

We need not go into the details of how this fund is to be shared. Briefly, the landowners who can prove that their land had a "development value" on the day the Act took effect, on claim made by the owners concerned, a special valuation will be made to ascertain the "development value" in each case, and when the aggregate is known, whatever it may be, the £300,000,000 will be distributed pro rata. But there are sundry concessions to special interests which will receive out of the fund as much as they are required to pay in the form of the development charge; and lately, the Central Land Board, with Ministerial approval, has bowed to the violent protests, on the part of home-seekers, against the development charge by promising them an amount out of the compensation fund equal to the amount of the development charge leviable. But the proviso is that the house must be built for their own occupation; and as with farm cottages, where the development charge is suspended so long as they are occupied by "members of the agricultural population," new duties are thrust upon the Police State to watch comings and goings and see that there is no trickery.

Perhaps that is a digression but it is only one of the many illustrations of what happens in the attempts to compel obedience to unnatural law. The Ministry and the Central Land Board see before them a complete breakdown in the refusal of landowners to part with land at the price of the "existing use value" which it is the purpose of the Act to fabricate and set low in order that the development value should be correspondingly high. In consequence the calculated development charge, which the Board essays to impose, added to land prices owners are demanding, cannot possibly be borne. Impotently and with a flourish of bravado, it issues its warnings and its threats to end this deadlock and smash the blockade against access to land, which has been so deliberately tightened by the folly of Parliament. Sir Malcolm Eve would "make the Act work," forsooth, by the exercise of the powers of compulsory purchase. Thereby it is thought to force that "existing use value" down to the fictional level, make sure of the full development charge and, incidentally, obtain the wherewithal to liquidate a landlord ransom of £300,000,000.

The development charge is fitly named. It is a levy and tax upon development. It falls only when and where development takes place, and while it is fashioned to collect an increment in land value it does so only there and then, under rules and conceptions that are both arbitrary and absurd. Running through the ramshackle ramifications of the Act is the extraordinary notion, taken as basis of action and assessment, that when a shop or house or factory is erected on any site or when there is any "material change" in the use of any premises, the value of the site is thereby increased. "The value of a site is created by placing an improvement upon it," we hear the sponsors say. We need not waste time in exposing the fallacy or showing how it has led in a direction precisely opposite to an economic understanding of the land question, as well as to policies as disastrous as that under consideration. In this development charge which inescapably takes the nature and extent of the improvements upon land as its measure, there has been superimposed a burden and penalty in no respect different in incidence from that inflicted under the present rating and taxation system. It acts as a barrier to building enterprise, narrowing the field of opportunity, switching demand upon such room as is available in existing buildings and putting a premium on them. In a word it is a powerful contributory factor to the maintenance of congestion and high rents—a planning gone astray into the production of future slums.

We speak again for a reversal of this whole course of action, no matter what difficulties or humiliations may have to be faced in overcoming vested interests and vested prejudices alike. We should expunge the Act from the Statute Book and undo the mischief that has been done. Frankly, it means the demolition of the painfully built structure, the annulment of the obligation to pay the landlord ransom, and the refund of the development charges. It is to start afresh and with the least possible delay give effect to the Taxation and Rating of Land Values to the relief of all buildings and improvements. Ours may be a counsel of perfection, but for the solution of what the Act posed as a problem, there is none other.

A. W. M.

KING CHARLES AND LANDLORD PARLIAMENTS

CURRENT interest in the tercentenary of Charles I's execution centres, of course, around the dramatic highlights of the dispute between the rival power-seekers of the XVII Century. There are, however, some slight signs of a growing understanding that the monarchy might have been at least as interested as the Members of the Long Parliament in the welfare of the great mass of the people. In relation to the most important aspect of English history, and the most neglected: the robbery of the people's right to land, it is useful to remember that to read the names of the members of that Parliament is like reading a list of the existing county families. During all the disputes between Charles I and his Parliaments the common people were probably more interested in the controversy concerning Enclosure, and many pamphlets written at that time still survive. Such titles as *The Humble Petition of Two Sisters* (1604), *Depopulation Arraigned* (1636), *Inclosure Thrown Open* (1650), all of them protests against the encroachments of the squirearchy, suggest that divine rights of kings or parliaments was not the only subject of discussion. Charles I appointed Commissions of Enquiry, and the Star Chamber

instituted proceedings against enclosures on the ground that depopulation was an offence against the Common law. Charles actually annulled the enclosures of two years in certain Midland counties. The headsman of Whitehall seems to have struck down, together with some bad things, some check on the powers which under the Commonwealth and Charles II gave an added impetus to the movement since constituting the greatest crime in our history.

If Charles I had beaten his enemies he would probably have imposed a bureaucracy upon them, and upon his people, in the same way that his contemporary, Louis XIV, buttressed his authority after an analogous contest. As Louis ruled through men like Mazarin and Colbert, so Charles might have ruled through men like Strafford (the Stafford Cripps of the time), who, in fact, consciously followed the methods of Colbert. England would have suffered a kind of Town-and-Country-Planning-Bill type of bureaucratic landlordism instead of the almost undiluted landlord power which ruled England first under Whig and then under alternating Whig and Tory, Liberal and Conservative domination until Socialism arose to graft bureaucratic upon private monopoly.

Cromwell, after he had risen to power, showed no sympathy whatever with the Diggers and Levellers who aimed at social and economic liberty as well as the "civil liberty" so favourable to the Parliamentary gentlemen who eventually formed the Whig Party, foisted excise duties upon the people while withholding their feudal dues from the king, and later, under Queen Anne, passed a law disqualifying all but the landed gentry from becoming Members of Parliament.

In forming our conception of English history it must not be forgotten that until the Socialist intelligentsia turned to this subject Whig historians established almost a monopoly. Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, and Macaulay were all Whigs and the grand-nephew of the latter, who at present holds the Regius Professorship at Cambridge, worthily upholds the tradition of personal brilliance, genuine devotion to intellectual freedom, and neglect or disparagement of the economic freedom which means everything to the poor. It is curious to note how Whig paternalism blends with Socialist paternalism. It was the Whig, Lord Harcourt, who said, on a memorable occasion, "We are all Socialists now." Sir George Trevelyan seems to regard the law of income-tax as the law of God. The Whig spirit is probably much more prevalent even to-day than we imagine. It opposes the true Radical spirit of the independent working man in the same way as the Socialists oppose it. Edmund Burke became something like an oracle among Whigs, and he revealed the real attitude of his kind when confronted with the enthusiasm for the Rights of Man, which at first showed so little consideration for the privileges of landlords. "Good order," he says, "is the foundation of all things. . . . The people, without being servile, must be tractable and obedient. The magistrate must have his reverence, the laws their authority. The body of the people must not find the principles of natural subordination by art rooted

out of their minds. They must respect that property of which they cannot partake." The farmer, he says, in another place, is the true guardian of the labourer's interest, in that it would never be profitable for him to underpay the labourer. It is not difficult to guess what kind of property was uppermost in Burke's mind.

For those who believe there is a deeper social problem than anything which crossed Burke's imagination one incident of that memorable day, January 30th, 1649, invites speculation. Among Charles's sorrowing friends on the scaffold was James Harrington, a republican and a friend of the Cyriac Skinner immortalised by Milton's Sonnet. Harrington, the son of a Rutlandshire squire, had lived and studied in Holland, Denmark, Germany, France and Italy, always concerning himself with problems of society. He had been appointed by Parliament to accompany the king from Newcastle, but became so intimate with the prisoner, holding such long and friendly discussions on the philosophy of government, that the appointment was revoked. Harrington's *Oceana*, published in 1656, reveals, no doubt, the substance of these discussions. According to this treatise, the message of history is that the form of any government is determined by the balance of dominion or property in land. Any attempt to maintain government in opposition to this principle leads to disorder. Therefore, the word Commonwealth can have no meaning unless it means equal property in land. We shall never know to what extent Charles was impressed by this argument. We know, however, that Cromwell's officials were with difficulty prevented from suppressing the book, and the Lord Protector observed on that occasion, "What I have won by the sword I am not going to be scribbled out of." Has this not been the real argument of landlordism and officialdom for three hundred years?

F. D. P.

THE PROGRESS OF EDUCATION

Act I. February, 1887. John Morley is addressing the students of the London Society for the Extension of University Teaching.

"What is the object of this movement? It is to diffuse the fertilising waters of intellectual knowledge from their great and copious fountain-heads at the Universities by a thousand irrigating channels over the whole length and breadth of our busy, indomitable land. I can conceive nothing more democratic than such a movement as this, nothing more calculated to raise modern democracy to heights which other forms of government and older orderings of society have never yet attained. Athenian society rested on a basis of slavery. With us, happily, it is very different. Our object is to bring Periclean ideas of beauty and simplicity and cultivation of the mind within the reach of those who do the drudgery and service of the world. I like to think of this in connection with students like those miners in Northumberland, whom I know well, and who, after a hard day's work in the pit, walk four or five miles through cold and darkness to hear a lecture, and then walk back again the same four or five miles."

Act II. *The Observer*, January 16th, 1949.

"As a result of a scientific investigation now being conducted through London and Birmingham Universities it is hoped that the fatigue and strain of the housewife's daily work will be reduced to a minimum and a scientific plan evolved for the case of the average home. Dr. James

Mackintosh is working on the psychological aspect of household work. Professor Zuckerman is now studying the average woman's measurements in relation to furniture and kitchen equipment. When the results of the enquiry are published it is hoped to tell the housewife when and how frequently she requires rest breaks, etc."

It seems that during sixty-two years of stupendous scientific discovery, and universal State education the drudgery of the world, as far as the average housewife is concerned, has decreased so little that the Universities have become, to a great extent, technical research stations rather than centres for the cultivation of the mind; moreover, the intelligence of the average woman is so low that she cannot be trusted to choose her own labour-saving devices or know when she requires a rest!

One is tempted to speculate what might have been the situation if Morley had not been so sure that Victorian society did not contain an element of slavery just as potent as the chattel-slavery of Athens. The greatest "labour-saving device" yet discovered is not a mechanical invention; it is the legal invention which makes one man the owner of the natural element—the land—on which others must work and live. It reduces the landowner's labour not to a minimum but to nil; its consequences distort and discourage the true search for knowledge; it keeps nations busy indeed—with ever-growing numbers of officials busily frustrating the productive efforts of others—but no longer indomitable.