

Margaret E. Bateman Urges Study of Causes of War

Margaret E. Bateman, Director of International Headquarters of the Henry George School, spoke over Station WLIB on Saturday, May 5th, on the San Francisco Conference. This was one of a series of brief talks, sponsored by WLIB, given each day during the Conference. Other speakers on these programs have been Sir Norman Angell, William Agar, Edward L. Bernays, Clark Eichelberger, Norman Thomas, and Dr. Lin Yu Tang.

Miss Bateman stressed the importance of dealing with causes, rather than effects, in planning for a permanent peace. Her talk follows in full:

"Now that Victory is near, what are we going to do with it? Men and women who are taking part in the San Francisco Conference must realize that no matter how lofty their ideals may be, these victories of the United Nations will either sweep the world forward to permanent heights of great advancement or to the depths of ruin. As President Truman said: 'If we do not want to die together in war, we must learn to live together in peace.' The question is how to learn to live together. This is a serious question which concerns every one of us.

"The delegates at San Francisco could find the answer to most of their problems right in San Francisco. They would find in the public libraries there and in their own countries, translated into their own languages, a book which was written sixty-six years ago in San Francisco. In this book they would discover the basic causes of war. The author of this book became known as 'The Prophet of San Francisco.' In the light of present day events he was indeed a prophet. His name was Henry George. The book referred to is 'Progress and Poverty.'

"Henry George pointed out that there must be a common cause for the upheavals of our world society. He saw that political manipulation of artificial controls did not alleviate the distress that was accumulating everywhere in the world . . . that countries with large

standing armies were unsafe, and that little countries with no armies would be the victims of war. He saw the same potential difficulties in countries ruled by kings, in those ruled by dictators, and in those countries where political power was said to be in the hands of the people. Henry George saw the potentialities of war in countries operating under high tariffs, and in other countries where trade was free. He recognized that beneath the sign of war and distress in every country there was a common cause.

"Henry George found that oppression was made possible through the system of land tenure and that this one thing is common to all countries. After the last war the ex-Kaiser, although banished in disgrace from his country, was still the largest landowner in Germany. He continued to benefit from 240,000 acres of German territory, which he claimed as his man people were clamoring for Lebensraum. Living-space owned by their ex-Kaiser and his former noblemen was available to the people only on terms that left these people destitute. It is a well known fact that the landowners of Germany are also the military power. They are the ones to bring forward men such as Hitler to protect their interests and increase their special privileges, even though it means plunging the whole world into war. Henry George recognized this land system as a fundamental cause of world chaos.

The same situation prevailed in Italy, where fifteen Italian families owned one and a half million acres of land. To maintain this land monopoly Mussolini was projected into power.

"It is easy to express great hopes of this conference. I have great hopes. I believe strongly in the sincerity of those who are planning for world peace; but ultimately we must be prepared to deal with causes instead of effects. Hitler's death and Mussolini's death will not destroy the causes that gave such men as these the power to drag the whole world down with them.

"The tragedy of war has come to many of us twice in our lifetime. We must learn the cause and apply the cure of social maladjustments which lead to war. The San Francisco Conference is arousing our determination to do so. The Prophet of San Francisco warned us that: 'Unless its foundations be laid in Justice the social structure cannot stand.'

"If all members of the San Francisco Conference would seriously consider the proposals of Henry George they would understand exactly how the foundations of the social structure can be laid

in Justice for all nations, large and small. They would not fear inflation or immigration or mass unemployment. They would know that in a world society where a correct economic system was in effect these questions would not present fearsome difficulties:

"The principles pointed out by Henry George are Eternal Truths. They are the basic foundations of Justice. If the San Francisco Conference is to mean anything to the permanent peace of the world, its foundations must be those presented by an American who believed in the American way of equal opportunity for all and special privilege for none.

"This is history's first Universal Conference. It is vital for us to investigate every angle of the conference and especially the Truths which our own American Henry George made clear in his masterpiece, 'Progress and Poverty.'

"Each one of us may appoint himself a delegate of the San Francisco Conference. We can learn the principles upon which a world society can be a peaceful society. We can discover the causes of war, and we can understand the principles of peace.

"When everyone knows these principles and acts upon them we shall have permanent peace. Henry George said: 'Let no man imagine that he has no influence. Whoever he may be and wherever he may be placed, the man who thinks becomes a light and a power.'"