

To meet the immediate situation and the famine which threatens most Asiatics, Sheikh Abdullah's solution is the least objectionable—so long as the privileged landlords leave their land uncultivated or continue their cruel exploitation of the peasants who cultivate it.

Agrarian reform, suitable for all peoples and all latitudes, does not consist so much in the brutal expropriation of large landed proprietors as in laying upon them the obligation, through an appropriate fiscal system, of cultivating their unused land and allowing them as cultivators to enjoy in peace the fruits of their exertions and enterprise. If they decided to leave their land waste they would find themselves obliged to sell it cheaply to those who wanted to cultivate it. Let us assume that the value of land, rural and urban, has been assessed by experts and that taxation is progressively transferred upon the value of land, apart from improvements. If the owners cultivate or build on it they profit thereby because improvements, crops and consumable goods are all relieved from taxation. But if the landowners neither cultivate nor build upon their land they will very soon

get tired of paying the tax on its value and will sell cheaply to those who want to use it.

If, instead of making a violent revolution, the Bolsheviks had been wise enough to introduce Georgeist land reform the Russian people would have been spared the bloodshed and hardships which have fallen on their unhappy country and by repercussion on the world.

Sheikh Abdullah's agrarian reform is less efficacious than it appears at first sight, because it is summary and violent. Nothing resting on force is advisable or good in itself. In matters of social reform—especially land reform—we must always have time on our side and remember the celebrated maxim of Auguste Comte, "Profound revolutions are never violent, and violent revolutions are never profound."

(Mr. A. Daudé-Bancel, editor of *Terre et Liberté*, also contributes much to other periodicals. His recent articles have appeared for example in *La République Fédérale*, on the gold standard and free trade; also on the Persian oil and agrarian problem; *La Journée Viruëole*, the economics of synthetic rubber; *L'œuvre Libre*, evils of indirect taxation; *Le Coopérateur Suisse*, Co-operation and Georgeism.)

ASIATIC AND AFRICAN LAND TENURE

A Selection of Important Assertions and Admissions

Justice William O. Douglas, of the United States Supreme Court, is among the most influential of the authorities who insist that a rapacious landlordism is the cause of the misery and social upheavals in the Asiatic countries. Nothing short of far-reaching land reform can remedy matters or meet the onslaught of Communism. Two vain ideas must be abandoned. One is that Communism can be overcome with shot and shell, the other, that capital investment and development schemes can lift a land-monopoly-ridden people out of its distress. Justice Douglas made intimate acquaintance with conditions in a recent tour to the Middle East and Southeast Asia and he set forth his impressions in a powerful article which appeared in the journal *Look* of January 16. Every peasant, he says, who raised a hoe against a Maharajah and every tenant who defied the money-lender and his extortionate interest was expressing the rebellion that has long been smouldering throughout Asia. These peoples are in the midst of revolutions founded on specific complaints, including ownership of land by a few, a system of taxation under which millionaires pay little or nothing, and governments that are corrupt. The system of tenancy leaves the tenant barely enough to live on *Money is not so much needed as ideas. The need for money will come only after the political revolutions have been effected and new democratic regimes stabilised. Money spent before reforms have been launched will be largely wasted; without them the money will go largely to enrich the classes at the top, hastening the day the Communists take over. Industrial and irrigation projects could under proper management increase productivity, bring greater prosperity and produce a land that could support additional millions of people. But unless it is done under a programme of reform it will work only to increase the hold that a few hundred men already have on these countries.* (The italics are ours.) In fine, as Justice Douglas asserts, if we openly undertake to manage these revolutions and direct them we will at once enlist the enthusiasm of the peoples of this area; we will for the first time be identified with them in their struggles for liberty, not in words but in action.

India's Greatest Need

"In the centre of Kashmir is the lovely 'Vale' with its capital Srinagar, lying in splendid country, where every fruit and flowering tree grows to greatest perfection. This is the most famous of all holiday resorts in India. The neighbouring countryside is populated with some of the poorest and most exploited people in the world. They are greatly skilled in handicraft, they make Kashmir shawls, textiles, beautiful furniture and metal work . . . India is proud of having saved the Vale from being sacked by the tribesmen and having set up a democratic government under a popular Muslim leader [Sheik Abdullah]; progressive Indians also welcome his promise of social reforms—above all, the land reform which is the greatest of all India's necessities."—Kingsley Martin, broadcast on February 13, reported in *The Listener*, February 22.

The Philippines

In a leading article dealing with the poverty and social unrest in the Philippines to-day, the *Manchester Guardian*, April 28, quoted the following extract from the current number of the American quarterly review "Foreign Affairs":—

"Americans who have assumed that in the Philippines we did a model job of starting a colonial people toward independence and prosperity are now experiencing a rude shock, and there are others to come. Less than five years after the establishment of the new Asian nation our hopes—and those of the Filipino people—have been met with the emergence of something acceptable neither to us nor to them. Mismanagement, corruption, and failure to enforce needed reforms have destroyed public confidence in the Government and contributed to a breakdown in administrative and economic life. Possibly more than anywhere else in the Far East society in the Philippines is coming apart at the seams."

The author of this article, Mr. Ravenholt, traces the trouble to a social system which the Americans, in the days of their power, left unreformed. He says that the United States, on taking over the Philippines, in some

cases confirmed as absolute owners of land the men who in Spanish days had held only rights of collecting taxes from it. To-day, one per cent. of the people owns most of the wealth, holds the political power, and rack-rents the peasantry. The possessing class refuses to pay taxes; 60 per cent. of the revenue legally due is at present uncollected. Laws for the control of rent cannot be enforced; farmers who are supposed to be paying 30 per cent. of their crop to the landlords are made to pay 70 per cent.

The *Manchester Guardian* comments that extraordinary though these facts may appear they are nearly all supported by the report of the Bell Mission which made an elaborate economic survey of the Philippines last year at the joint request of Presidents Truman and Quirino. From that report it quotes:—"Landownership by farmers who work the land has steadily declined . . . The strained relations between the landlords and their tenants is one of the main factors retarding the recovery of agricultural production . . . While the standard of living of the mass of people has not reached the pre-war level, the profits of business men and the incomes of large landowners have risen very considerably . . . wages remain low because of the unequal bargaining power of workers and tenants and employers and landowners. Under such conditions any policy that keeps prices high has the effect of transferring real income from the poor to the rich. This is what has happened in the Philippines . . . Most agricultural and industrial workers have no faith that their economic position can or will be improved."

Lord Hailey on Native Rights

Lord Hailey, who is recognised as the outstanding authority on colonial affairs, in his newly published work *Native Administration in the British African Territories*, has this to say about land tenure systems:—

"In an agricultural community there is no graver source of unrest than a system of tenure which may subject the peasantry to exploitation by a landlord or a moneylender. There is no graver menace to society than the dispossessed landholder who can find no alternative livelihood in industry.

"These are features of agrarian life which have hitherto had no analogy in the African indigenous economy, but unless due regard is paid to the development of a suitable form of land tenure, they are now likely to become common in those areas of Africa which have a high population or an intensive form of cultivation.

"Unless the right of natives to pledge or alienate their land is restricted the whole future of Africa may well be darkened whatever system of government she evolves. The consequent creation of a class of discontented, landless cultivators would form the obvious prey for those who are interested in bringing about a political upheaval."

His wide experience in India and Africa has convinced Lord Hailey that the path to political maturity is through economic betterment. "Nothing is more convincing," he writes, "than the rapidity with which an improvement in material conditions is followed by an increase in the initiative and capacity of the individual members of the community."

"There are no Paupers"

These are some passages in the book *African Journey* by Mrs. Paul Robeson published in 1946.

"I asked if Dr. Moroka's father, Chief Moroka, had owned all the land hereabouts. 'Owned?' they asked in surprise, 'No. No one owns any land. The land belongs

to the tribe, and the current chief is only the custodian for it.' The idea of individual and private ownership of land is wholly foreign to African thought. Land is to be used, not to be owned.

"The native law of land tenure in Africa, although it is unwritten, is infinitely better, sounder and healthier than that which the British people tolerate and suffer in their own country.

"To most Englishmen this statement will appear absurd. It is, however, strictly accurate . . . 'I conceive that land belongs to a vast family, of which many are dead, few are living, and countless numbers are yet unborn.' This picturesque phrase, which fell from the lips of a dignified African ruler, examined by the West African Lands Committee, symbolises the entire philosophy of African social life, political, economic and spiritual.

"The fundamental conception underlying native tenure all over Africa . . . where the white man has not destroyed it, is that land, like air and water, is God-given, that every individual within the community has a right to share in its bounties provided he carries out his social and political obligations to the community of which he forms a part; that in the community as a whole is vested the ownership of the land, and that consequently the individual member of the community cannot permanently alienate the land he occupies or uses.

"Whether the smaller or larger social organisation be regarded as the landowning unit, the same common principle permeates the social structure and lies at the root of all social philosophy. Under this system no member of an African community is ever in want. If a member of an African family—using the word in its African signification (community)—emigrates for a time, his heritage in the land is waiting for him when he returns. No man starves or can starve. There are no paupers in Africa, except where the white man has created them."

In Basutoland

"The Rise of the Basuto," the new book by G. Tylden, reviewed in the *Rand Daily Mail*, December 16, pays tribute to Moshesh, the great and wise tribal leader whom the Basuto honour to-day as the man who built their nation. Illiterate barbarian as he has been described, he is considered by many writers to have been the greatest diplomat the Whites have ever encountered among the Bantu. From the first, Moshesh firmly refused to alienate any land, although he allowed white men to settle in his "tribal territories." The disposition of land has ever since rested with the Paramount Chief. As a result of his policy, Basutoland to-day is a Dependency in which tribal organisation remains and the chiefs are allowed to exercise authority. Since 1868 it has been regarded as a Native Reserve. The soil cannot be leased or sold; it is vested in chiefs in trust for the people. Among the natives, rights of occupation and not rights of property are exercised as individuals.

The Dispossessed in Kenya

In preparation for the arrival of Mr. James Griffiths, the Colonial Secretary, joint mass meetings, organised by the East African Indian National Congress and the Kenya African Union, were held in Nairobi, May 13. The *Manchester Guardian*, May 15, reported that "about ten thousand Africans, mainly residents of Nairobi, approved a proposal to present a petition to Mr. Griffiths asking for the return of land which they allege was taken from them for European settlement. Eliud Mathu, leader of the African-nominated unofficial members of the

Kenya Legislature, dramatically half-tore his Western-type jacket from his shoulders as he told his stamping audience: 'They (Europeans) brought this jacket . . . I would rather be naked and not civilised and have my land.' Mr. Mathu suggested the formation of a new body to be called the African Lands Restoration League. He added that if the land was not restored 'they can bring an atomic bomb and destroy the whole lot of us because without land the future of the African people in this country is doomed.'

ECONOMICS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Dr. H. G. Pearce, of Sydney, N.S.W., author of the book *Value, Normal and Morbid* has written as follows in a letter to Mr. J. Rupert Mason, of San Francisco:—

"I have long been of the opinion that the delusions in which public opinion confides are mostly inherited from the Universities, *i.e.*, they are largely the delusions which were the *official* delusions of 'thinkers' about 30-50 years before. Hence I have tried for some years to interest University students. No avenue of approach seemed open, as most students seem to *worship* their professors and most professors seem to be interested in little else than *being worshipped*. Finally, I devised a plan of catching some students who were entering the faculty of Economics—I got contact with two or three but concentrated on one. I did not push Georgeism on to him but rather criticised what he was being taught by reference to Prof. Robbins: 'We are not yet agreed what it is we are talking about.' Prof. Davenport: 'A confusion of tongues' lasting from 'the eighteenth century well into the twentieth.' Prof. Leacock: 'Invasion of Thought by Mathematical Symbols' and Prof. L. Fraser: 'Fourteen different meanings of capital,' etc., etc.

"Nothing much seemed to happen for three years, but as that one student seemed still willing to listen I kept to my line that he was learning little but jargon. In December last he sat for his third year examination and about that time he admitted to me that it all seemed fairly intelligible for a year or two but that his third year studies had convinced him that I was right. He was getting more and more entangled in jargon. So he asked me if I would deliver a short course of lectures on economics during the long vacation if he could secure a group of ten students. I agreed, of course. I heard no more till Friday, 19th January, when he phoned me and said he had a group of 19 students ready.

"We had seven lectures and the attendance was not 19 but 30. They especially asked me to concentrate on two questions:—(1) What economic science is, *i.e.*, its formal object; (2) what is investment?

These two points seemed to be their chief muddles and hence their chief worries.

"I had no set course along these lines and so I had to make one up as I went along. They were so impressed that they want me to continue with a few more lectures during mid-winter vacation (about two weeks' duration). One student took 350 pages of notes, and the class asked my permission to have these duplicated for the benefit of the others. I checked over these notes and gave my permission. They promised to send me a few copies."

A Free Copy of "Land & Liberty" is an invitation to become a subscriber. Monthly 1s. By post 10s. a year; U.S.A. and Canada, \$2.

OBITUARY

James Dundas White died on April 30 at his residence at 39 Burton Court, Chelsea. He was in his 85th year and had been an invalid for the past two years, but almost up to the last was actively interested in the work of the Henry George movement. His latest literary contribution is his book *Land Value Reform* published 1949 by the Land & Liberty Press, Ltd. In his long life he rendered an immense service not only by his writings but also in his Parliamentary career, as a gifted exponent of the principles and policy for which this journal stands. Especially valuable was his guidance in the matter of practical application and the careful drafting of legislation, to which he attached the utmost importance. The evidence of that is most clearly shown in his last book, successor to the many that came from his pen in the course of years. That work began even before 1906 when he first entered Parliament as Liberal member for Dumbartonshire. His books and pamphlets are too numerous to list fully, but notable among them were his *Economic Ideals*, the *Truth about Tariffs*, the admirable *A.B.C. of the Land Question*, the *Scheme for Land Value Taxation*, the *Economic Justice*, the *Land Value Policy* and *Our Land and How to Make it so*. His most active political life was during the Liberal administration from 1906 to 1914 when, after representing Dumbartonshire till 1910, he was elected Member for Tradeston in 1911. He was successively Private Secretary to two of the Ministers, but otherwise held no offices; even better than that was the high esteem in which he was held by his colleagues. One of the most instructive documents that came out of all the legislative discussions of that time was the report of the Select Committee, presided over by Lord Advocate Alexander Ure, on the Scottish Land Value Taxation Bill—a historic vindication of the whole principle—and as a member of that Committee Dundas White rendered exceptional service. In 1919 he had a change of heart and joined the I.L.P., standing for Labour at Middlesbrough in 1923 and for Central Glasgow in 1924, both without success. Afterwards he retired from the political field. To converse with him was to have the impression of being with an eminent man, and lovable withal, for there was great charm in his companionship; and from his many public meetings throughout the length and breadth of the land there must be thousands who still remember the conviction they derived from his clear intellect.

Mrs. Janet Duncan Calder who was residing with her son and his family in Dumbarton was overcome with sudden illness which required care in hospital, where (in Glasgow) she died on March 29. Sister of John Paul, the late editor of *LAND & LIBERTY*, she, like her brother, was devoted to the Henry George movement ever since her youngest years. Her home was in Annan, Dumfriesshire, and among that vigorous group of Single Taxers to which her husband belonged, mostly connected with the Boiler Works there and whose leading spirit was the late Harry Llewellyn Davies. She had been widowed a number of years and she shared her life sometimes with her daughters Peggy (Mrs. Arnold Schwarz) and Janet in London and sometimes with her sons in Scotland, William in Dumbarton, and Neil in Annan, where she was laid to rest. Among the bereaved is also Mrs. John Paul, who often had her companionship in her home at Kilcreggan. To all who thus miss a very dear lady we convey our sincerest sympathies.

A. W. M.