

it seems, even for the most convinced Platonist. True, at first sight it seems that to make so many significant spiritual and idealistic reactions depend largely on a mere "science" such as economics, is a sordid and material approach — so sordid indeed that the mind, bent on sacrifice, revolts instinctively against it. But only at first sight. As soon as we begin to realise that the world functions according to law, that God is greater and more serene when incarnate in law and that sacrifice is made to law just as easily as to pure chance the whole problem assumes another aspect.

It is, in fact, a harder and nobler sacrifice to help on the slow movement of history which offers no immediate glory than to demand for sacrifice the pseudo-splendour of the romantic death or the tinsel sublime of the surface cause. The long patience of the scientist searching for truth bears no radiant badge, but it leads in the end to a better human adjustment. So it is with the sordid science of economics which, after all, is not really sordid. We are not in fact considering men as either greedy or unselfish, but only as obedient to a law which, like those of mathematics, is independent of themselves.

The whole process of evolution is a constant process of adjusting the subject to the object, the inner relation to the outer, and this really is what the reign of law is to the man who perceives it. The man who sacrifices to establish the law he has seen in vision is doing the ideal thing the Platonist would have him do, only he is doing it for the sake of the ideas "in" the things not "before" and "beyond" them. The greatest sin of all probably is to have seen the truth and to thwart it, the "sin against the Holy Ghost" which Goethe embodied in the figure of Mephistopheles:

*so setzest du der ewig regen  
der heilsam schaffenden Gewalt,  
die kalte Teufelsfaust entgegen*<sup>1</sup>

the attempt to block creative evolutionary activity.

If we seek in human life for a motive for such actions we may find it in the old conception of *hubris*, the pride that makes the individual assert himself too much. It is right for the organism to assert itself — that is the meaning of evolution and the freedom which the poets have so gloriously sung. But, it is wrong to assert oneself against the law and if we do this we shall be cast out of Heaven. The law of nature, which is the law of God, prevails in the end.

<sup>1</sup> "So you with your devilishly cold fist oppose the healing creative power (of nature)"—Faust.

#### NOTICE

Unforeseen circumstances may prevent the next International Conference from being held in Toronto in 1963, as announced in our last issue. Watch for further announcement.

## NEWS FROM DENMARK

# Farming and Politics

BY PAVLOS GIANNELIAS



**H**ARALD GRONBORG, Director of the famous Folk High School at Odense, Denmark, (which belongs to the Association of Smallholders of Funen) has recently published an interesting and well-documented study which shows that small farms in Denmark are more productive than large ones. And these benefits to the small farmers have resulted from only a partial application of the remedy of Henry George: "Abolish all taxation save that upon land values." These reforms have not only encouraged a more intensive use of land already under cultivation, but have brought into use land previously idle by subjecting it to the payment of land tax.

Farms of 25 acres and under have increased their yield of wheat, beetroot and hay by 35 per cent., as compared with farms of 250 acres and over. Also, on average, small farms support more than twice as many cows, three times as many pigs and twenty times as much poultry per acre.

For both sizes of farm the annual taxes upon land value are nearly equal, being about £5 per acre, but for income tax purposes the small farms pay about £8 per acre, which is nearly double that paid by the large. (Improvements are almost exempt from taxation).

Although Gronborg is convinced that further tax reforms would enable farms of even 5 or 7 acres to become profitable, opinion is more and more inclining to the view that the days of the small farms are numbered, unless they amalgamate. One of the reasons why many of them are so productive is the fact that both the farmer and his family are working.

The large landowners are still seeking to abolish land value taxation, even though it is obvious that the system has encouraged a more intensive use of land. In their role of wheat producers they have succeeded in obtaining a customs duty on imported wheat, which is penalising the consumer, and also the small farmers who need wheat for use as cattle food.

A great struggle is now taking place concerning the proposed substitution of land-value taxation by increases in consumer taxes. *Ret Og Frihed*, the journal of the Danish Justice Party, organised a meeting recently to discuss this and other questions, and particularly the burning one of Denmark's future if she joins the Common Market.

Former deputy Neils Anderson and other Georgeists, although not against a United Europe, are critical of the

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## DANISH NEWS

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idea that freer trade and lower customs duties will apply only internally. They also fear that restrictions and social and economic regulations will increase the price of land and the cost of living. In this way Denmark stands to lose all the reforms she has gained so far.

A specially nominated official agricultural commission's majority decision to force small farms of under 17 acres to amalgamate into units of 60 acres, was opposed by Georgeist deputy Mads Sig Steffenson. By comparing the results of periods 1934 to 1939 and 1954 to 1959, he proved that farms averaging 17 acres increased their yield by 30 to 36 per cent. per acre, while farms averaging 460 acres increased by only 11 to 20 per cent., per acre. The commission's decision was also opposed by the small farmers themselves.

Concerning output and working costs the figures are as follows: on small farms output per worker has increased by 79 per cent., working costs by 74 per cent.; on large farms output per worker has increased by 33 per cent., working costs by 54 per cent.

Steffensen and Gronborg both agree that the optimum size of farm from a social and economic point of view would be from 17 to 30 acres, which is the average found today in Danish agriculture. In England, however, there is the paradox of very large and very small farms resulting in an average acreage of 65.

Steffensen concludes that if the idea of abandoning the small farms, or amalgamating them, was replaced by full land-value taxation all the present difficulties would be resolved.

### WANTED: A MODERN SOCRATES

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is that growth in a highly developed society like ours depends rather less on the mere quantity of capital investment than on innovation and improvement of methods, and the important major contributions to this end are education (technical), competition and "the shaping of business taxation to ensure that business has the incentives to respond to the challenge of competition and export demand."

Of these modest requirements Mr. Green heartily approves and he chides the Chancellor with neglecting to opt for the Cairncross cure, rather than the Paish one. He goes on to chat happily about fostering "investments and loans from abroad," a policy which should be "considered with sympathy rather than alarm." And he looks into the near future, through rosy glasses, at the signs that the experts are providing such useful tools as "reports on consumer protection and company law, enquiries into retail price maintenance, business taxation and monopolies." 'NEDDY,' that untried mule from which so much is hoped, should be able to look after such things as "skilled labour and apprenticeships," while others "in-

cluding aspects of monopolies and competition" may be safely left to the Common Market. (!).

Finally, Mr. Green produces his ace—Professor Erhard, the West German Finance Minister, whose policy he commends as "both economically sound and politically potent." One of the leaves from Professor Erhard's book he recommends to the Chancellor's attention is that "The consumer is supreme." (That's what I said). "The will to consume keeps alive efforts for greater efficiency and improvements. Innovation and advance flourish only if consumption exercises a constant pressure on the economy." The other leaf is that "although freedom is essential, it needs constant nurturing."

Well there you are. Surely from this fount of wisdom, it should be possible to catch one good cupful of economic common sense? The trouble is, there are so many taking the waters these days that the crowding and jostling permits nothing but a few drops in anybody's cup, and that is soon spilt in the scuffle.

Meanwhile, the great big round world keeps turning with no visible assistance from the economists as far as one can see. Would you say "in spite of?" You may very well be right. P.A.G.

## LAND AND THE FREE SOCIETY

IF WE ask ourselves whether in this bewildering complex of rights which men call property there is any clarifying principle of order, we must, it seems to me, take as our premise the principle enunciated by Sir William Blackstone that "the earth . . . and all things therein are the general property of all mankind, exclusive of other beings, from the immediate gift of the Creator." This does not mean that the earth and all things therein should be administered by a central collectivist authority or that individuals should not or cannot be made secure in the enjoyment of private rights. But it does mean that no individual can or should exercise a sole and despotic dominion over any portion of the earth or of the things therein. The earth is limited in size and its use is necessary to every man's existence. Therefore, the rights of any man upon the earth must be reconciled with the equal rights of other men, not only of living men but of the unborn generations. No one in his senses can therefore believe in an absolute right of property which would permit the transient possessors of the land to destroy its fertility, to burn down forests, to cause the streams to dry up, to squander at will the minerals under the surface. These owners did not make these resources. They are unable to re-create them. What title have they then to claim that posterity has no rights which they must respect? The true doctrine surely is that men hold property in limited and necessary natural resources, not as sovereigns, but as tenants. . . .

(From Walter Lippman: *The Good Society*)