MANIFESTO
OF THE
SOCIALIST PARTY
OF GREAT BRITAIN.

WITH
Declaration of Principles.
SIXTH EDITION, with New Preface.

PRICE THREE PENCE.

Published by
THE SOCIALIST PARTY
OF GREAT BRITAIN,
17 Mount Pleasant, LONDON, W.C.1.

"To Labour the Fruits of Labour."
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17 MOUNT PLEASANT, LONDON W.C.I.
1920.
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain

HOLDS—

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

The SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.
PREFACE TO SIXTH EDITION.

Since we issued the last edition of our Manifesto the world has been convulsed with a stupendous war.

Like a consuming fire the militarist fever has swept through countries and continents. Passions which had lain dormant for years broke into fierce activity at the first blast of the war trumpet, and foul jingo sentiment surged over almost every European country at the first tap of the drum.

Wily politicians proved themselves students of psychology. They flattered and cajoled, threatened and persuaded, tricked and swindled, lied, deceived and betrayed with a success that must have astonished even themselves. Oily-tongued priests and the prostitutes of the Press outvied each other in the filthy work of creating a war frenzy. The strumpets of the “upper ten,” whose own male folk had found safe jobs miles enough from the “front,” made “heroes” of poltroons with a touch of the magic white feather, while little girls were sent by their canting elders to parade the streets with banners bearing the hypocritical taunt: “If you won’t go we must.”

As was to be expected, this mighty event proved a searching test for all those who claimed to hold Socialist principles. At the very outset the so-called International crumpled up, thus justifying our long-standing criticism. In all the belligerent countries the pseudo-
Socialists, whom we had all along denounced as mere capitalist catspaws, ranged themselves beside their respective war-lords, voting war-credits, and acting as decoys to lure men of the working class into the shambles. Everywhere organisations which had followed the opportunist policy, trying to build themselves up on compromise and political trading while claiming to be founded on Socialist principles, found themselves caught in the toils when the test time came, and the appeal was made to those passions and emotions that only Socialist knowledge can destroy.

As during these years of war the struggle of ordinary party politics has been largely suspended, the activities of the political parties whom we have exposed in our previous editions have been mainly connected with the war; therefore we propose to let our previous preface stand as a record of the treachery of those parties on the political field, and to devote these new pages to an exposition of the way in which that treachery was carried into the military arena, to the ruin of many a working-class home in this country and in others.

We will deal first with the Labour Party. In the first month of the war we were told that—

The Head Office of the Party, its entire machinery are to be placed at the disposal of the Government in their recruiting campaign.


Most of the Labour Members threw themselves without hesitation into the work of recruiting. Some have acquired military titles (i.e., Col. Ward, Col. Thorne, and so on). And "Reynolds's Newspaper" (June 4th, 1916) stated:—

"The Labour Party voted for Conscription."

Mr. W. F. Purdy, Chairman of the Labour Party Executive, in an interview with a correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" (7.6.17),
speaking on the Party attitude toward the war and the Stockholm Congress said:—

As Chairman of the E.C. of the Labour Party I am not going to meet or sit in conference with the representatives of the enemy countries while we are at war. I mean to carry out the policy of British Labour as laid down by our representative gathering. That policy is to pursue the war to a successful termination, which means to a complete victory over the enemy.

Another prominent member of the Labour Party, Mr. A. Henderson, addressing a recruiting meeting at Norwood (15.9.14) declared:—

It was to avoid coming under that iron heel of Prussian Militarism that he appealed to every young man to realise the gravity of the position, and, if his circumstances permitted, to come forward and serve his country.—“Daily Citizen,” 16.9.1914.

This individual was evidently of sufficient importance for the capitalist government to give him a job in the Cabinet. He went to Russia during the Kerensky regime, and so greatly was this Labour Party leader trusted by the bourgeois enemies of the working class that he boasts—without contradiction—that he carried in his pocket a document giving him full power to send home the British Ambassador and to take his place.

As showing what a useful benchman of capitalist oppression Mr. Henderson is, we reprint a letter which he addressed from the Labour Party offices concerning the deportation of the leaders of the Clyde strikers by the Government in 1916:—

Dear Mr. McLeod,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 1st, and note your observations with regard to the position on the Clyde. I do not think you over estimate the dangers of the situation, or that you exaggerate the incitement that has been used by men of self-imposed leadership. There is but one of your statements that I doubt, as to further appeals being made to the patriotism of the men
concerned. They have been appealed to by their own Trade Union leaders, and by Cabinet Ministers, but they appear determined to take their own course, no matter what is said. It remains to be seen how the stern enforcement of the law, such as the transfer of the ringleaders from the affected area, will assist.

Yours sincerely,
ARTHUR HENDERSON.
—"Labour Leader," 1.2.17.

Another selection from the Labour Party for Cabinet rank was Mr. G. N. Barnes, who was made Pensions Minister. He showed his zeal for the master class very early by declaring, regarding soldiers discharged "medically unfit":—

It has been claimed that these men should be put on pension . . . inasmuch as the doctors have passed them in . . . I want to say they will not get it while I am in the office.
—Official Report, Col. 254, 6.3.1917.

But enough of this gang of renegades. The record of their political crimes are to be found in almost every newspaper in the country, but we have not room here to give further examples.

The Independent Labour Party has always tried to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, and it has supported its old traditions to the full in its attitude toward the war. Even in the issue of August 6th, 1914, of the "Labour Leader," the late Mr. Keir Hardie gave an indication of the confusionist policy which was to be pursued when he wrote—in the leading article—

Many of us hoped . . . that the Government would remain steadfast to the end, and refuse to be drawn into the conflict unless our interests as a nation should be directly attacked. (Italics ours.)

That was the wedge that split asunder the Manifesto on the front page of the same issue, headed: "Down with the War." It prepared the way for every act of treachery which members of the I.L.P. thought fit to indulge in, and
negated utterly the attitude of opposition to the war, which the N.A.C. of the I.L.P. tried to foist on the public as the "official" attitude of the Party. The commentary to it was supplied by the "Labour Leader" itself, which editorially said in its issue of October 8th, 1914:—

The tragic thing is that the Socialists of almost all the belligerent nations are convinced, equally with the French Socialists, that in taking up arms they are acting purely in national defence. Just as Germany appears to be the aggressor in French eyes, so Russia appears to be the aggressor in German eyes.

Evidently it did not take long for Mr. Keir Hardie to become convinced that "our interests as a nation" were "directly attacked," for the "Manchester Guardian" of 28th November, reported:—

In an article in yesterday's "Pioneer" (Merthyr) he says: "I have never said or written anything to dissuade our young men from enlisting. I know too well all there is at stake."

Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, another leading light of the I.L.P., also appears to have adopted the same view, for, notwithstanding that in the House of Commons he "impeached before the bar of history" Sir Edward Grey and the Government, and declared that "the war they were fostering was wrong and would be considered so by posterity" ("Labour Leader," 6.8.1914), he could yet write for the benefit of a recruiting meeting:—

I want the serious men of the Trade Unions, the brotherhoods, and similar movements, to face their duty. To such it is sufficient to say, "England has need of you, and to say it in the right way."


Many other prominent members of the I.L.P. engaged in the task of forwarding the war. The N.A.C. Report to the I.L.P. Conference for 1915 brings evidence in the following:—
Certain members of the I.L.P. have taken part in the recruiting campaign.

How careful the I.L.P. were to leave open this road to capitalist favour is indicated in this passage from a speech by Mr. Bruce Glasier at the above-mentioned Conference:

The N.A.C. had endeavoured to make quite clear the position of the Party. They said that as a Socialist organisation the I.L.P. could not recruit, nor could a man recruit as a Socialist. If a man recruited, he did so as an Englishman or a Scotsman. They had dissociated the Party from the political recruiting campaign, but they had left it to every member to recruit if he thought it well to do so, and, if he thinks it his duty, to ask his neighbour to recruit.

This open invitation to all and sundry to place their services at the disposal of the capitalist butchers did not stand by itself. Mr. F. W. Jowett, M.P., Chairman of the I.L.P. and President of the Conference said:

It has been said that the I.L.P. holds the view that, notwithstanding the circumstances binding Great Britain to France and France to Russia, the Government ought to have declared for neutrality; I do not accept the statement as a correct representation of the position of the I.L.P. For my part, at all events, I agree that the Government was in honour bound by its secret understanding with France, to declare for intervention.

It is quite comical the way the wirepullers of the I.L.P. tried to save the organisation from reproaches for what they obviously knew well enough was the treachery of their "leaders." They said (see Report of 1915 Conference):

While recognising that such matters as enlistment and the urging of recruiting are matters for the individual conscience, we feel it desirable to draw attention to our recommendation that no part in the recruiting campaign should be taken by the Branches of the Party.

This attitude has been officially taken up all through the piece by the I.L.P. Whenever they
have been attacked on the point of their members stumping the country as capitalist recruiting agents, they have put up the defence that it is a matter for private conscience, and that the offenders were acting in an individual capacity. A similar plea was used to cover the delinquency of the I.L.P. delegates who voted for the “unanimous declaration” issued by the Conference of “Socialists of Allied Nations,” which stated that the Socialists are “inflexibly resolved to fight until victory is achieved.” Mr. Bruce Glasier said (I.L.P. Conference, 1915):

The members of the I.L.P. who were present at that gathering were not there as representing the Party, but as members of the International Bureau.

It is not for us to insult the intelligence of the reader by endeavouring to explain the obvious. Such dishonesty and trickery need only to be brought to light to point their own moral and teach their own lesson. We will leave this organisation now to the judgment of our fellow workers, who may find innumerable instances of the shameless betrayal of the working class in the actions of the I.L.P. members at the cost of a little enquiry, or by a search of the columns of our Official Organ, the Socialist Standard.

The British Socialist Party, which has purged itself many times, soon felt the effects of the war. The “old gang” mainly adopted the jingo attitude without hesitation and without disguise—as evidence the following from a B.S.P. manifesto quoted in the “Daily Citizen” (15.9.1914):

The British Socialist Party, while working consistently in the interests of peace, always has maintained the right of the nations to defend their national existence by force of arms. Recognising that the national freedom and independence of this country are threatened by Prussian militarism, the Party naturally desires to see the prosecution of the war to a speedy and successful issue.
While the Executive Committee supported the war a Divisional Conference passed a resolution regretting—

That the Executive Committee should have recommended members and Branches under any circumstances whatever, to associate themselves with the recruiting campaign.

A prominent member, Mr. Victor Fisher, and other individuals formed a "Socialist National Defence Committee," which issued a manifesto urging Socialists to carry the British flag in the "war of liberation." Members of the party complained that Victor Fisher and others procured soldiers to act as stewards at the National Defence Committee demonstration "to attack and intimidate Socialists present at the meeting." (Report of 5th Annual Conference, p. 27.) The Camberwell delegate to the Conference said that she had been thrown down the steps by paid soldiers. "Justice" for 6th January, 1916, contains this from another of the "old gang":—

... Your correspondent was rightly informed that I took part in the recruiting demonstration organised by the Blackburn Branch of the B.S.P. in conjunction with the military authorities on the first Sunday in last May. I stood up when the National Anthem was played and I shall do so again whenever its strains symbolise national unity in the resolve to combat Prussian militarism until all its fangs have been extracted.

Yours fraternally,
J. Hunter Watts.

The writer of that letter called for a Comrades' Company for service at the front" ("Justice," 22.4.1915), said that he had constituted himself a recruiting agent for the British Army, and at the meeting above referred to declared that "every Socialist capable of shouldering a rifle must enlist."
The Socialist Labour Party also found themselves carried away by the flood of confusion. One of the contributors to their party organ, "The Socialist," wrote (December, 1914):—

The S.L.P.—let us admit it freely—has been taken by storm, though not so disastrously as other parties. . . . What policy does the S.L.P. follow with respect to this war? We don't know. We are disunited. We are groping for a lead at the present time.

The Editor of the same journal wrote in the issue of November 1914, three months after the war broke out:—

I cannot say what the official attitude of the Party is.

Probably the fact that they could not decide their attitude accounts for their action in 1918 when the Executive Committees of the Socialist Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party, and the British Socialist Party jointly issued a manifesto on the eve of the General Election. This was obviously an attempt to gain political attention, but the fact that the S.L.P. should find itself in company with those organisations, which from its inception it had never ceased to denounce as working-class enemies, shows the decadence and demoralisation of the one-time self-styled "fighting" S.L.P.

**The Socialist Party of Great Britain** was the only organisation in this country that maintained the Socialist attitude on the war. Since our inception as a party we have proclaimed the unity of interest of the workers the world over, and the antagonism of interest between the workers of the world and the master class thereof. The principles which we had proclaimed and acted upon in "peace" were sufficient to guide us in war. Socialists in any country had only to stand faithfully by them to keep the name "Socialist" free from reproach,
and to retain the confidence of those who looked in hope toward our movement. At the first opportunity—in the first issue of our Party Organ published after the entry of Great Britain into the war—we declared that:

Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and Socialist fraternity, and pledged ourselves to—

work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism.

In those two statements we vindicated Socialism. In the face of the tricksters, misleaders, and capitalist agents we declared the unity of interest of the world's workers and proclaimed again the class struggle.

Socialism—the only hope of the toiling masses—was proudly acclaimed as the beacon for the toilers of the globe in the struggles of the future. When anxious eyes search the horizon for some flickering beam to give them direction, and weary ears listen tensely for some encouraging sound to give them hope and the strength that comes with hope, they will discern the one and hear the other in the message that we sent out to the world in arms—that the workers of the world are one and the master class their enemies.

The Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

PREFACE TO FIFTH EDITION.

In re-issuing the Manifesto of The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, it has been thought desirable to depart from the original only by the addition of footnotes giving the authorities for the statements made. Its value as an historical document is thereby preserved, and it stands as a record of the events that led up to the establishment of this Party, and the reasons for our attitude of hostility to all other parties.

That that attitude was, and still is, the correct one, is amply proved by the events that have transpired since the publication of the Manifesto.

The S.D.P.¹ has continued to supply evidence that the assertion of its founder, Mr. H. M. Hyndman, that “the majority of the organisation are wholly destitute of political aptitude”² still applies. Whilst declining to affiliate nationally with the Labour Party, it allows its branches to do so locally,³ and in the guise of trade union delegates its prominent members attend the National Conference of the Labour Party.⁴ At the 1906 General Election it permitted W. Thorne, M.P., to run under Labour Party auspices, complying with its condition that he would run, not as a Socialist, but as a “Labour” candidate only.⁵ Its propaganda is mainly the advocacy of palliatives for patching up and making more bearable the capitalist system, although Mr. Hyndman has declared that “palliatives are likely to obscure the main issue,”⁶ and that we are “face to face with a system which makes all reform impossible.”⁷ At present its main concern is to induce the capitalist class to compel the working class to undergo

¹ The S.D.F.’s new name.
³ S.D.F. 27th Conference Report, 1907.
⁴ Justice, Feb. 2, 1907.
⁵ Thorne’s speech, Plaistow, Sept. 18, 1904, and correspondence published by him in Oct., 1904.
⁶ Justice, Nov. 30, 1895. ⁷ Justice, March 12, 1904.
military training for "national" defence,8 that is, for the defence of the property of one section of the capitalist class against another section.

At the General Election of January 1910, the S.D.P. champion, Mr. Harry Quelch, sought an arrangement with the Liberals of Northampton9 to enable him to run in harness with their nominee. Not content with this act of treachery, the S.D.P. called upon the working class at the succeeding election (December 1910) to vote for the Tories.10 Similar advice was given during the North-West Ham bye-election11 and at the bye-election at Bethnal Green that followed they boasted of the fact that Mr. Hilaire Belloc, the prominent anti-Socialist, was one of the leading supporters of their candidate.12

The I.L.P. has continued its policy of bargain making with capitalist politicians. At the General Election of 1906 Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at Leicester,13 and Mr. James Parker at Halifax,14 were amongst the candidates who entered into compacts with the Liberals. When this is remembered it is easily understood why the bye-elections at Leicester and Halifax were not contested.

The I.L.P. leaders still at times call themselves Socialists, and at other times protest against frightening their supporters by introducing the word into resolutions.15 At the Amsterdam International Congress they voted for a resolution extolling the "tried and victorious policy based on the class war,"16 and on their return to England referred to the class war as a "shibboleth"17 and as a "reactionary and Whiggish precept, certain to lead the movement away

8 Justice, April 20, 1907.
9 Coventry Sentinel, Dec. 18, 1909.
10 Justice, Nov. 26, 1910. 11 Justice, July 8, 1911.
12 Justice, July 29, 1911.
15 Labour Party Conference, Belfast, 1907.
from the real aims of Socialism."\(^1\)

The source of a large portion of the funds of the I.L.P. is still wrapped in mystery. Some time ago two mysterious individuals, no doubt “independent labourers,” (or were they “suffragettes”?) gave the Party, through Mr. Hardie, a donation of £1,000,\(^1\) and another person, also anonymous, gave £100.\(^2\) In connection with the Edwards incident Mr. Hardie said that “those who pay the piper call the tune.”\(^3\) Does this explain the political gymnastics of the I.L.P.?

The general elections of Jan. and Dec. 1910 witnessed the most glaring alliances with the Liberal party by members of the I.L.P. that have yet been seen.\(^4\) Just as, for the sake of their seats and salaries, they had boomed the fraudulent Licensing Bill on Liberal platforms all over the country, they now entered upon a great campaign on behalf of the Dreadnought-providing Budget of the Liberal party. They have allowed their men to engage in the most reactionary tactics, in spite of the protests of the rank and file.

It is difficult to make a selection out of the mass of accumulated evidence in support of our continued antagonism toward the Labour Party. It is admitted, even by its prominent members, that it is not a Socialist organisation, and that any attempt to make it such would disrupt it.\(^5\) That by itself would be a sufficient reason for our opposition. Composed of men of widely differing views, it makes no pretence of being anything but a reform party. As the Chairman of the Belfast Conference said in his address: “they were a queer party, and they are a queer party.”\(^6\)

The recent addition of the miners to the ranks

\(^1\) Labour Leader, August 26, 1904.
\(^2\) Labour Leader, Jan. 18, 1907.
\(^3\) House of Commons, April 11, 1907.
\(^5\) Labour Leader, Feb. 1, 1907.
\(^6\) Belfast News Letter, Jan. 25, 1907.
of the Labour Party has brought it an even more reactionary element than previously existed. Many of these M.P.s, such as Messrs. W. Johnson, W. Brace and W. Abraham, openly boast of being Liberals still, and are run by the local Liberal organisations. Besides their election tricks, we have them junketing at capitalist coronation orgies, and their chairman, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, made plain his treachery by attending the War Minister’s banquet to the figurehead of German capitalism, the Kaiser.25

Like their brethren of the I.L.P., the Labour Party are concerned with place, not principle. Hence they vote against even their own amendments in order to save the Government! The Government Workers’ Wages resolution is an example of this form of betrayal. As regards working-class interests the Labour Party, lacking any underlying principle, are worthless, but in confusing the minds of the working class they prove exceedingly useful to the capitalists. They are an obstacle in the revolutionary path and must make way for the Socialist working class.

The Socialist Labour Party was formed in Scotland by seceding members of the S.D.F. (now S.D.P.) Its founders did not comprehend the real significance of the revolutionary struggle, for they adopted a list of “immediate demands” for palliating the evils of capitalism, thus leading the workers to believe that their interests could be served by patching up the present system instead of by devoting their energies to its overthrow.

The formation of a real Socialist Party (the S.P.G.B.) and the publication of its official organ, the Socialist Standard, eventually convinced them of the unsoundness of their position in this respect, and their “immediate demands”

25 Labour Leader, June 30, 1911.
27 The Socialist, July, 1903.
were abandoned. The organisation is undemocratic, and a perusal of their official organ leads one to conclude that they are more concerned with the physical misfortunes of certain members of other political parties than with the economic and political enlightenment of the working class.

In trade union matters the S.L.P. have blindly followed the lead of the American S.L.P. Contradicting their original teaching that political action was all-sufficing for the emancipation of the workers, they now try to found a British branch of an American industrial union. They hold that Socialism will be achieved by “direct action” on the part of such a union. This is an Anarchistic deviation. They do not accept the Socialist position of Marx and Engels that “the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy.” The position of the S.L.P. is, in their own words, that “the Socialists will not first ‘come into power,’ and then gain possession of the means of production; they will gain possession of the means of production through the Industrial Union, and their ‘power’ will result from that possession.

When the Industrial Union’s control over production is assured (sic) then the political overthrow of capital and the administration of production by the Industrial Union are necessary and inevitable consequences.” As a political party, therefore, the S.L.P. has committed suicide.

The Socialist attitude toward Trade Unions (indicated on pp. 22-23 of this Manifesto) has been consistently maintained by the S.P.G.B.

The workers’ organisation, political and

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28 The Socialist, June and Nov., 1905.
29 S.L.P. rules. Also see Socialist Standard, Aug., '06.
30 See quotations in Socialist Standard, Aug., '06.
31 The Socialist for Aug., 1903 told the working class “to rely upon its own political force as all-sufficient for that purpose.”
32 Communist Manifesto, p. 20
33 The Socialist, Dec., 1907.
economic, must be upon the basis of their class with the object of ending the capitalist system and establishing the Socialist Commonwealth. Any efforts on their part to resist the encroachments of the master class deserve our sympathy and support. But whilst encouraging this resistance, we should fail in our duty did we not point out to the resisters the limits of their power.

Any action that increases the cost of production provides greater incentive to the capitalists to devise means to reduce it, and results in more determined efforts to improve existing, and introduce new, machinery. An increase in the number of the unemployed inevitably follows. Emancipation, not palliation, must be the watchword of the workers, as it will be when they become Socialists.

The workers’ organisation must be Socialist and all-embracing. There must be no restrictions, sectional or financial. The unemployed worker must be admitted with the employed, and none excluded because of inability to meet financial obligations. In a word, the basis of the workers’ organisation must be class solidarity and class interests. Its tactics must be aggressive as well as defensive, and its aim revolutionary. Alone of all parties the S.P.G.B. maintains the above position, and is therefore the party of the workers.

The disaffection existing in the ranks of Labour and the recent strikes and lock-outs have shown that the Labour man-on-the-make is a serious danger to the working-class movement. From the inception of our Party it alone has consistently exposed this growing army of misleaders who fasten themselves on the workers’ backs. Its case against the fake political parties remains unanswered. As against the pseudo-Socialist and semi-Anarchist bodies, it stands for Socialism without modification, and alone make uncompromising war against all who stand in its path.

MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE WORKING CLASS.

In bringing to your notice the aims and methods of THESOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, and in order that the reason for the existence of the Party may be clearly understood, it will be necessary to give a short survey of the position of our class under existing society, and a sketch of the historical development which has resulted in present conditions.

To-day the worker goes into the labour market as an article of merchandise, and his price, that is, his wage, is determined like that of any other article of merchandise, by the cost of production (i.e., the social labour necessary), and this in the case of the worker is represented by the cost of subsistence. The price of labour power fluctuates by the operation of supply and demand, but those variations cancel one another, so that on the average the worker gets but sufficient to enable him to exist and reproduce his kind.

There are generally more workers in the market than are actually required by the employers, and this fact serves to keep wages from rising for any length of time above the cost of subsistence. Moreover, machinery and scientific applications are ever tending to render labourers superfluous, with a consequent overstocking of the labour market, decrease of wages, and an increase in the number of the unemployed.

Under these conditions poverty is necessarily the lot of the working class, and it is admitted by even the apologists of the present system, that in Great Britain to-day one-third of

1 See “Capital” (Swan Sonnenschein), p. 145 et seq.
the population is on or below the poverty line.\footnote{2}

Herded together in slums, half starved and ill-educated, the workers eke out a miserable existence, in many cases their whole life history being but the chronicle of a longer or shorter journey to the workhouse. The unhealthy conditions under which the workers live are the fruitful source of the diseases to which they are subject, and alone explain the physical deterioration which is working havoc with our class.

The evils with which we are confronted are not temporary or accidental, but are the necessary outcome of the system of society itself. As long as that system remains its results will become more and more pronounced, and its effects increasingly felt by the working class. Suffering from want and haunted by the fear of want, life is a burden to the working class to-day.

This was not always so. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries handicraft was the prevailing mode of production, and there was no machinery worth mentioning. Hence we wish to emphasise the fact that the handicraftsman was in possession of his tools, and usually of the raw material, and the natural consequence was that he generally owned the product. He was also entitled to his share of the common land. The craftsman, therefore, was not obliged to sell his labour-power continuously, and he worked when and how he pleased.

The handicraftsman, accordingly, was in a favourable social position. With the growing trade he was enabled to command a high price, so much so that at the end of the fifteenth century the handicraftsman could earn enough in ten weeks to provision himself for twelve months,

while the labourer could support himself for a whole year by what he earned in fourteen weeks. 3

The workers had also abundant leisure and recreation, owing to the numerous holidays, feasts, and fairs, 4 and in their travels could always obtain food and a night's lodging free at any of the monasteries or convents.

The discovery of America and the new way to the East—round the Cape of Good Hope—increased commerce and brought in its train a greater demand for labourers. 5 Then began the systematic enclosure of the common land on the pretext of improving agriculture, but in reality for the purpose of driving off the people so that they might be available as wage workers.

The land was enclosed, the old craft privileges curtailed, and advantage taken of the Reformation to abolish the holidays.

Driven off the land, the workers found the basis of their freedom gone, and were forced into the handicraft factories which were brought into existence about this time by the merchants—the forerunners of the modern capitalist class.

In these factories, although the work was still mainly handicraft, the division of labour was, because of its economy, pushed forward more rapidly than before. 6

Then came the introduction of machinery. Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, Arkwright the water frame, Crompton combined both and produced the mule, and Cartwright brought out the power loom. Soon Watt's application of steam as a motive force for machinery revolution-

4 Brentano's "Guilds, etc.," p. 67, 1st edition.
ised production, and enabled the capitalists to for-
sake hill and dale and bring the workers together
in industrial centres, where the raw material, coal
and iron were convenient. Hence have arisen
the factory towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

From that day there has been a ceaseless
application of large and small inventions to
machinery, increasing its power, speed, and pro-
ductivity. The worker, however, lost his skill as
craftsman, and now became a machine minder.

Owing to machinery doing away with the need
for great physical strength, women and children
were next harnessed to the car of Industry, so
that the worker was brought face to face with
two sets of competitors: the machines on the one
hand, and his wife and child on the other.

We see the result to-day, in that both here
and (more particularly) in America there are "he
towns" and "she towns," while even where
men and women are employed the home life is
destroyed, and the woman works during the day
and the man at night. By a wise dispensation
of capitalist Providence the workman sees his
wife regularly each day—at the factory gate.

Here we have the worker entirely dispos-
sessed of the means of getting a living except
by selling himself as an article of merchandise
to the owners of the means of living. This is
wage-slavery.

Society is to-day divided into two classes
with opposing interests, one class owning the
means of life and the other nothing but their
power to work. Never in the history of society
was the working class so free from all trace of
property as to-day. Of the wealth produced in
this country, roughly £1,700,000,000 per annum,
the workers’ share is, according to capitalist
authorities, less than £665,000,000, so that the
working class gets little more than a third of
the wealth produced.7

7 Chiozza Money’s “Riches and Poverty,” p. 28.
Wealth is natural material converted by labour-power to man's use, and as such is consequently produced by the working class alone; and while the major portion of the wealth is appropriated by the capitalist class, this class numbers some 5,000,000, or about an eighth of the entire population. Nearly two-thirds of the wealth is therefore retained by an eighth of the population. It is, indeed, computed by Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labour to the United States Government, that the worker in that country gets only $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents out of each dollar's worth of wealth he produces, that is an eighth of his product.

To-day production is social, but ownership and distribution are individual. Production is co-operative, and no man can claim that he produces a single article, for he has only carried out one operation of a whole series necessary to the final product.

But in the sphere of distribution, while the capitalists are a solid class against the workers as regards the ownership of the wealth produced by the working class, they, the capitalists, are antagonistic to one another in the endeavour to get the larger share of the markets. Fourier pointed out at the beginning of the last century that this competition could only end in monopoly, and we see concentration and trustification going on in every branch of industry, more notably in the United States, the most advanced of capitalist countries.

The present system contains within itself the germs of its own destruction. With increasing powers of production the worker's share, and

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8 "One-third of the entire income of the United Kingdom is enjoyed by less than one-thirtieth of its people." *Ibid*, p. 42.

therefore his purchasing power, grows less, and this leaves an ever-increasing mass of wealth for the capitalists to endeavour to consume, resulting in a constant glutting of the markets.

The latter become more and more restricted as each country in its turn produces for itself and then joins the scramble for the markets of the world. By this process the small manufacturer and trader are being eliminated and wealth is concentrated in ever fewer hands. National and international trusts become the order of the day, and capitalism enters upon its final phase.

The anomaly of starvation in the midst of plenty, a distinctive feature of capitalist society, becomes more and more apparent to the workers, and the capitalists themselves, overpowered by the very forces of production they have perfected but are no longer able to control, suffocated by the enormous mass of wealth they can no longer consume, and faced by the ever-increasing army of the unemployed, will be compelled to give way to the economic and human forces around them.

Production and distribution are becoming more and more out of harmony, and it is a sociological as well as a biological fact that an organism living out of harmony with its surroundings must re-adapt itself in order to continue in existence. To bring about this re-adaptation it is necessary to make ownership and distribution harmonise with production, that is, to make them social. This can be done only by the overthrow of capitalism and

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth, by and in the interest of the whole community.

THAT IS SOCIALISM.
In all human actions material interests rule, and therefore the dominant class can only be concerned in upholding wage-slavery and increasing their power over the workers. The working class, on the other hand, are driven by their material interest to struggle for the possession of the means of living. To the working class history has committed the mission of transforming society from Capitalism to Socialism.

A glance over past history shows that every class that emancipated itself had to commence with the capture of the political machinery, that is, with the power of government. It is, therefore, necessary for the workers to organise a political party having for its object the capture of political power.

This political party of the workers can only be a Socialist party, because Socialism alone is based on the facts of working class existence. Socialism alone can free the worker from the necessity of selling himself for the profit of a master; Socialism alone will strip him of his merchandise character and allow him to become a full social being. Then with the removal of the many artificial restrictions to production, those producing wealth, owning and controlling it for their own well-being, will be interested in the further development of the productive powers; for every new conquest in the domain of science, every fresh extension of the dominion of Man over nature, will be hailed by all as a means of shortening the time necessary for the production of our material requirements, and increasing the leisure essential to the adequate development of our physical and mental faculties.

In this country there are many organisations claiming to fulfil the requirements of a workers' party. There is, for instance, the Social-Democratic Federation, established over twenty years ago by "middle-class" men. In
most cases these men never had a real grip of the working-class position, and as a consequence "middle-class" ideas have usually dominated the S.D.F.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman, "the father of British Social Democracy," does not accept the statement of Marx that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself, but contends that the workers will be aided and guided (particularly the latter) by men from the class above. Thus having no sound basis of action, the political policy of the S.D.F. has reflected practically all phases of tactics, ranging from the revolutionary position to support of betrayers of the working class like Mr. John Burns.

Not having sufficient faith in the class it was supposed to represent, the S.D.F. went from the support of one section of the capitalist party to another. Although continually mouthing the class war, its members at one time talked of voting Tory to smash the Liberal Party, and at another time of voting Liberal to smash the Tories. During the South African war they supported, among others, Mr. John Burns, Liberal candidate for Battersea, Mr. Henry Labouchere, Liberal candidate for Northampton, and Mr. Philip Stanhope, Liberal candidate for Burnley.

Their utter lack of Socialist discipline in allowing members to support capitalist candidates and capitalist parties was shown in the case of the support by Mr. H. Quelch of five Liberal-Labour candidates for the London County Council, viz., Messrs. Ben Cooper, G. Dew, H. Gosling, J. Gregory, and W. Steadman, when these men were nominated at a meeting of the London

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10 Justice, August 17, 1901.
12 S.D.F. 20th Conference Report, 1900.
Trades Council, of which council Mr. Quelch has since been appointed chairman.

The Social-Democratic Editor of Justice also supported the candidature at North West Ham of Mr. J. J. Terrett, a thrice-expelled member of the S.D.F. Mr. Quelch likewise supported Mr. Steadman, Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury. Mr. Will Thorne (a Parliamentary candidate of the S.D.F.), supported Mr. Percy Alden, Liberal candidate for Tottenham, in spite of the determined opposition of the local branch of the S.D.F. Mr. Thorne also supported Mr. Will Crooks, the Liberal candidate for Woolwich. Mr. J. F. Green (Treasurer of the S.D.F.), with the sanction of his Executive Council, supported Mr. D. Naorooji, Liberal candidate for North Lambeth. Mr. J. Hunter Watts (member of the Executive Council of the S.D.F.) supported Mr. Masterman, Liberal candidate for Dulwich. The Executive Council of the S.D.F. supported Mr. J. Hill, Liberal-Labour candidate for Govan.

Five years ago Mr. Hyndman, in withdrawing from the Executive Council of the S.D.F., stated that the majority of that organisation were wholly destitute of political aptitude, and that very much was to be desired in respect of their understanding of the basic principles of Socialism and the statement is still true.

In face of these facts the Social-Democratic Federation cannot correctly claim to be a genuine workers’ party.

The Fabian Society also poses as a Socialist organisation, for we are told that this society “consists of Socialists.” It is, indeed, composed of “middle-class” men, who naturally deny the class struggle, profess to believe in

14 Letter published by Mr. Alden, Dec. 1905.
15 Socialist Standard, Feb., 1905.
permeating the capitalist class with Socialism, and hold that the tendency of society is towards government by the expert. Fabianism, therefore, tends towards the rule of the bureaucrats.

Fabianism is the cult of the civil service, and is Socialist neither in name nor in fact. Whenever the Fabians take part in elections they run as Progressives (Liberals)—or as anything but Socialists. This is fortunate for Socialism.

Fabianism, that peculiarly British product, is merely a manifestation of the intellectual bankruptcy of the capitalist class, and can be left to its own devices.

The Independent Labour Party, another party claiming to be of the workers, was formed on the theory that the S.D.F. was not practical. The I.L.P. was going to preach Socialism in such a way as to bring it into actual practice. In its early days there was a big struggle over what was known as the "fourth clause," which practically forbade alliances in the political field, and would have put the I.L.P. in such a position that it could not join hands with any other party. For some years there was a battle over this point, and the "fourth clause" was finally defeated.

Soon after it came into existence the I.L.P. spent about £5,000 in election expenses, and it is a significant fact that to this day no explanation has been given as to where this money came from.17

The members of the I.L.P. were also to give special attention to the trade unions, which they did by sinking the principles of Socialism for the sake of the financial and political support of the unions. Among their early doings was the Bradford affair. There they were running a Mr. F. W. Jowett for the local council, and made a bargain with the Liberals for the exchange of support.18 Hence Mr. R. Roberts, a member of

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17 See also Preface to Fifth Edition.
the I.L.P., supported a Liberal candidate in the Tong Ward in opposition to Mr. C. A. Glyde, the I.L.P. candidate; and one of the reasons why the I.L.P. opposed Mr. Quelch at Dewsbury was that otherwise they would have lost the support of the Liberals for Mr. Jowett at Bradford.

There are indeed many instances of alliances between the I.L.P. and the Liberal Party. In '98 the Leeds I.L.P. approached the Liberals with a view to an alliance, which was refused; they then went to the Tories with the same object and with the same result. In the same year, in London, they wanted some seats on the County Council, and in return for those seats they agreed to support the Progressives, but this action had the effect of opening the eyes of the honest rank and file of the I.L.P. in London, and of killing their organisation in the metropolis.

The so-called Independent Labour Party is independent only in that it is free to sell to the highest bidder. The I.L.P. is, in reality, run by a set of job-hunters whose only apparent political principle is to catch votes on varying pretexts and by still more varying means. They openly repudiate the class struggle, the basis of Socialism, but nevertheless seek admission to the International Socialist Congresses, where they acquiesce in what they call "a merely glorified animalism dangerously akin to bestiality" in order to pass muster in the presence of the assembled delegates of the international proletariat.

The Independent Labour Party is evidently not a party of the workers.

The Labour Representation Committee came into existence chiefly, as far as the rank and file


21 *Labour Leader*, August 17, 1901.
of the trade unions were concerned, owing to
the Taff Vale and Quinn v. Leatham decisions,
and as far as the trade union officials were
concerned, because they saw a chance of Parlia-
mentary jobs. At the first meeting of the L R.C.
Mr. John Burns opposed putting the movement
on a working class basis.22 Mr. James Sexton,
of the Liverpool dockers, said that the Socialist
resolution was magnificent but not war—not
conducive to Parliamentary jobs, he meant—
and he would vote for it anywhere but there.23

This position is characteristic of most alleged
Socialists in Britain – they would vote for Social-
ism anywhere but where a vote would help it.

Mr. Steadman said they should elect those
who had borne the heat and burden of the day—
i.e., men of the Steadman stamp. At Newcastle
Mr. John Ward stated that they wanted to get
their feet on the floor of the House of Commons
and would not be particular how they did it.24
Mr. J. Keir Hardie said they did not want Tory-
ism, Liberalism, or Socialism, only Labourism.25
Wonderful to narrate, this is the same Keir
Hardie who sits as a delegate on the Interna-
tional Socialist Bureau!

The L R.C. constitution states that they
should not support the Liberal or the Tory
party, but for every seat that has hitherto been
contented the candidate put forward by the
L.R.C. has been a Liberal-Labour hack, so much
so that Mr. John Morley stated he would welcome
them into the House of Commons, as they would
always be found voting as Liberals.

Last year Messrs. W. Crooks, D. Shackleton,
and A. Henderson supported Mr. Benn, Liberal
candidate for Devonport,26 and Mr. Bell, ex-chair-
man of the L R.C., got his seat in the House of
Commons by an arrangement with the Liberal

26 Reynolds's Newspaper, June 19th, 1904.
party. Mr. D. Shackleton is a defender of child labour, 27 and Mr. Henderson is an opponent of the legal reduction of the hours of labour.

After all their cry of independence and after all their falling out with Mr. Burns (who told them they were selling themselves for two hundred dirty pieces of gold 28), they selected as Chairman of their Parliamentary group the same Mr. John Burns, the defender of Asquith 29 (who admitted responsibility for the murder of miners at Featherstone), thus choosing as their leader one of the most bitter enemies of the working class.

The Labour Representation Committee is not the party of the workers.

A word with reference to trade unions may be found useful here. While writers like Smith, Howell and others imagined the present unions merely a continuance of the old craft guilds, later and more accurate research has shown this view to be untenable. With the break up of the feudal system and the advent of the manufacturing period, the old craft guilds died out. The grouping of large numbers of workers in factories, and, later on, the introduction of power-driven machinery, rendered necessary the employment of capitals far too large for the workers to save out of their wages. Thus the workers remained workers all their lives, and the close communication between them in industrial centres, enabled them to interchange ideas regarding their various positions, with the result that unions began to be formed, based upon the recognition of the fact that the worker remained a worker during his life.

Moreover, in many cases a grasp of the class antagonism necessarily arising from such conditions was obtained by the more virile and

27 Labour Party Conference, Belfast, 1907.
28 Daily News, Sept. 9, 1904.
29 Socialist Standard, Jan., 1906.
intelligent of their members.

For years they had to struggle to make their combinations lawful, and then to secure legal protection from the thieves who appropriated their funds; but at last both these objects were attained, and, until the Taff Vale and Quinn v. Leatham decisions, the trade unions jogged along in a comparatively secure legal position.

With this legal protection, however, ideas that had been growing up since the breaking down of the Chartist movement, spread far and wide. Taught by the assiduous agents of the capitalist class that "Capital" and "Labour" were brothers, the workers acted on the theory that between them and their masters were "common" interests; that if they demanded more wages than the capitalists cared to pay they (the workers) would drive the business out of the country; that as it was the employers who paid them their wages they should not "kill the goose that laid the golden eggs," and such other phantasies as capitalist ingenuity could invent.

As a result, portions of the textile and mining industries arranged "sliding scales," under which wages were supposed to rise with prices. Long experience has, however, shown that in practice wages slide down with express speed, but the sliding up process proceeds at a tortoise-like rate, and then only under pressure, so much so that even such a conservative and religious section as the Welsh miners have been agitating for the abolition of the "sliding scale" system.

While the employers were numerous and competing, the workers' unions were able to wring advantages from them and make employment a little less like the hellish slavery it had been; but now the growing combination of the capitalists in every branch of industry has rendered the chances of winning a fight by the old methods exceedingly small. Under these conditions, and coupled with the absurd idea of the
mutuality of the interests between Capital and Labour, trade unions upon their present base are little more than benefit societies which save the capitalist class some amount out of the rates and taxes they would otherwise have to pay towards the support of their disabled slaves.

Before the trade unions can become effective factors in bringing about a change of society, they must give up the superstition that the robbers can be friendly to the robbed. The other superstition, that the employer is an enemy on the industrial field but a friend on the political field, must also be abandoned. The spectacle presented by the Engineers in voting for Sir Christopher Furness, Parliamentary candidate for York, at the very time they were on strike against him, could only arise out of ignorance of the antagonism between the worker and the master in the political no less than in the industrial field. Yet this political imbecility just instanced is supported by almost all the "labour leaders" and trade union officials as "practical politics." Defeated on the industrial field, the workers are advised by their "leaders" to place the only weapon left, the political weapon, in the hands of their enemies. May we be spared from such instances of criminal folly in the future!

The basis of the action of the trade unions must be a clear recognition of the position of the workers under capitalism, and the class struggle necessarily arising therefrom; in other words, they must adopt the Socialist position, if they are going to justify their existence at all. Does this mean that the existing trade unions are to be smashed? That will depend upon the unions themselves. All action of the unions in support of capitalism, or tending to side-track the workers from the only path that can lead to their emancipation, should be strongly opposed; but on the other hand, trade unions being a necessity under capitalism, any action on their part
upon sound lines should be heartily supported. 

In the industrial field to day there is an irrepressible conflict between the propertyless producers and the propertied non-producers. This conflict is represented in the political field by the organised party of capitalism, the Tory party and the Liberal Party representing different sections of the same exploiting class.

All political parties are but the expression of class interests, hence the working-class party cannot ally itself with or support any section of the capitalist party, for any alliance or bargain between them can only serve the interests of the ruling class by perpetuating the present system. The working-class party must be opposed to all other parties. There are many more or less well-intentioned persons who contend that the workers have something to gain by playing off one section of the capitalist party against the other, and that in this way a political footing may be obtained by the working class. Of two evils choose the lesser, we are told; but these good people do not realise that between the Liberal and Tory on the one hand and Liberal Labour on the other the choice is between the devil and the deep sea.

The capitalist class has for centuries been in possession of the political machinery and knows all the tricks of the trade. The capitalist class has men of wealth and men of leisure at its disposal for the control and manipulation of the machinery of government, and in the contest of political trickery the workers cannot cope with the strategy of the professional prize fighters and trained tricksters of capitalism. The only true position for a genuine working-class party is that of open hostility to all who support capitalism in any shape or form. This is the safe, sure and scientific position. By applying this test it is easily seen that neither the Social-Democratic Federation nor the Fabian Society, neither the
Independent Labour Party nor the Labour Representation Committee, is the party of the workers.

Realising that the economic forces working through the development of capitalist society demanded the formation of a revolutionary Socialist party; believing that the emancipation of the working class can be accomplished only by the members of that class consciously organised in a Socialist party; and recognising that the class struggle can alone be the basis of such a party, a small but determined band of workers assembled in London on June 12th, 1904, and founded the party of the workers, THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, a party based on clear and unmistakable principles interpreted in plain and unequivocal tactics.

Realising that, as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to be emancipated, the emancipation of the working class will involve the abolition of all class distinctions and class privileges, and free humanity from oppression of every kind, and resolved to adhere to the only position marked out by past experience as impregnable, THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN enters the political arena, and, in full faith that the members of our class will work out their historic mission, hurls defiance at all the forces of reaction. Generated by capitalist society, heir to the slavery of ages, outcast of civilisation, the working class will prove a fitting instrument of the movement of history, and by the brain and sinew of Labour will arise the Socialist Commonwealth—a society wherein poverty, privilege, and oppression will find no place, and wherein all may lead a full, free, and joyous existence.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

London, June 12, 1905.
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Published by THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN, 17 Mount
Pleasant London, W.C.I, and Printed by A. SUCKLING, 158 High Street,
East Ham, E.6.