

A Pamphlet from Palestine

A PAMPHLET by Elias M. Epstein published by Azriel Press on Jerusalem and entitled "The Case for the Jewish National Fund, A Challenge to Zionists," has reached us. Mr. Epstein begins his argument as follows:

The challenge to Zionists is not, therefore, so much to defend the integrity of the Keren Kayemeth: we may safely assume that the hundreds of thousands of Jews who love the land, who are inspired by the *Torah* injunction to redeem the soil, and whose devotion to the Keren Kayemeth has brought it in pennies and Pfennige over 2 million pounds—these men and women will not easily endure any change in the constitution of the Keren Kayemeth which would render its 213,000 *dunams* of people's land so many parcels of private property.

Further on Mr. Epstein says:

It is recognized by holders of all shades of political thought that land is too valuable a thing, not only monetarily, to be subject to the pranks and fluctuations of private speculation. In old fully developed countries reformers of all kinds struggle to remove or mitigate the land monopoly which strikes at the root of every economic and social problem. Many who are not followers of Henry George realize that land is the key to prosperity and to treat it as a commodity made by man is a false conception. The pressure of progressive opinion in these countries reveals itself in measures designed to break up large estates held out of use and so to "free the soil for the people."

In newer countries like Australia and New Zealand laws have been passed in time to ensure better distribution among all the inhabitants of the rent from the land. If elsewhere the land is vital to the nation, in Palestine, an old land which for us is new, it is trebly so. The argument that unless we possess the land we shall possess nothing, need only be stated to be understood. But when that is granted what is meant by "we"?

The writer of this pamphlet then states the inevitable results of rising land values under present conditions as population increases and industrial development advances.

Land inevitably rises in value wherever development proceeds. You cannot prevent land values from rising if population increases. The enhanced value is the product of improvements which are effected on the land by the application of the labor and capital of the population. Land being essential to life and there being a *limited* quantity, the growth of the community increases demand and reduces the available supply. The owner of the land need do nothing to improve it but it will become in time more valuable owing to the efforts of others—road and rail construction, building of factories and then villages in its vicinity, etc. It is clear, therefore, that the difference between what is paid for undeveloped land and what it is worth because it is surrounded by a thriving population should accrue to that population to which it is due. Actually it falls into the pocket of the private landlord. In the case of J. N. F. land, however, this increased value does revert to the community because the rent which the tenant pays to the J. N. F. for use of the land is a *percentage of its value* which is periodically determined afresh.

These are economic advantages—the prevention of speculation with the exploitation and ruin which it in-

volves, the gain for the whole people of the increased land value which their activities produce.

The question is now up in Palestine—the eternal question of the right to the use of the earth and the wrong involved in the private appropriation of those values which are due to population and its activities

WE need disinterested public service, moral and spiritual leadership in America rather than the notion of a country madly devoted to the invention of machines, to the production of goods and the acquisition of material wealth. Machines, goods and wealth, when their benefits are economically distributed, raise our standard of living. But it requires the higher concept to elevate our standard of life.

Intellectual, moral and spiritual progress are not the products of poverty. Upon this structure of material progress as a base we are erecting a structure of idealism that would be impossible without the material foundation. Of all human ideals one of the most vital is achievement for men and women of freedom from anxiety about tomorrow's food. Only in peace of mind can man's spirit flower and his humanity expand toward his neighbor.

The abolition of poverty in the individual and the nation has been the dream of idealists since the beginning of time.

—HERBERT HOOVER.

THE radical cause of the World War was the ill-will our social system engenders by harassing and obstructing free intercourse and trade with our fellows, notably by high tariffs. The Economic Council of the League recently blamed them for preventing the recovery of Europe. Then there was the urge of expansion, a "place in the sun," a scare of overpopulation, because, although the earth was given to the children of men, a few have monopolized it. Restore to the people their heritage that all who would use land may do so by paying to the State a uniform tax on the unimproved value of the land. Our social system is the negation of Christianity, hence wars and strife. Small wonder that a spirit prevails which would "Grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire, . . .

Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!"

—E. KAYS, West Maitland, Australia, in *Current History*.

AS the city grows, an industrial or commercial center (down town) develops. It will be the place where men can most readily trade and otherwise co-operate with one another, and will therefore become valuable, and its few owners will become wealthy as an inevitable result of necessary law.—JOHN Z. WHITE.

OUR country is bursting with power and desire to grow, but this impulse is everywhere met by the two increasing overhead costs mentioned, and these are the inevitable results of our present revenue system.

—JOHN Z. WHITE.