

A Reply to Opponents

(At a Danish election meeting. From the speech by J. Schmidt Hansen answering attacks upon the Justice Party by speakers from two of the opposing camps.)

"For the past 30 years the Justice Party has made itself the spokesman for a policy which along freedom's road and on the ground of justice will solve the economic and social problems. By destroying the economic monopolies, the land monopoly and the tariff monopoly and by removing the heavy tax burden, we can at the same time, by changing the whole course of things, make the working people free and economically independent. In that way it would be possible to make unnecessary far the larger part of these grants and aids. But so long as the present unjust social conditions obtain, we are not out to reduce the assistance given through the social legislation to those hardest hit by these conditions.

"The truth is that the moneys which are employed for this purpose are what is left of the crippling taxes which these parties through their legislation take from a large section of the same people who have these alms thrown back at them. When I say that it is the rest of the money, it is because of the millions that are spent purely in administering the whole of this legislation. The truth is that the social legislation is not a case of generous gifts but it is an insurance premium against Communism and revolution. That is the truth and it is surely nothing to be proud of.

"How long will you be satisfied in seeking support from the State that maintains these conditions? How long will you be satisfied with alms instead of demanding your rights? How long will you be content that it is made impossible for you yourselves to make provision for old age, so that instead you have to be satisfied with the paltry dole which the old age pension is? As long as we allow these economic monopolies to continue, we can only patch the existing conditions and let one compromise follow another without being able to prevent our continually reaching one crisis after another. We must follow the path of freedom and build upon justice so that people obtain their rights and cease to depend upon charity. That is the policy which the Justice Party recommends."

Poverty in the Orient

The address by Mr. George T. Tideman at a meeting of the International Study Group of the Arlington Heights Woman's Club (Illinois) was reported in the local *Herald* of April 6. Mr. Tideman had been supplied (through LAND & LIBERTY) with some of the writings by Sir Malcolm Darling, K.C.I.E., particularly his book *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*. The address was so well received that excerpts from it are being published. These were some of his points: The U.S.A. Government had committed itself to holding the line against the advance of Communism around the Soviet Republic by largesse and force. But poverty and education with the insinuation of the Communist made an explosive force. It was a lesson they needed to learn swiftly for "you cannot with bullets shoot holes into a doctrine."

"Bearing in mind," Mr. Tideman said, "that capital is wealth employed by labour in the further production of wealth, ownership of capital harms no one. Ownership of commodities or any product of toil is within the natural order. This brings us to the real difficulty—here, and in the Orient. When we apply the same practice

of ownership to the natural resources which are not a product of toil but are provided freely by nature, we put freedom on the block. Economic freedom for people who have only their labour to sell is impossible in any country where the natural resources are given over to private monopoly. Are we not too wont to assume that ours is 'the best of all possible worlds' and while we gird for war against Communism the agents of the Kremlin keep prodding the disinherited? If by the gradual encroachment of bureaucracy we ultimately lose our system of private enterprise it will be because we have glossed over the biggest, and most absolute fact of life: man's dependence on free access to the earth for his sustenance."

Hopes and Fears in Italy

In his broadcast talk "Changing Calabria," reported in *The Listener*, April 5, Sean O'Faolain said:—"For the last year and a half they (the Americans) have been pouring millions upon millions of lire into the south, where the rot starts: money to reclaim the land, that is to get it ploughed three feet deep where for centuries it had been merely hoed three centimeters down by oxen and old wooden ploughshares; money to get it manured, irrigated, planted, cleared; all the time tactfully pressing and pressing the Italian Government to force the landowners to sell out the land to the land-starved peasantry who can cultivate it intensively. Because five per cent. of the landlords have been in possession of fifty per cent. of the land.

"If war does not come to put a stop to it all, in three years the Great Sila plateau will be divided and planted and begin to pay 'under new management'—I mean under a new breed of small peasant proprietors.

"I believe that, if there is not a war, all this will happen, but not many people really believe it except the Italian engineers and land-experts. As for the peasants, they hope. The Fascist old-guard believe that if it does happen it will fail like every other scheme of its kind, and that in the end it will all fall back into the hands of the old landowners like a ripe apple from a tree.

"What is the effect of all this on the politics of the peasants? I asked a man near Petilia Policastro, where there were riots last autumn and peasants were shot for seizing land: 'Do you really believe in Communism?' At first he turned up the back of his hand and waggled it—the Italian gesture for 'So-so.' Then he said: 'No, I do not believe in Communism—but it is necessary.' He meant he was glad of Communist pressure on the Government; by which he implied that if only somebody gave him land—and he did not care who—his interest in politics would cease."

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