

LAND & LIBERTY

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TWO SHILLINGS

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A Way of Life

THE POLICIES of the Labour Government during the last two and a half years have brought many changes in the economic life of the country—but the full effects of their legislative enactments are yet to be felt.

More retrogressive acts will be added as the Government lives out its term of office and the future is uncertain and dark. In the name of unity and loyalty, the voices of critics within the Party are almost silent.

The task of the Conservative opposition is to win back the disillusioned voters at the next General Election, and much mind-searching and stock-taking will be and is being done in the process.

In politics there is often a division, if not a conflict, between the need to devise a policy that will win votes and one that is within the traditions and established philosophy of the party.

The Conservatives have yet to realise that the two are reconcilable. Certainly the present Government is making it easier for them.

In *The Daily Telegraph* last month the writer in a series of articles "Remaking Tory Policy" asks which way the Tory Party are going—towards a freer economy or a more state-controlled one. The present formulas of the party, he rightly says, are so constructed as to allow either interpretation. Of Mr. Enoch Powell, he writes, "He is now commonly regarded as the pure exponent of the philosophy of Adam Smith, as one who would jettison all controls and virtually dismantle the state in its economic aspect," and adds, "Powellism, the most valuable single ingredient in Conservatism today, is 'not so much a programme, more a way of life'."

Mr. Geoffrey Home is another fundamental



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rebel who is almost alone in advocating a basic reform of the welfare state. Mr. Russell Lewis is yet another ranged on the side of freedom and has published a pamphlet rejecting the concept of a wages policy and advocating the removal of many restrictions long established as well as new.

On the other side of the fence are Conservatives who share the outlook of Sir Edward Boyle, deputy chairman of the Policy Advisory Committee of the Conservative Party who would maintain a wages policy within a framework of a planned economy in which intimate co-operation between government and industry would be maintained.

It would seem that the Conservatives could lose on either policy and with good reason. No rewards are to be reaped by aping socialist policy because it must inevitably be too much or too little like the real thing. Nor

can Conservatives succeed in convincing the country that *laissez faire* is a panacea for all our ills—even when accompanied by welfare of their own devising.

The flaw in socialism is that it accepts poverty as an inevitable concomitant of capitalism and seeks to replace it with statism. The flaw in the Conservative *laissez faire* camp is that they fail to recognise that poverty is not an inevitable part of the natural order, but the result of man-made institutions which deny equal rights to land and aggravate the consequences with a network of subsidies and state privileges which are bestowed upon sectional interest in the form of state protected monopolies, tariffs, subsidies, grants, etc. We do indeed need not a change of programme, but a change of our way of life. Enoch Powell's logic is unassailable but it is half a loaf and although better than none it will never satisfy the hunger people have for real social justice.

NEWS AND COMMENT



JAPANESE CITY PLANNER URGES LAND REFORM

WRITING in the magazine *Chuokoron*, Akira Tamura, a Japanese city planner, says that the spiralling price of land is damaging the dreams of prospective homeowners, increasing the cost of industrial expansion, and hindering important public works projects. The new Tokaido Line, the Meishin Expressway, land reclamation at Mizushima, the Senri New Town, the bridge across the Seto Inland Sea and Seikan undersea tunnel will all transform the country, but the investments will not be effective says Mr. Tamura, unless the land price issue is faced.

According to Mr. Tamura, there are three factors that have prevented the establishment of an effective land policy:

- * the legal concept of interference in the land market as an infringement of private property rights.
- * the political pressure exerted by those who gain from the present land price situation.
- * the lack of study of the land price issue.

Recently, however, former Construction Minister Mitsuo Setoyama declared that "land is not merchandise" or "a scheme for money making," but "the basis for human activities."

Mr. Tamura points out that although land for expansion in Japan is relatively scarce there would be no cause for alarm for at least twenty years if it were not for high land prices. Rises in land prices are mainly attributable to economic advancements which do not require any productive efforts on the part of land owners. Public

works had also contributed to the price increases.

In looking for a solution to the high land costs and the need for further public investment, Mr. Tamura recommends that all increases in land values after a certain date be divided among the bodies responsible for producing the increased value. He also suggests new land planning techniques and the setting up of a public real estate market agency.

Increment taxes may not be a sound approach to true reform, but Mr. Tamura has highlighted the basic Japanese economic problem—one which could have far reaching effects for this rapidly developing country unless the correct remedy is applied.

DRIFT AND MUDDLE IN FARMING

AN EDITORIAL in the *Estates Gazette* drew attention to two conflicting approaches in Government agricultural land policy. The present system of supports and subsidies tends to favour the larger agricultural units and it would appear to be the Government's view that larger farms are more efficient. The picture of small farmers fighting to earn a living from insufficient land, with inadequate capital, is fairly common in Europe. In Britain it is now proposed to give grants to outgoing occupiers who release their land for amalgamation, and the state may buy land for this purpose where private initiative is not forthcoming. The argument is that ultimately the larger units now being created will be much more efficient and ultimately require less subsidies.

Working against this somewhat dubious policy is the