

no possible escape from the obligation of pointing out what fundamental adjustment must be made in our society, *consistent with uncompromising acceptance of equal rights*, if the causes of social weaknesses are to be eliminated. On this the Declaration leaves no grounds for doubt and, incidentally, it challenges Communist propaganda on a subject Communist propagandists have always exploited with success.

The Manifesto is published by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, at our offices. "We declare," it states, "that the tenure of land is the great governing fact which ultimately determines the . . . condition of the people. That the fundamental cause of involuntary poverty and recurrent periods of unemployment is the private appropriation of the rent of land and the withholding of land from adequate and proper use . . . That until measures are taken to stop the private appropriation of the rent of land, all measures currently advocated for improving social conditions are incapable of achieving their purpose . . . that as everyone has an equal right to life it necessarily follows that everyone has an equal right to land on which alone life can be sustained."

To remove this source of evil the document advocates: "That the equal right to land be secured by collecting the rent of land and devoting it to the uses of the community and assuring to the producer the full fruits of his efforts by abolishing the imposts," etc., which at present penalise his exertions.

The accompanying Resolution on Individual and Common Rights in Land specifies briefly the principles of justice by which these rights may be exactly determined

and exercised in complete accord with the true right to property.

The Declaration and Resolution, which were confirmed by members drawn from twenty-seven different countries, thus reconcile the great declarations of human rights of the past, with the profound reform required by modern society; no conclusion is evaded, no question is begged, no phrase left doubtful. Any inconsistency should be easy to distinguish.

The Manifesto has been translated into fifteen languages and the text is now available in printed form, not only in English but also in French, German, Spanish, Italian and Esperanto. Printing of other translations will follow. Copies of these documents have been and are being circulated widely to appropriate public bodies and men and women. They were acknowledged by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in October, 1949, but, so far, no further action has been taken by that organisation.

If one is convinced that land is not necessary to human existence the Swanwick Declarations can be ignored, but if one is not of that opinion it follows that most of the current discussion on human rights is conducted on a basis of unreality, for the question of right to land is almost always ignored. No interest in social questions can be inspired by a higher or wiser motive than consideration for the dignity and rights of others as well as for oneself, but to ignore the subject of land tenure in social investigation reduces that consideration to nullity. The right to land is the first of human rights, on it all other rights depend.

F. D. P.

## SIR ROBERT PEEL AND PATRICK EDWARD DOVE

In an article in the *Manchester Guardian*, July 6, marking the centenary of Sir Robert Peel's death, Mr. Asa Briggs emphasises Peel's practical mind and appreciates "his vast programme of fiscal reform." But Mr. Briggs mentions Free Trade only once, and then in an incidental way which might lead the unsuspecting reader to assume that the *laissez faire* Prime Minister did not wish to be associated too prominently with Free Trade. If in recalling eminent figures of the past we are always to avoid mentioning any aspect which clashes with the prevalent notions of to-day, of what use is it to recall them? On the other hand, remembering that it is always opinion which moulds the conditions of society, if we live in an age which seems heading for disaster, and the example of some great figure of the past directly conflicts with opinions at present prevailing, it is these conflicting opinions which especially merit our attention.

Peel lived in an age which identified Protection, public debt, inflation, pressure groups and international regulation of commerce with poverty, corruption and war. By *laissez faire* was then meant not licence for the strong to oppress the weak, but removal of obstructions to honest work. By liberty men meant equal freedom to rely on one's self. "Freedom from want" would have evoked the contempt which such misapplication of language deserves. Peel set himself to abolish things which he regarded as evil and, being practical, did so by legislation designed to reduce debt, restore the honesty of public finance and reduce or abolish Protection. It never occurred to him that before redressing an evil in one's own country it was necessary to await the decision

of an international conference; and the results of his measures showed it was not necessary. On the contrary, he regarded efforts to interfere with the policies of other nations as futile. On that subject, the night before his fatal accident, he said in Parliament, "Liberty will be best worked out by those who aspire to freedom by their own efforts. You will only overload it by your principle of interference, against which I remonstrate—against which I enter my protest." No message could be more useful than this, to come to us from the period of peace, increasing prosperity, rising national confidence and hopeful civilisation during which Peel was Prime Minister.

But it is equally important as a lesson to our own age to recall the aspect in which Peel failed, and the consequent measure which dimmed his reputation, even at its highest. For generations it was remembered against him that in 1842, in order to supply revenue needed to make up for reduction of Protective duties, he revived the Income Tax. In speeches by Macaulay, Lord John Russell and others, and numerous popular petitions, the taxing of a person according to his industry and thrift was denounced as inexpedient in peace time as it was unjust always, however it might be tolerable, like the press gang, in national emergency. But Peel's critics, like the anti-socialists of to-day, failed to see their criticism was almost useless unless it led up to an alternative to meet the situation. At the back of their minds, it is true, they realised that the alternative lay in some kind of "property tax," but this took no better shape than the inhabited house duty of 1851 in place of the

former, odious window-tax. Peel's Parliamentary critics never set themselves to answer the question: If public expenditure is to be defrayed by a tax on property, and private property is to be preserved, what is the essential difference between private and public property? The failure of Peel or his critics to face this problem has reduced their once confident world to ruin and virtually destroyed private property. Income tax is now regarded as an almost sacred method of taking from the inevitably over-wealthy to give to the inevitably over-poor; and State manipulation of the whole apparatus of currency, debt, tariffs and taxation is accepted as the highest development of economics, lacking which scarcely anyone would be able to participate in what is regarded as a vital privilege, *i.e.*, the opportunity of being employed by someone else.

By a coincidence, in the very year of Peel's death, appeared Patrick Edward Dove's *Theory of Human Progression*, a book which might have been designed to resolve Peel's difficulty. "In politics there are only two main questions," says Dove, "first, personal liberty;

secondly, natural property." "The earth is the common property of the race; whatever an individual produces by his own labour is the private property of the individual. Common property in the earth can be established only by making the rent of the soil the common property of the nation. All civilised communities must ultimately abolish all revenue restrictions on industry, and draw the whole taxation from the rents of the soil, which are the common produce of the whole labour of the community."

Dove's book was scarcely noticed by the intelligentsia of his time, not at all by the politicians. He knew that reform comes not from Parliament but from the diffusion of knowledge amongst ordinary folk; that truth's one and only advantage over error is that truth is permanent, and a society which persists in disregarding the natural law of property can no more be maintained than a machine designed in violation of the natural law of physics. Recent developments might have been arranged by a committee anxious to mark the centenary of his book by demonstrating the correctness of his prognostications.

F. D. P.

## THE DANISH GENERAL ELECTION

The Danish Lower House of Parliament was dissolved on August 8 and a General Election followed on September 5. Details of the results are shown in the accompanying table, which compares the votes of the two previous elections in 1945 and 1947. There are now 149 seats in the House besides two representing the Faroe Islands, but in those islands the election does not take place till mid-October. Of the 149 seats, 105 are constituency seats (*kreds mandater*) where the election proceeds in normal manner by direct vote, and 44 are supplementary seats (*tillægs mandater*) which, while still preserving constituency representation, are so allocated to the parties as to bring about a distribution of the aggregate number (149) of seats proportionate to the total votes cast in their favour. For this purpose the country is divided into three main

The relative progress of the Justice League, the independent Party whose programme is the full expression of Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, is most marked. In five years it has quadrupled its votes and its representation in Parliament. The Conservatives recovered the position they held in 1945. The Moderate Liberals fared badly, but their losses are in part compensated by the Conservative gains since these two parties are in coalition as an anti-Socialist block. The Radical Liberals gained in strength, having made their opposition to the Atlantic Pact and to the rearmament proposals their main claim for electoral support. The downfall of the Communists is highly significant.

The Social Democrats had managed as a minority government to retain office for the last three years. It

	NUMBER OF VOTES CAST			SEATS SECURED			VOTES IN 1950 PER MEMBER ELECTED
	1945	1947	1950	1945	1947	1950	
Social Democrats .....	671,755	834,089	813,512	48	57	59	13,788
Conservatives .....	373,688	259,324	365,370	26	17	27	13,532
Moderate Liberals .....	479,158	574,895	438,114	38	49	32	13,692
Radical Liberals .....	167,073	144,206	167,923	11	10	12	13,985
Retsforbundet (the Justice League)							
—Henry Georgeist .....	38,459	94,570	168,499	3	6	12	14,041
Communists .....	255,236	141,094	94,468	18	9	7	13,495
Various .....	63,760	35,963	6,407	4	—	—	—
	<u>2,049,129</u>	<u>2,084,141</u>	<u>2,053,879</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>13,784</u>

electoral divisions. Of the 44 supplementary seats 9 are reserved for the Metropolitan area, 14 for the Islands and 21 for Jutland and it is within these respective divisions, not over the whole country as one, that the adjustments by means of the supplementary seats take place. How this method of P.R., which is peculiar to Denmark, works out is also shown in the table. It was amended in the Act of 1948 to give greater exactitude, and if those amended provisions had been in operation in 1947, the results would then have been: Social Democrats 61; Conservatives 19; Moderate Liberals 42; Radical Liberals 10; Justice League 7 and Communists 10. These figures should be observed while comparing the varying fortunes of the parties as given in the table.

resigned when its proposals for stiffly increased taxation and severe import restrictions were rejected. It appealed for but failed to obtain a vote of confidence. The result of the General Election is such a close balancing of the parties that it is a question what Administration can be formed that can last any time. The Social Democratic and the Moderate Liberal-Conservative blocks each have 59 seats, and the Radical Liberals and the Justice League (who on the more immediate issues of the day are not likely to be found in the same camp) each have 12. With the Communists none of the parties will have any traffic. It is a confused situation in which the Radical Liberals, more Fabian now than when they did so much for Land Value Taxation, will be with the Social Demo-