

into one another like hand and glove. There was one other thing; agreement that the land of England should be better cultivated. That is well enough, but it is only so much talk, if nothing is done about the land question, and who among the politicians is willing or able to act?

The last time England experimented with State Socialism—it was then called Mercantilism, in the period when Denmark and other European countries fell under its sway—it was significant how private initiative knocked the bottom out of the system. It was the highly developed contraband trade which forced the hands of the statesmen. Heligoland, which was then an English island, was quite openly a clearing station for the smugglers; it even had its own rates of exchange. It was a black market in grand style. Whole fleets of smugglers' ships came to Heligoland, which unloaded and loaded and distributed goods to many ports. The smugglers became the people's heroes "because they could provide the goods in demand." There is a diverting book from that time written by the English naval captain, Frederick Marryat, *The Three Cutters*: the pleasure cutter, the customs cutter, and the contraband cutter. The author leaves his readers in no doubt as to which cutter had his sympathy. When he wrote that book Marryat was in a high official position and even so his hero was the captain of the smugglers.

REFLECTIONS ON OUR POLITICIANS

IN the September/October number of *The Porcupine*, the Bulletin of the Manchester Land Values League, Mr. Arthur H. Weller makes the following useful comments on some recent speeches and statements.

Mr. Churchill on Free Enterprise

In his speech at Blenheim Palace on August 4th, Mr. Churchill referred to "the capitalist system of free enterprise," which, he said, existed in this country before the last war, and he condemned the Government's controls and interferences. It is said, with truth, that the British public have short memories. Mr. Churchill's speech suggests that the memories of British politicians are equally short, though things are not always what they seem to be.

It was a Tory government (labelled "National") which, by means of tariffs and other obstacles to private enterprise, put an end to Britain's long-enjoyed freedom to trade. It was under Tory rule that private enterprise was first hindered and penalised by regulations and fines imposed on those who produced more food and other good things than Government officials thought desirable, and for selling without permission or too cheaply. And now Mr. Churchill presents the Tory party as the champion of free enterprise and denounces the Labour Government for carrying on the same evil policy. Conveniently forgetting its own record, the Tory pot calls the Labour kettle black!

Mr. Morrison on Individualism and Socialism

Lovers of freedom should not forget the records of their suitors. Freedom will not be won by substituting one party of controllers for another party of controllers. Our lost liberties can be regained and full economic freedom achieved through whatever government an awakened and intelligent democracy may elect in the future.

At a recent meeting in London, Mr. Herbert Morrison, Lord President of the Council, pleaded for co-operation within industry. Above all, he said, he wanted ways found by which the individual could still count. The

With the progressive fettering of industrial life, the day is arriving when a new crowd of freedom's champions will take the same risks and give ease to the fast-rusting State machinery. Youth will not be content to live on hero-worship. It will be "hats off for the past, coats off for the future." Liberalism calls again, and next time it will not be any half-baked Liberalism.

One hears that Churchill has said of Attlee, that "Attlee is not a wolf in sheep's clothing; he is a sheep in sheep's clothing." Let that go. But what is Churchill himself? It is possible he may return to take hold of the rudder. The remarkable thing England seems to have wholly forgotten is that there was a time when Free Trade rescued the country from the situation in which it now finds itself. But has Churchill, indeed, any other ideas than to tilt at windmills?

Even a windmill has to have more than sails and wind. It must first and foremost stand upon land. The land is the first and last link in all production. And there are more statesmen than the English who need to learn that.

[It is pleasing to see Mr. Björner still active with his brilliant pen. Despite the handicaps of advancing age sorely affecting his eyesight, he is a frequent contributor to the Press. Last month we were happy to convey congratulations to him and Mrs. Signe Björner on their golden wedding.—EDITOR, L. & L.]

individual was too good and too valuable to be destroyed, and therefore, said Mr. Morrison, Socialists pleaded for more individualism.

This, at first sight, is rather confusing. A dictionary definition of Individualism is "a system in which each individual works for his own ends," and Socialism is defined as "a social organisation aiming at the abolition of individual action and establishing community of property." Paradoxes are sometimes used to deceive, as when tariffs were advocated as a means to win freer trade, but Mr. Morrison's plea deserves serious consideration. Perhaps the ideals of Socialists and Individualists are not as incompatible as they are generally believed to be. Few people who call themselves Socialists would accept a social organisation which involved the subjugation of the individual and the expropriation of his property. And few Individualists would approve of the handing over of the Post Office and the sewers to private enterprise. If prejudices were forgotten a programme might be found combining the virtues of both policies, as Mr. Morrison seems to suggest. . . .

Confusion can be avoided only by an understanding of the nature and extent of individual and communal rights. In every field of human activity the rights of the individual end where his "doing as he pleases" begins to infringe upon the rights of others. Real freedom is equal freedom. No man can claim more than this and no man should be content with less. But the barrier of the Land Monopoly which has defied for centuries all efforts to abolish poverty and war will, if not removed, continue to make real progress impossible. Happily, there is a practical and effective policy for its removal—the Taxation and Rating of all the land on its unimproved values, accompanied by the un-taxing and un-rating of industry and homes. This policy would "take for the community what belongs to the community, the value that attaches to land, and leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to him."

Cannot all men and women of goodwill in both camps accept this liberating policy, and realise their ideals by working for it?

The Food Minister on Competition

Perhaps Mr. Strachey's remarks on food prices at a conference in London may be another sign of a dawning recognition of economic facts in ministerial circles. He said competition would bring food prices down, and added: "You cannot expect to have free trade and the absence of price control without its corollary, free competition and free entry." This is not in keeping with what most people, including most Socialists, understand Socialism to mean. Mr. Strachey seems to have had this in mind when, after pointing to the benefits of competition, he said: "You do not, in my view as a Socialist, get the ideal result by competition." If the reduction of food prices to reasonable levels is not Mr. Strachey's ideal, it will to millions of people bring welcome relief, to say nothing of the effects of "free entry" on the queueing problem.

Freedom is the panacea for economic ills, and Mr. Strachey did well to declare for free competition, free entry and free enterprise. When an unemployed worker in an overcrowded labour market sees another man get the job he wanted, it seems to him that competition is responsible for his poverty and misery. But that is not free competition; it is hurtful because it is one-sided competition. It is said that the workers are free to starve, but this "freedom" is evil only because the workers are not also free to feast. Competition for jobs is injurious only where alternative jobs are not available.

"Competition," to quote Henry George, "plays just such a part in the social organism as those vital impulses which are beneath consciousness do in the bodily organism. With it, as with them, it is only necessary that it should be free. The line at which the State should come in is that where free competition becomes impossible—a line analogous to that which in the individual organism separates the conscious from the unconscious functions. There is such a line, though extreme Socialists and extreme Individualists both ignore it. The extreme Individualist is like the man who would have his hunger provide him with food; the extreme Socialist is like the man who would have his conscious will direct his stomach how to digest it."

Mr. Dalton on Inherited Wealth

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Dalton, said, on June 11th, that great inherited wealth is a grave evil both to those who inherit it and to those who are deprived thereby. It was, he continued, the greatest root cause of the inequality in the whole of our legal and social system.

The inequality Mr. Dalton refers to is probably inequality in the distribution of wealth. If this is so, it is a pity he did not explain how that which is distributed (wealth) can be the cause of distribution, and how the character of wealth can be affected by its distribution. If inherited wealth is evil, it was evil before it was inherited; its transference from one person to another, by inheritance or otherwise, cannot affect its quality.

Wealth consists of material things, such as food and houses, which have been produced out of land by labour to satisfy human needs and desires. Wealth constantly varies in quantity and quality, is constantly produced and consumed, and it cannot be responsible for the good or

bad uses to which it may be put. A possible explanation of this and other condemnations of wealth is that its critics fail (or refuse) to recognise the difference between Wealth and Land. "Inherited wealth" usually includes title deeds to land in town or country, and this kind of "property" is evil both before and after inheritance. Private property in land—the present system—causes inequality in the distribution of wealth by conferring on the owners of land a legal right to share the wealth produced by those who use it. Landowners share the products of labour by charging the producers for permission to labour.

In a village where there is an abundant water supply, all the people will be free to take what they want. If one man takes fifty gallons and another man only ten, the second man's supply will not be small because the other man's supply is large. But if, later, the well yields only enough water for the bare needs of the villagers, then one man's plenty will involve scarcity for others. In the larger village in which we live—the world—there is an inexhaustible "well" from which could be produced enough wealth to satisfy the desires of every human being. It is the land, Mother Earth, the bounty of the Creator provided for the use and enjoyment of all. Poverty and scarcity are not due to any failure of Nature's reservoir nor to any weakening of human skill in production; they are due to the land having been "cornered" and treated as private property. What Nature seemed to do in the failing water supply, man has done in the modern world by laws which enable a few privileged people to acquire unearned wealth by owning the sources of supply.

If statesmen were humble enough to learn the truth by studying Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* they would not invent fantastic theories to explain what they do not now understand, but would remove the root cause of social injustice (Land Monopoly) by means of Land Values Taxation and Free Trade, thereby making it possible for all men to enjoy as much wealth as they were willing to produce.

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