

## DEMOCRACY

BY LEWIS H. BERENS, IN "TOWARD THE LIGHT."

The goal toward which, despite temporary aberrations and transient periods of reaction, the civilisation of Western Europe constantly impels mankind, may then be summed up in the one word Democracy, using this term to denote a Social System, as well as a Social Creed, based upon Justice, upon the Law of Liberty, upon the Golden Rule of Righteousness, upon the recognition and enforcement of the equal claims of all to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness, and all that this involves.

Justice, as we have already seen, involves Liberty: a liberty which finds its natural limitations in the equal liberty of others. For, in accordance with this fundamental, social, or ethical principle, whatever liberty of action a man may claim for himself, he must necessarily concede as a matter of right to his fellows. As already sufficiently emphasised, if Justice is to be done, if Equal Liberty is to be secured, if we are to recognise and respect the equal claims of all to life, then the opportunities of Nature, included in Economics under the term "land," must be made available to all on equitable terms, and to each must be secured his equal and joint share in the bounties of Nature, and the exclusive and absolute right to dispose of his own activities, and the fruits of his own activities, as he may deem desirable, provided only he in no way infringes on the equal liberty of others. . . . Privileges abolished, equal liberty secured, the present class divisions and caste system would disappear, the identity of interests of all the co-operating working units, now obscured by the din and turmoil of conflicting class interests, would become manifest, and thus the reign of social peace within the limits of the community would be inaugurated. Moreover, communities thus organised would soon arrive at the full realisation of the inspiring fact that the social and industrial interests of the workers of the world are, in truth, identical, that it was but the privileged classes—who previously dominated and directed their international relations—who had conflicting interests. In other words, the inspiring light of Justice would reveal to them that fundamental identity of social and industrial interests which, even to-day, despite conflicting class interests, racial animosities, differences in civilisation, in religion, habits, manners, beliefs, customs, and laws, constantly tend to weld the workers of the world into one harmonious social whole. Thus, too, the reign of international peace would be inaugurated on the safe and sure foundations of identity of interests, safeguarded and supported by those fundamental pillars of the Democratic Faith, Justice, Liberty, and Toleration.

Moreover, communities thus organised, though they would be prepared if necessary to defend themselves, or even others, against aggression, would find no motives impelling them to disturb the peace of other communities. . . . For Justice not only imposes as the most sacred duty of individuals, toleration of the idiosyncrasies of other individuals, but it also imposes, as the most sacred duty of communities and nations, toleration of the idiosyncrasies of other communities and nations. Hence, they would be compelled to realise, not only in the abstract, but as the animating principle of their foreign as of their domestic policy, that they had and could have no right whatever to impose by force their own views, beliefs, and aspirations on others. Thus, the main source, cause and motives of both "righteous" and "unrighteous" wars would be removed, and the reign of peace between peoples in various stages of social evolution, differing in habits, customs, beliefs, and phases of civilisation, would be inaugurated.

## PALESTINE FOR THE JEWS FREE OF CHARGE

The following article from the pen of M. W. Norwalk appeared in the YIDDISCHE FOLK of November 12th, issued by the Federation of American Zionists. It is translated into English by the author, for the SINGLE TAX REVIEW, at the request of Mrs. Mary Fels and Judge Louis D. Brandeis, of the U.S. Supreme Court, and head of the Zionist world movement since 1914. —Editor, SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

Assume that every statement published in the Jewish press, that Zionism has penetrated among almost all classes of the Jewish people, is all true. As proof, there are large Orders, Verbands and Rings, which openly declared themselves for the Zionistic idea and promised material aid. Assume that a Jewish Congress will demand Palestine for the Jews. Suppose that both sides—the Allies and the Entente—are favourably inclined toward the proposition. Assume that a World's Peace Congress will ask the Jewish Representatives on what conditions they desire Palestine. They will want to know what the Jews will do with Palestine when they get it. Do we know what to answer? You smile at this seemingly foolish question. You think it time enough to worry when absolutely necessary—that is, when we get the land we will then think of what is to be done with it. Now, dear reader, you are making a big mistake. You must remember, that to know what to answer to an "Apikoreth" agnostic we were taught even in smaller things—especially here, where we are to deal with the so-called "The Wise," or the Statesmen of other nations, who as friends are willing to make concessions for our welfare but not, of course, to prepare trouble for themselves. They will under no circumstances consent that Jews shall settle in Palestine and there have a "Mexican quarrel" among themselves.

We must not forget that "Eretz Israel" (Palestine) is more or less populated, and that most of the land is someone's property. No international Peace Congress will assume the right to take away the property from its present owners and give it to the Jews.

One more thing we must remember. Though the Bible says, and many admit, that we are a "wise and understanding people," yet all know that a large number of our people, drowning themselves in the troubled seas of the Golus (Diaspora) caught on to the straw of State Socialism, the ideas of which are distasteful to almost all of the reigning classes. That these latter shall not take us to be dreamers, we must have a concrete plan in order to be able without great sums of money, to settle large numbers of Jews in Palestine, and when there, not to call out class-hatred and strife—a plan which shall at the same time coincide with the Bible and shall be recognised by civilised nations as just and feasible.

I say, "caught on to the straw of Socialism" advisedly, because after a careful analysis it will be found that Socialism, besides being morally and practically doubtful, is surely not after the ideals of either the Bible or Talmud. I do not want to engage in a lengthy discussion in order to prove that under a Socialistic system—that is, where all means of production belong to the people—no worker would receive the full value of that which he produced, because the so-called means of production (machines, &c.) are products of human labour and when a part of the produced wealth should belong to the public-at-large, the individual labourer must have so much less for his work. I want only to say here that even the most enthusiastic supporters of Socialism acknowledge that the Socialistic system—the accurate plan of which is known to none—can be inaugurated only through evolution and that it must

take centuries until people will know how to live under such a system. Until then it is nothing but a straw.

When we are counting on the probability that masses of Jews will settle in Palestine—especially ere we go before a Peace Congress and propose that we shall be given Palestine—we must work out a feasible, concrete plan for bringing about such an immigration without depending upon miracles—upon moneys which "Achuzath" (Land Developing Semi-Co-operative Society) will accumulate little by little; or upon large sums which our richer brethren will contribute to the Jewish National Fund. It is about this plan that I wish to speak here. The plan in itself is not entirely new, especially for the Jewish people. It is most remarkable that while there is no suggestion either in the Bible or in the Talmud of Socialism we find on the contrary at almost every step a reminder of one fundamental principle of political economy.

When Joseph took the land from the Egyptians they told him: "We and our land will be slaves unto Pharaoh." Genesis xlvii. 19. That is, when our land is taken away by Pharaoh we become the slaves of Pharaoh. When the land of the Egyptian priests was not taken away they remained a free ruling class. *Ibid.* 22. To prevent the Jewish priests—the interpreters of the law—from becoming the ruling class, the Bible denies them any part of land in Palestine. Numbers xviii. 20.

In order that no Jew shall become enslaved, the Bible provides, "And the land shall not be sold." Leviticus xxv. 23. Besides the freeing of the Jewish slaves on the 7th and Jubilee years, that the lands (not houses or any other wealth), shall return on the 50th year to the original holders. *Ibid.* xxv. 13. After the law that the land shall not be sold for a permanence, after the commandment of Jubilee, God promises that, "Ye shall dwell in the land in safety." *Ibid.* 18. Also "I will give peace in your land." *Ibid.* xxvi. 6. After the commandment of the 7th year (release, "Shemitah" year) comes the promise, "Indeed, there should be no needy men among ye." When Isaiah (v. 8) reprimands the Jews he admonishes them thus: "Woe unto you who cause house to join house, field brought to field until there is no more room." The Talmud Tractat Shaboth, page 33, side 2, holds that the Jews were exiled from their land because they abolished the Shemitah (the release) year and the Jubilee year.

Ezekiel (xlvii. 22-23) commands that when the Jews come back to Palestine, "Thou shalt then divide the land evenly to each man like to his brother, to you and to the sojourner amongst you." In other words, that even non-Jews who live in Palestine shall get an equal part in the land.

When we come to modern nations we find a cardinal principle—that the land of a country belongs to the people. In England, the people at the last two elections voted to take away little by little the annual land value from the landlords, and that the House of Lords, which is composed mainly of landowners, should not interfere with the passing of such a law, the Veto Power in this instance was taken from them. . . .

We come to the modern plan of Jewish emancipation from the Diaspora—Zionism—we find that when yet in its early days, when Dr. Herzl figured on buying Palestine from the Turkish Sultan and that Jews should be able to settle there little by little, the Jewish National Fund was inaugurated for the purpose of buying up the land from the present owners to become the property of all the Jewish nation, never to be sold, so that there should be no private land ownership in Palestine. Now, when good land in Palestine is already selling at a high price, should there be a probability of a large Jewish emigration the speculative price of land will be so high that it will be far beyond the reach of any common-Fund to purchase it. And Zionism, without land in Palestine, is a soul without a body.

From the foregoing we can see that the concrete plan which we Zionists must adopt at once, a plan which the outside world should be able to understand and appreciate is, that Zion shall be redeemed through justice, and her inhabitants through righteousness (Isaiah xi. 27). In other words, our proposed plan shall be that Eretz Israel, Mesopotamia across the Jordan, Syria, &c., shall be declared free ports for the world's commerce; there shall be no export or import duties of any kind, or any kind of taxes whatsoever, either in the acquiring or production of any kind of merchandise, chattels, buildings nor any wealth produced by human skill or labour. The government of the mentioned places shall not be allowed to legalise to itself the right to rob the individual of the smallest part of his wealth, to the production of which neither the people at large nor the people's government have contributed anything. And to defray the expenses of necessary national and local government service the government shall collect the annual rental value of useful nature—that is, every person or group who wish to have the exclusive possession of city, farm, mine or quarrying lands, oil-wells, water-falls or other natural opportunities, the kind of which is scarce, shall pay into the public exchequer whatever such a special privilege is worth every year, to be settled by higgling of the market. That such a plan will be easy to inaugurate in Turkey there is no doubt. First, according to the precepts of the Koran, no one is allowed to hold land unless he works it; and therefore it is Turkey's law that the government shall confiscate all lands which the owner makes no use of at least once in three years. Second, the Turkish Tariff duties are very small and more or less pledged away:—governmental income from production is insignificant; land ownership is not tied up with banking, mortgage or other useful institutions which would be affected by the adoption of such a law. Were it not for a large Jewish emigration the land would have very little selling value, so the owner of such land will not have any reason to cry out against confiscation. The Turkish Government is in need of the large incomes and modern improvements in the country which the proposed system would bring about.

Now, the result of the adoption of the Single Tax System in Palestine, &c., would be that no man or corporation would be able to hold land unless it were intensively utilised. This will necessitate large numbers of labourers with a corresponding increase in wages. When government takes the annual value of the land the present shiftless owners will be compelled to give away most of their land to those who are more capable of inaugurating modern means for intensive production (in this case necessarily Jews), thus enriching themselves and contributing large sums towards the usefulness and enlarging of the sphere of governmental service.

Individuals and groups of workers or business people with little or no capital would receive loans from the Jewish Colonial Bank, sufficient to employ themselves on the free land, or to promote the needed industrial undertakings, so that large capitalists or companies that wish to conduct great business will have to pay higher wages and offer better conditions to their employees than the latter can get by working for themselves, or in voluntary co-operation on free land. And the more well-paid people there are in the country the more industry and art will develop to satisfy their increased demand, and the greater the number of Jewish workers who will settle in Palestine and surrounding countries.

As under a free trade and free land system all men and products will be welcome to Palestine there will be no reason for any nation to encroach on its borders; therefore there will be no necessity for a standing army or navy. Land and other monopolies will not exist, as the govern-

ment with the moneys from the national fund and land-rent (Taxes) will furnish the people with the means of transportation and communication. Everyone able and willing to work will always be capable of making a comfortable living, so that worry, envy, class-hatred, theft, robbery, &c. (the results of poverty and the fear thereof), will not exist, and the expenses for the maintenance of police, prisons, asylums, &c., will be reduced to a minimum. And all the nations will come to learn from our example how to live peacefully—as it is said, “From Zion will come the Law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

## HOUSING “CONVERSATIONS”

Dr. Smyth, medical officer to Norham and Islandshire District Council, stated in his report—“In taking a general view of the district under the Council’s control, I estimate that about 90 per cent. of the cottage property is unfit, both from moral and health reasons, for human habitation.”—GLASGOW HERALD, October 23rd.

The Housing Question was considered at a Manchester Diocesan Conference, the Bishop of Manchester presiding. (We quote from the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN, October 21st.)

Councillor T. R. Marr pointed out that a great many houses were structurally unfit for human habitation. In many other cases, where the houses were fit, the character of their occupation made them injurious to health. He instanced a country cottage he had visited, where fourteen persons slept in two tiny bedrooms. Both in town and country there was a shortage of houses for the working classes, and since the outbreak of war the building of houses had virtually ceased.

Mr. Dodd remarked that at the present time working men paid an appalling proportion of their incomes for rent.

The Archdeacon of Lancaster said that he had found even on an estate of the Duchy of Lancaster that labourers could not find houses to live in within two or three miles of their work.

The housing problem in Glasgow, as in many cities and towns throughout the kingdom, has assumed a grave aspect, and there has probably never been a time when there was a greater scarcity of accommodation.

The total number of houses in Glasgow is 230,950. The one-apartment houses number 40,286, with an average of 3.2 occupants to each house. The two-apartment houses are 112,687 in number, with an average of 4.9 occupants. The three-apartment houses number 43,783, the average number of occupants being 5.2. There are 14,840 houses of four apartments, and 19,354 of five and more apartments.—GLASGOW HERALD, October 7th.

A conference of representatives of trade unions, trades councils, and the Independent Labour Party and the Scottish Labour Party was held (GLASGOW HERALD, October 16th) in the Melbourne Hall, Edinburgh, on Saturday to consider the question of housing in the Rosyth area.

Mr. Robert Allan, President of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, in moving a resolution condemning the existing housing conditions at Rosyth, and calling for Government grants free of interest for a comprehensive building scheme, said the rents charged for these houses of a kitchen, a living room, and three small bedrooms ranged from £24 to £33 per annum.

Mr. T. Hamilton, Rosyth Workers’ Union, said, 1,400 members of his union working at Rosyth, about 800 to 1,000 of whom had come from the South of England on the understanding that there would be sufficient housing accommodation provided. They came from the English cottage housing system, and they had been forced to select

houses in Edinburgh, Dunfermline, or Kirkcaldy, and travel from 15 to 17 miles to and from their work.

A Rosyth worker said he was paying £18 13s. in Edinburgh, which he thought was not bad for a labourer, and he was prepared to pay that at Rosyth.

Another worker said in England he had four beautiful rooms for 5s. a week. Now he shared a flat with another family at 9s. 3d. a week.

Mr. Simpson (Shaleworkers) said the houses at Rosyth for which they were asking £33, although they had five rooms, had no more cubic capacity than houses of three rooms in Edinburgh rented at £15.

At the Sanitary Inspectors’ Conference at Cardiff, September 29th, Bailie J. Stewart, of Glasgow, in a paper read to the meeting on Health and Housing, said he confined himself mainly to Glasgow, as typical of all our large industrial communities, and mentioned that if the actual density for each acre was given it would vary from nil to 55 for the well-to-do residential parts, to 300 or 600 per acre in the industrial districts, in some few parts exceeding 1,000 per acre. This latter tremendous density of itself constituted a very serious menace to health. Nearly 800,000 of the people lived in houses of three apartments or less, with results which, he submitted, were disastrous and costly.

There was the startling fact in respect to Glasgow that in one district the rate of mortality of children under one year of age was two and two-third times higher than in a certain other district. The housing question required to be tackled. The cottage was preferable to the tenement, and every house should have a garden, while four apartments should be the minimum for an average family.

Dealing with tuberculosis, he said that sanatoria were being erected and patients treated therein at very great expense. If the results in other parts of the kingdom were akin to those in Glasgow, it would have to be admitted that it had all been something like a gigantic failure.

## ANDREW WILSON

We have received with deep regret the sad news of the death of Andrew Wilson, of Belfast, formerly of Woolwich.

In earlier years, as a member of the English League, he did much earnest, quiet work for the cause among the workers at Woolwich Arsenal. Some years ago he removed to Belfast, where he was engaged in the fruit trade. He soon got into touch with our local friends, and was for some time Honorary Secretary of the Belfast League.

When the war broke out, he offered himself for munition work, and went back to Woolwich for three months. Afterwards he was employed elsewhere to mount guns for naval service. This work completed at the end of six months, he became an inspector of munitions “somewhere in England,” and, later, a foreman inspector “somewhere else.” Then he joined a staff of workers to prepare ordnance gauges for an Allied Government, working early and late at a technical institute. Within a few days of finishing the contract his health broke down through over-work. He reached home early on September 23rd in a high fever and went to bed, never to rise again. Hæmorrhage followed on typhoid fever, and on the 3rd October—the seventeenth anniversary of his wedding—he passed away, at the early age of 41. He leaves a widow, two daughters, and a son. We tender them our heartfelt sympathy in the loss of a loving, devoted, and unselfish husband and father.

He was respected and beloved by all who knew him. In Belfast he could have found but few to whom he could talk freely of the faith that was in him. But he “kept the faith” even in so uncongenial an atmosphere. F. V.