a little consideration, we shall pocket our intellectual pride, and not object to carrying out our own principles, because they are so simple that anyone can understand them; and that we shall not be so silly as to refuse to support a Government which is willing to take the first step towards their accomplishment, simply because it is Liberal.

Though, for the moment, if we like, we can still feed fat the ancient grudge we bear against the Liberals, by noting that a Valuation Bill is again postponed for a few months: a postponement, I venture to think, caused by the overlaying influence of the Bureau: for it is not only at the County Council and at the Board of Education, but also at the Local Government Board, that the power of the Bureau is allowed to neutralise the power of the People.

I hope the Fabians will come along in defence of this Socialism of theirs; will see that this extinction of the individual appropriation, in the form of Rent, of the price paid for permission to use the earth, is the main thing: that, until this is settled, the effect of all other reforms is negated or minimised.

Whether we come along or not, the Unemployed will compel ordinary people to come along on these lines. For let us face the fact that, under the present industrial system, the unemployed are a necessity: now and again there may be rather too many of them—and a few may safely be allowed to die off—but most of them must, by some plan or another, be organised either by the State or Charity: be kept going—and they will be kept going. The Bishop of London says so—and the Bishop of Manchester has composed a special prayer

on their behalf. The Bishops in the House of Lords, we are told by our lively Diocesan, are the Tribunes of the people—it is a new rôle for them, it will be interesting to see whether they are merely concerned with keeping the reserve of Labour alive, or letting them get permanent access to the means by which they live. For let *them*, let us, remember what the greatest investigator of Labour has said: “The modern system of industry will not work without some unemployed margin—some reserve of Labour.” The *Daily Mail*, having learnt this lesson from Charles Booth, says frankly: “To solve the unemployed problem would simply paralyse the nation’s industries. We must have a reserve of idle labour to draw upon at will: but that is no reason why the army should be so large, or why its members should be left to starve and to deteriorate.”

I hope our Episcopal Tribunes will let the House of Landlords know that if they solve the unemployed question, they will, at the same time, destroy the Land monopoly which causes it. I hope that neither they nor the Fabians will be half-hearted about the matter. I hope—but I have my doubts.

But whether with or without our help or the Bishops’ help the principles embodied in the first sentences of our Basis have come to stay, and must be put into practice.

To this end, what should we do immediately? I have more than once reminded you that our Society is badly equipped with literary ammunition for this great battle against the appropriation of Land Values, which means that it is badly equipped for defending the cause of Socialism as distinct from Collectivism. We have left it to others to carry on this fight, and now that we are becoming alive to the importance of it, we cannot, I think, do better than use the Tracts and Pamphlets which others have prepared. I should like to see Mr. Pease getting into close touch with Mr. Verinder, and the literature of 376, Strand, on sale at 3, Clement’s Inn.

I conclude with the words of the resolution which I moved on behalf of the Society, of which Mr. Verinder is Secretary, at the last meeting allowed to be held in Trafalgar Square in the autumn of 1887:

“That the land of every country belongs of natural and inalienable right to the whole body of the people in each generation: that if you want to put a stop to poverty both in the country and the great centres of population you must work to restore to the people the whole of the value which they give to the Land, to get for the people complete control over the Land, and to that end to see to it that those who use Land pay for the use of it to its rightful owners, the people.”

Remembering that you must not buy the Landlords out, that you need not kick them out, that you had better tax them out.